

Siren Publishing

*Ménage Amour*

A photograph of a woman in a white bikini being held from behind by two shirtless men in a body of water. The woman is in the center, her arms crossed over her chest. The men are on either side of her, their hands resting on her hips and waist. The water is calm, and the background shows some greenery.

# NOW AND ALWAYS

Pam Champagne



## Now and Always

Mayhem greets Lily when she comes home for her father's funeral. Even worse, she realizes she's in love with Cain and Zach Young, two boys she once had a crush on. Now, they are men—and willing to share.

The will states she'll inherit the family ranch on two conditions—she must marry Cain, and the ranch must show a profit in a year. That's not an easy feat since the foreman has been rustling most of the cattle. Her love for Cain and Zach overwhelms her as much as the financial problems.

When the ex-foreman kidnaps Lily, he tells her he is her half-brother, and that Cain was aware of the relationship. Devastated, Lily turns away from Cain. Even worse, Zach sticks by his brother, and Lily can't have one without the other. Can she learn to forgive Cain so the three of them can find everlasting happiness?

**Genre:** Ménage a Trois/Quatre, Western/Cowboys

**Length:** 20,412 words



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# **NOW AND ALWAYS**

**PAM CHAMPAGNE**

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## **Chapter One**

Squish. Cain Young shifted position and winced as his cowboy boots, saved for special events like funerals and weddings, sank an inch further in the mud. Why did it always rain at funerals?

Beside him, Zach's feet shifted back and forth as if doing a two-step in the muck. "Here comes Lily."

Cain snapped to attention. His muscles tensed, his boots forgotten. It was about damn time she showed up. The woman would more than likely be late for her own funeral. His gaze trailed Zach's straight to the vintage 1959 red Corvette pulling up none too slowly behind the black hearse, stopping about three inches from its chrome bumper. The door swung open and two beautiful long legs swung out, followed by a tall, gorgeous female. Cain's gut tightened. Lily Curran had grown up in the past eight years, but his body remembered her as if it had been yesterday.

Not bothering with an umbrella to protect her beautiful blonde hair and fancy clothes from the steady drizzle, she hurried across the grass as fast as her three inch heels allowed. Damn fool. She'd more than likely break her long, graceful neck. The hem of her formfitting black dress ended mid-thigh, and the plunging neckline exposing twin globes was an invitation for all men to ogle. He brushed aside his twinge of envy at the pearl necklace nestled in her cleavage.



Beside him, Zach's whistle of appreciation earned him Cain's elbow to the ribs.

"Ouch. That hurt," Zach complained. "Why are you such a stick in the mud? Hey, that was a pun."

"Behave yourself. Lily's off-limits. Nothing's changed."

"Her father's dead now." Cain's piercing glare brought a flush to Zach's cheeks. "I'm just saying—"

"You've said enough." Just what Cain needed—Zach sniffing after Lily. The future held enough drama without that complication.

Soggy mourners standing in the heavy mist to pay their respects to Steve Curran focused on the newcomer, and a loud buzz of voices drowned out Pastor Ryan's eulogy. Some things never changed. Lily's talent for causing a stir had dogged her throughout childhood and continued to hound her as an adult. Not that Cain blamed anyone for whispering. She hadn't been home in years, and today she shows up at her father's funeral dressed like a classy hooker.

"Sorry," Lily said in a breathless voice. Cain tore his eyes from the pink tongue licking her full bottom lip. "I got a late start this morning, and—" She broke off abruptly at the pastor's loud, irritated *ahem*.

Cain gave her credit. She regained her composure in a blink and stood tall, her bold blue eyes daring anyone to criticize her. Everyone's attention returned to the man of the cloth, although he had no doubts they'd rather dissect the dead man's daughter. As Lily listened to the words for the father she hadn't seen in years, Cain studied her profile. He didn't much care for the sophisticated woman she'd become. He preferred the Lily with unruly curls and a cheeky grin. The one who'd been sent away from home in shame years ago—if only circumstances had been different...*Whoa! Don't go there. Not now. Not here.*

As if sensing his interest, Lily's blue gaze rose to meet his. For a brief moment happiness sparkled in her eyes, quickly replaced with a blank indifference that hurt him more than a punch to the stomach. Or



perhaps he'd imagined it all. Imagination had been his constant companion since the day she'd walked out of his life.

"Steve Curran was a good man who lived an honest life. God rest his soul." Pastor Ryan's final "amen" pulled Cain from his memories. He wrenched his eyes from Lily.

Head held high, she made her way to her father's casket. For long moments, she stood in silence before she knelt in the wet grass and placed a kiss on the blue steel. When she returned to Zach and Cain, her composure amazed him.

"Where's Carmen?"

"She went to the funeral, but chose not to attend the burial," Cain said.

Lily frowned. "That's odd. How's she holding up?"

"She's missed you, Lily." Zach joined the conversation.

With a quick nod at Zach, she took each of them by the hand. "Come on, let's go home. Steve's attorney reads the will at three o'clock."

"Steve? What happened to 'Daddy'?" Zach asked.

Lily's hand tightened on his. "He's been Steve to me since the day he threw me off the ranch."

"He had valid reasons, Lily," Cain reminded her. "You know it as well as I do."

She cocked a well-formed eyebrow. "Because we couldn't keep our hands off each other is reason enough to disown a daughter?"

Cain stiffened. "He never disowned you. He sent you away to school. There's a difference. He never forbade you from visiting all these years."

Lily's mouth tightened. "That's not the way I see it."

"The whole thing's crazy," Zach chimed in. "We weren't doing anything wrong, 'cept swimming."

Cain swallowed a groan. Zach had been fifteen the night Steve Curran had caught the three of them skinny-dipping in the river hole. It's possible it'd been innocent fun for Zach. Cain had been twenty,



old enough to know better. At sixteen, Lily's relentless determination to lose her virginity had driven him insane. God help him, but that night he'd lost the strength to push her away. He should be thanking Steve for showing up before the inevitable happened. It'd been bad enough Lily's father had found them half-naked, ready to do the naughty deed. If Steve hadn't sent her back East to school, he and Lily would more than likely be married with three kids by now, and she'd probably hate his guts. As for him, who knew? As much as he didn't like to admit it, he'd probably love her as much today as he had eight years ago.

An unwanted thrill shivered through Cain as Lily hooked her arm around his and scanned the crowd. "Zach, you can drive my 'Vette," she purred, dragging Cain toward the limo—a limo Zach and Cain had ridden in alone to the cemetery because Carmen had refused to join them. Steve had paid for it as part of the funeral package. Stupid waste of money to Cain's way of thinking.

The hurt on Zach's face reminded Cain of a time when they'd been kids and their foster parents had given Cain permission to go to the movies, but not Zach. Protecting Zach's feelings had become second nature to Cain. Without hesitation, he said, "'Fraid not, Lily. Zach and I are a team."

Hands on her hips, her lower red lip pouted. Cain braced himself for one of her full-blown tantrums. Instead, she smiled and tossed the keys to one of the ranch hands. "Jethro? You don't mind bringing the 'Vette home, right?"

Jethro tipped his hat, a silly grin on his face. "No, ma'am."

"Straight to the ranch." She winked. "Get my drift?"

"Yes, ma'am. She sure is a beauty."

An image flashed through Cain's mind of what life would be like if Lily decided to stay. Every ranch hand would trip over each other, vying for her attention. Perhaps creating chaos was what she had in mind. It sounded like one of Lily's schemes.



As they climbed into the back of the limo and onto the plush leather seats, Lily finagled herself between him and Zach, going so far as to push Cain into the rounded corner, placing her fingers on his thigh. Nope. Nothing had changed, except Lily at twenty-four had much more experience at seduction than she'd had at sixteen.

Cain yanked his thoughts away from the past. "Why do Zach and I need to be there for the will reading?" God knew the last thing he wanted to do was hear what he already knew, and he had no desire to watch Lily shoot through the roof when she discovered what her father had done.

Lily removed her hand, and he missed the heat of her fingers. She shrugged. "Don't ask me. Ben Hennessey called last night, and those were his orders." She fished a mirror from her purse and reapplied her lipstick. Cain ached to lap the ruby wetness from her mouth. She snapped shut the compact and stared into his eyes. "Steve thought of both of you as his sons."

"Bullshit." Angry words rushed out before Cain could stop them.

Lily backed away, bumping against Zach, whose foolish grin told Cain he enjoyed the warmth of her body. "You're wrong, Cain. He cared," she insisted.

Cain's ears drummed with fury. "He rescued us from social services for free labor. It had nothing to do with kindness. Zach was only eight, and your father worked him like a man." With each word he spat, Lily pushed further against Zach until she'd squashed him against the door. Zach's arms wrapped around her. Cain recognized the protective glare in his brother's eyes. Hadn't Lily's body bamboozled him enough times? Screw it. Zach was a grown man. If he allowed Lily to use him to satisfy her craving to tease, then he'd learn to handle the fallout.

"Why did you stay if that's what you believe?" she asked with what sounded like genuine curiosity. "You could have left the ranch when you turned eighteen."



“And abandon Zach to your father? I don’t think so. Besides, Steven paid well. We’ve been saving money to buy our own place.” Thick tension filled the limo, and Cain realized he’d crossed the line when Lily’s irises darkened to indigo.

“Hey, Lil.” Zach gave her fingers a friendly squeeze. “How’s Boston been treating you? I guess most of my e-mails must have landed in your spam folder since I never got any responses.”

Despite his irritation with Lily, Cain almost smiled at Zach’s lack of anger at her cyber rejection. He’d had no idea Zach had attempted to keep the lines of communication open after Lily had left the ranch.

“I’m sorry, Zach. Forgive me.” Lily brushed a piece off lint from her dress. The breath caught in Cain’s throat at the hungry look in Zach’s eyes when the hem of her dress rode further up her thigh. “I hated the world for a long while, but once I accepted I wouldn’t be coming home, I devoured my education and went on to get my Master’s, determined to make it in the corporate world.” After a deep sign, she finished her story. “After that, too many years had passed, and it was awkward to get in touch.”

“Grow up, Zach,” Cain growled, pinning his gaze on his brother. “Lily ignored her father for all those years, why should she e-mail you?”

Lily’s hero never wavered. “Because she loves us, right, Lil?”

“Now and always,” she murmured, repeating a pledge the three of them had taken more times than he could remember. She gulped a big breath and plowed on. “I did phone my father, Cain. After five years of him refusing to take my calls, I gave up.”

“That’s not the way I heard it,” Cain muttered.

“Come on, Cain. Give her a break,” Zach said. “Lily wouldn’t lie to us.”

Lily smiled. “That’s okay. You were always the least judgmental of the three of us, Zach.” Lily reached out to gently caress Zach’s cheek. The small gesture must have set a fire inside Zach, and Cain almost screamed in frustration when Zach reached inside the deep V



of Lily's dress to cup her breasts. Eight years ago, they'd barely filled Cain's hands. Today they were more than a handful. His eyes must have given him away because Lily's lips curved into a smile. "You remember."

She rested her head against Zach's shoulder, and Cain fixed his gaze on Zach's fingers pulling her nipples into tight buds. Her thighs slipped open, and the moan escaping her throat shot through Cain's veins, heating his blood. With closed eyes, she raised her mouth for Zach's kiss.

Cain's cock hardened, and his balls tingled. How many times had he imagined playing with her breasts? He almost exploded when Lily's fingers trailed up the insides of her spread thighs. Jesus! She wasn't wearing underwear. Her fingers spread hairless labial lips. Sweat broke out across his brow as she flicked her clit with a long red nail. Creamy moisture oozed from her sweet hole.

Zach swung his leg around her and tugged her butt into his crotch. With an expertise that took Cain by surprise, his brother flipped Lily's breasts out of the low-cut bra. Cain's cock popped up like a tent pole at Lily's sighs of pleasure. He gripped the edge of the seat to keep from joining the foreplay.

"Lick me, Cain. Please." His body shuddered at Lily's husky voice. "I've waited forever to feel your mouth on my pussy."

He knocked her hand away from her mons and yanked down her dress. "Damn it, Lily. No more seduction scenes. You're not a kid anymore."

"I'm ready to blow," Zach groaned.

Locking her defiant gaze with his, Lily pushed the intercom button. "Take the scenic route back to the ranch, Fletcher."

"Yes, Miss Curran." Cain swore he heard amusement in the driver's voice.

Lily grabbed her purse and tossed a condom to Zach. "Put it on, lover." Her tongue licked her lips as she pulled her dress up to her waist and got on her hands and knees on the seat, offering Zach full



access to her bare ass. Her breasts swung gently to the rhythm of the limousine rolling along on the road.

“Stop it,” Cain croaked. “This has gone far enough, Lily.”

\* \* \* \*

Lily thrilled to Cain’s muttered protest. All six feet of him turned her on. He hadn’t changed much. His dark brown hair was still too long, falling below the collar of his denim jacket. A few wrinkles appeared in the corners of his gray eyes. Zach had grown into a spitting image of Cain—perhaps an inch or so shorter, but the same color hair and the same slate-colored eyes. Over the years, Lily had wondered if Cain would still want her. The bulge in his jeans gave her the answer. She braced herself on one hand and reached across to lower his zipper, slipping his swollen cock out of his boxer shorts. She rode the sensual wave circling the backseat of the Limo. Her body craved release with these two men and her heart ached for the cherished closeness they once shared. Her brain insisted a sexual encounter would be insane. The three of them needed to become reacquainted. Her pussy declined to heed the advice.

She bent forward and licked a pearly bead of pre-cum from the slit of the engorged head. Cain’s fingers tangled in her hair. For a brief moment, she feared he’d push her away. Instead, he controlled the movement of her mouth. She gasped in pleasure and rotated her hips as Zach’s cock poked into her pussy. A hot moisture ran down the insides of her thighs. How many times had she dreamt about being loved by these two men? Something she thought would remain a fantasy. She’d always steered her thoughts to making love to Cain, but Zach had always pushed his way into the picture. “Hurry, Zach. Put it all the way in. Do me now!”

Her mouth slid up and down Cain’s silken rod, matching the rhythm of Zach’s pumping cock. Cain’s hips lifted off the seat to push deeper into her throat while Zach’s fingers milked her breasts. The



orgasm built fast. “Don’t stop,” she mumbled, taking her mouth off the stiff cock she ate.

Her fantasies hadn’t come close to the sensations zinging through her body. “Faster, Zach. I’ll die if I don’t come.” She went down on Cain until his cock rubbed the back of her throat.

God, Lily, I’m coming,” Cain groaned. She sucked harder until his ejaculation triggered her own climax. Greedy, she swallowed the hot cum spurting into her throat and squeezed her pussy muscles on Zach’s cock until he let loose his seed. Exhausted, she collapsed in Cain’s lap and licked his balls. Pleasure shot to her core when his cock hardened again.

“Oh, man, I can’t believe this.” Zach’s thumbs rubbed her clit, arousing her once again. “Let’s do it again.” Zach gasped. “Turn around, Lily, and let Cain drive this time.”

Cain’s thighs tensed under Lily’s cheek. Afraid he might knock her to the floor in disgust, she sat up and rearranged her clothes as best she could. “Not now, Zach.” She dropped a quick kiss on his lips. She willed her beating heart to slow down and reminded herself not to read anything into the situation. It was hot sex and nothing more. “It was great. Thanks.”

“Thank *you*, ma’am,” he replied with a cheeky grin. “I’m looking forward to the next time.” His expression grew serious. “I’ve missed you, Lily.” Zach’s sincerity brought heat to her cheeks.

Cain refused to meet her gaze. He zipped up his jeans and stared straight ahead. When the limo slowed and stopped, they silently filed out into the rain. Not even Cain’s withdrawal put a damper on the sensations flooding Lily’s pussy and nipples. They thrummed with satisfaction.



## Chapter Two

Lily crossed her legs at the ankles, enjoying Zach and Cain's gazes, locked on her exposed thighs as they sat on the couch in the library, one on each side of her. This morning had been a revelation when she'd found not one, but two wonderful lovers. She might have to change her plans to fly back to Boston tomorrow. She had a few weeks of vacation due her. Why not use it to spend time at the ranch? It might be a risk to stay here, though. Already her old feelings for Cain and Zach were grabbing a hold of her heart. A twinge of sadness took her by surprise at the thought of leaving. *Stay focused, Lily. It was sex, nothing more.* But was it?

Carmen reclined in a formal wingback chair off to the side of Steve's large mahogany desk, perched on the edge of the cushion, frantically twisting an embroidered handkerchief. An occasional sob escaped her. Lily wondered, not for the first time, if the housekeeper and her father had been lovers. As a child, Lily had noticed the special looks that had passed between them. If they'd been sleeping together, they'd done a great job of hiding it. Perhaps they'd only been close friends. She shook the cobwebs away. What did it matter? Her father was dead.

Everyone's interest diverted to the door at the sound of footsteps. Expecting her father's lawyer, Ben Hennessey, Lily stiffened to see Dave Weaver, the former ranch manager, saunter in, his steely blue eyes directed at her, as if daring her to challenge his right to be there. Her father had fired Dave a few days before his death, so Carmen had told her, during one of their many phone conversations. Cain squeezed her hand. Had he sensed her agitation? He'd always been



able to read her mind in the past. He leaned close to whisper in her ear, his breath sending thrills to her core. “No matter what happens, play it cool. Don’t make a scene. Act like a lady.”

On the other side, Zach patted her shoulder. The emotional support from her two best friends strengthened her resolve to see this through.

The attorney’s voice boomed from the back as he entered the room. “Looks like everyone who needs to be here has arrived, so we can proceed with the reading of Steve Curran’s last will and testament.” He shuffled across the rug, dragging his right leg that had been lame for as long as Lily could remember. With an air of confidence, Ben settled behind her father’s old desk and removed a blue-backed document from his briefcase. Once he’d cleared his throat several times, he peered over the rim of his wire framed glasses. “No need to read the legal jargon. I’ll relay Steve’s desires and answer any questions.”

He shifted his weight and focused on Carmen with a kind expression. “It was Steve’s wish that you have a home on the ranch for the rest of your life, plus an adequate monthly income should you choose to move elsewhere.”

Cain tugged Lily down when she rose to comfort Carmen, who wept into her hankie. Carmen’s emotional reaction to her inheritance had been overwhelming. Lily’s head snapped up at Ben’s next words.

“To my longtime foreman, Dave Weaver, I leave a one-time stipend of fifty dollars.” The attorney peered over his glasses. “Dave, you have twenty-four hours to vacate the premises, and there are several hired hands Steve also wants off the ranch. I won’t take the time to read the names. Cain,” Ben peeked over his glasses, “I’ll give you the list and you can take care of it.”

Lily had no idea her nails were digging into Cain’s arm until he muttered, “That hurts.” Dave approached the desk. His red cheeks and bulging eyes clued in everyone on his mood.



“With all due respect, Ben, there’s a later will that supersedes the one in your hand.”

Ben smiled and folded his hands. “I don’t think so, boy. Steve called me two nights before he died and asked me to draw up,” he tapped the document on the desk, “his last will and testament.”

“That’s not something he can do on the phone,” the foreman argued.

Ben leaned forward. “He didn’t. I came here. Trust me, everything’s legal.”

“Who witnessed it? Her?” Dave jabbed a finger at Carmen. “That don’t make it legal. She was the old man’s whore.”

Lily jumped to her feet, ignoring Cain’s hand jerking on her arm. “That’s enough, Dave. Carmen’s part of the family. Always was and always will be.”

Cain’s voice filled the room. “She didn’t witness the signing of the will.” Lily fell back onto the couch. “I did.”

Zach stirred, his knees brushing Lily’s leg. His jaw dropped. Obviously, he had no clue about the new will either.

Ben rose from his chair. “Dave, kindly leave the room.”

Thick moments of silence hung in the air. Lily waited for the explosion. A sigh of relief whooshed from her lungs when the angry manager pivoted and stormed toward the door. The killer look he’d flung at Cain would have withered a lesser man. Cain never flinched. His strength in the face of adversity took her breath away. Right there she fell in love with him for the second time.

Seconds ticked by.

“You haven’t heard the last of me,” Dave challenged. The slamming of the door resounded in the quiet room.

Ben pushed his glasses further up the bridge of his nose and coughed. “Yes, well, let us proceed. The rest of my estate, excluding Carmen’s cottage and ten acres, I leave to my daughter, Lily, with the following stipulations.” The attorney paused, removing his glasses to



rub his eyes. "For the record, I tried to dissuade Steve from this decision. The stubborn ass refused to budge."

Lily gripped Cain's thigh in anticipation. What had her father done? After banning her from the ranch for all these years, she hadn't expected him to leave her anything.

"Lily and Cain must marry within the week. If at the end of a year, they remain married and the ranch shows a profit, the will stands. If either of the aforementioned conditions is not met by the end of twelve months, the ranch shall be donated to the Bakers' Conservation Department as a wildlife preserve, excluding Carmen's cottage and ten acres, of course."

Zach sprang to his feet. "That's insane. Lily can attest the will."

Ben folded his hands. "She can try. Be warned I will testify as to the soundness of Steve's mind the night he made his last will and testament."

Lily's ears buzzed with the implications. If she'd stood, her legs would collapse for sure, so she kept her ass glued to the couch. "Did he explain why, Ben? He sent me away to keep Cain and me apart. Why would he suddenly want us to marry?"

Ben rummaged in his briefcase and held out an envelope. "Perhaps you'll find your answers in this letter."

Zach responded to the plea in her eyes and retrieved the envelope to place in her shaking hand. Lily stared at it a long while as if it might transform into a rattler. Had Cain known about the stipulation her father had added to the will?

"Any more questions?"

In her confusion, Lily blurted, "The audacity of my father has robbed me of speech, but you can count on hearing from me in the future with a list of them."

Ben laughed and gathered his materials. "Bring it on, girl. I can take it."

Lily stumbled to her feet and made a beeline for the door.

"Lily! We have to talk."



She glanced over her shoulder at Cain. “Did you know about this?”

“I did.”

A lump formed in her throat. “And you didn’t tell me because...?”

Cain glanced around the library. “Can we talk somewhere private?”

To Cain’s right, Zach hovered in the background. She shifted her attention back to Cain. “No. Whatever you have to say can be said right here.”

“Give me a break. I haven’t had a real opportunity to tell you, Lily. I would have filled you in on the ride here, but you had something else on your mind.”

Lily flinched. A stab of guilt struck her at Cain’s reminder of her actions. When would she learn to curb her impetuous nature? “I’m tired. I need to think.” Before he could argue, she fled up the stairs.

\* \* \* \*

Lily ran her fingers over the fragile glass figurine of a ballet dancer. Her mother had insisted she take dancing lessons. What a farce. They quickly discovered she had two left feet, so the lessons ended and they’d given her this glass ballerina as a joke. Nothing had changed in the room. Her Michael Jackson poster still hung on the wall to the right. Pictures of horses she’d loved over the years graced the far wall. She flopped on the bed. Even her favorite white chenille bedspread still covered the bed. She didn’t look up when the door squeaked open and closed with a soft click. Carmen’s unique jasmine scent wafted into the room, announcing her presence. Curling into a ball, she ignored the kind Spanish woman who’d been there for her after Lily’s mother had died in a riding accident when Lily had been eight. She traced the vivid red roses embroidered on the bedspread. The mattress sank with the woman’s weight. Warmth seeped through



Lily's shirt when Carmen rubbed gentle circles on her back. "I'm sorry, sweetie. I know how difficult this must be."

"I'm fine, Carmen."

"I don't for one minute believe you. You're hurting inside." Carmen cupped her chin, forcing her to look into worried brown eyes. "Ever since you were a little girl, your bottom lip trembled if you were fighting tears. Like it's doing now. My poor Lily. He did love you, despite the fact he sent you away."

Lily had lost count of how many times Carmen had said those same words to her over the years. Lily hadn't believed them back then, and she didn't today. "He hated me because I fell in love with Cain, who was nobody."

"Lily, you're so wrong. Look at me. I'm nobody, and your father loved me."

"Then why didn't he marry you?" Lily snapped. Immediate guilt rushed into her head. "God, Carmen, I'm sorry. That was hateful. You're a beautiful person, inside and out."

A sad smile spread across the wrinkled face. "He asked. I refused." Lily opened her mouth and Carmen cut her off. "It wouldn't have been right. Your father wasn't a snob. Quite the opposite. You want the truth? He worried you and Cain were too young. Over the years, Steve and Cain got to know each other, and in the end, Steve realized he'd been wrong to separate the two of you. The will is his attempt to make things right."

Lily rolled onto her stomach and buried her head in the pillow. "Well, it's more complicated now than back then." *Yeah, like now she wanted both brothers.* She doubted Carmen could handle that knowledge.

Carmen twisted her arthritic fingers poised in her lap. "I'm convinced Dave's going to hurt someone. He believes the ranch should have been left to him."

Lily rolled and sat on the edge of the bed to give Carmen her full attention. "What do you mean? Why would he think that?" Since



when did Carmen involve herself in the ins and outs of the ranch? “You worry too much. Ben oversees the finances, and Dave ran this place with an iron hand.” From all Carmen had said over the years, it seemed her father had treated Dave like a son. “What happened between Dave and my father?”

Carmen rose and scurried across the floor to check that no one lurked outside the door. She shut it and the lock clicked as she threw the deadbolt. Lily’s heart thumped harder at this secretive behavior. The woman had begun to worry her. “Come, sit down. You’re scaring me.”

The older woman squeezed her ample figure into a rocking chair. “There’s evil afoot, Lily. You need to believe me. The cattle head shrinks by the day. Dave denies it, even though Steve accused him on several occasions of stealing a few at a time.”

Lily’s unease grew. Dave and her father once had been so close. So much so that Lily had experienced pangs of jealousy. She’d come to believe her father had loved him more than he did his own daughter. Plus, Dave had always treated her like a pesky fly. He’d never once had a kind word to say. Something serious must have happened to cause a rift between them. “Have you spoken to Cain about this?”

Carmen shook her head. “Steve was adamant not to involve others.”

Yet, he’d made Cain part of the deal for Lily to inherit the ranch? She rolled off the bed and hugged her surrogate mother. “I’ll talk to him tomorrow and see if he knows anything.”

Carmen wasn’t appeased. Wiggling her butt out of the chair, she said, “If you say so. Get a good night’s sleep, Lily. Tomorrow will be a hard day.”

As soon as Carmen left, Lily relocked the door, feeling foolish for being fearful in her own house. She fingered the envelope Ben had given her, fighting the temptation to read her father’s letter. Had he apologized for the way he’d treated her since the night he’d found her



swimming in the buff with Zach and Cain? Or would the letter be full of more incrimination? While her mind churned with indecision, her fingers broke the envelope's seal. With great trepidation, she slipped out the single piece of paper.

Her father's bold handwriting triggered a twinge of regret. Why hadn't she swallowed her pride and come home to make peace with the father she'd always loved? She inhaled deeply and read.

*Dear Lily,*

*I can only imagine what's running through your overactive brain right now. I wonder if you are mourning my death or if I succeeded in killing any love you once had for me.*

*Admitting this to you is finally admitting it to myself. Your free spirit reminded me too much of your mother. That spirit killed her. I begged her not to go riding in the storm. Of course, she didn't listen and even insisted on mounting the wildest horse in the stable that dreadful night.*

*When I found you in the river with Zach and Cain, I saw your mother and me when we were young and carefree. Pain grabbed my gut and wouldn't let go. I sent you away to school, not so much to separate you from them, but more because it hurt me to have you around. You remained a constant reminder of what I'd lost.*

*Carmen's a good woman, and we found happiness together, but your mother was my one true love and I never forgot her. With you gone, I'd hoped...well, it's not important now. Over the years, guilt ate at me like a cancer. I got to know Cain, and he made me understand the way it was between you two. He'd been willing to wait until you grew up. If you still love him, Lily, this is my way of giving you two a second chance. If your love for him has died, then I'm sure you two can tolerate one another for a year; that is, if you want the ranch.*

*Forgive me for being a fool and know that I always loved you, my little girl.*



*Your loving father*

Her flowing tears splattered on the paper and smudged the ink. Lily crumpled the letter to her chest and let loose her sobs. She'd lost eight years with a father who she'd adored only to learn too late he'd never stopped loving her. How could she bear this sorrow?

Memories snowballed in her head. The last thing she wanted was to reminisce about the years after her mother's death, but the thoughts intruded anyway. Her father had withdrawn into a shell for a year, seldom coming out of his room, leaving her to Carmen's care. She'd sensed Carmen's fear that the only parent Lily had left would drink himself into hell and never survive. With Carmen's help, her father snapped out of his depression and had resumed his parenting role. Lily had thrived on his and Carmen's love until the day of her fifteenth birthday. She'd fallen in love with Cain during the celebration when he'd kissed her cheek and wished her happy birthday. If only things would go back to the simplicity of life before that day.

Lily had shamefully chased Cain around the ranch the following year. Even when he'd commanded her to quit messing with his head, she'd relentlessly pursued him with no qualms about using her body to tempt and tease him into submission. Even though he'd been several years older, she now realized the tremendous will power Cain had exerted by never caving to her until the night of her sixteenth birthday. The next morning, her father had shipped her to an all-girls school in the east.

Now, she'd come home only to discover she loved both brothers. Her love for Zach had been the love for a best friend. Like her, he'd grown up, and she wanted him, as well as Cain. She had no choice. Tomorrow she'd talk to both men. They deserved to know her true feelings.



## Chapter Three

The Xanax Lilly swallowed on waking refused to work its usual magic. Her mind continued to race faster than a NASCAR hopeful. The smooth road of her life had taken a turn onto a dirt path filled with potholes. In two days, she'd gone from a decisive executive in a well-known financial firm to a woman in love with two men. What had happened to the sophisticated professional who'd come home to pay her respects at her father's funeral? She'd arrived at the ranch and stepped back in time as an insecure teenager.

All the years she'd strived to make a name for herself seemed wasted and unimportant. She'd accomplished so much, but it was superfluous without love.

She twisted open the bottle, about to take another pill. No. Her days of anxiety needed to end, along with the burden of stress. The plastic container hit the bottom of the wastebasket with a dull thud. She'd focus on the ranch and her affection for Zach and Cain for a week before making a final decision on whether she should quit her job in Boston. If things didn't work out for her here, she'd return to her job and consider other options.

With her mind made up, she pulled on some jeans and a tank top, determined to have it out with her men. She slipped into her boots and grabbed a denim shirt off the end of the bed.

Lily bypassed the smell of baking bread in the kitchen and hurried to the barn. She spied Cain in one of the stalls and perched on the rail in a provocative pose, giving him an eyeful of cleavage. Other than the pronounced tic in his cheek, he appeared unfazed as he continued to groom a stallion. What was wrong with the man? Last night he'd



wanted to talk. This morning he'd barely grunted when she'd walked in. "Did you enjoy the show in the limo yesterday afternoon?" Why had she said that? She sounded like a cheap slut. That's not who she was and not the reason she'd sought him out.

He paused and ran his gaze over her body, raising her body heat to an uncomfortable level. "I would never have guessed you'd grow into an exhibitionist. Yeah, I enjoyed it. And special thanks for spicing up Zach's sex life. He talked of nothing else all night, except your warm, wet pussy."

Hurt roiled inside her chest. "You didn't used to be so cruel."

His brows rose. "It's the truth. Make up your mind, Lily. Which one of us do you want?"

"How about both of you?"

His dark brows arched, widening his gorgeous gray eyes. "Really?"

She formed her lips into a pout. "Something wrong with that?"

He turned away, but not before she caught a glimpse of his bulging crotch. "We've got more important business to discuss...like Steve's will."

Lily reined in her libido. Cain was right. "I talked to Carmen last night. Did you know Steve had accused Dave of stealing cattle?"

Cain's brow furrowed. "I'd heard some scuttlebutt. I try not to listen to gossip."

"Carmen says the herd is dwindling."

"Then that explains why Steve fired Dave and wrote him out of the will."

Lily jumped off the rail and leaned back, tapping her boot on the straw. "That's it? You don't have anything else to say?" Cain continued to brush the horse, and Lily wanted to grab the curry comb. "Well?"

He faced her and rested his back against the wall. "What exactly are you after? Did you come here for an early morning romp in the hay, or do you want to act like an adult and discuss the stipulations in



Steve's will?" He raised a hand when she would have spoken. "Think before you speak. Your wild spirit was cute when you were a teenager. Now it makes you an immature brat."

Lily launched herself at him a hand raised to strike his face. "Why you—"

Cain grabbed her arm and drew her close until their faces were inches apart. Gray eyes flared with anger and held her captive. "I mean it, Lily. It's time you grew up."

Tears welled behind her eyelids before dribbling out of the corners of her eyes. Damn it. The last thing she needed was to cry in front of one of men she'd loved since she'd turned fifteen.

Abruptly, he moved and asked, "Did you read your father's letter? Does it shed any light on why he decided on that stupid stipulation?"

Disappointment slowed her heart rate. She'd never tell him what her father had written. "No, but it doesn't matter. I have no intention of fulfilling it."

"Is that right? I'm surprised you'd surrender your own heritage without a fight. What about Carmen?"

Lily's hands clenched into fists. "Steve left her enough money to live well."

Cain's mouth tightened. "Are you so cold? Carmen thinks of you as her daughter. What would it be like for her if you left?"

The low blows struck hard. She agreed with every word he'd spoken. Her concerns for Carmen ran in the same vein, and she didn't need him to call her out. "You're the one who called the plan stupid. Are you willing to marry me? Do you think we can make the ranch show a profit?"

Cain stepped toward her and halted within touching distance. Lily quivered as moistness seeped into her panties. The two brothers might have been twins. Same gray eyes and brown hair, although Cain wore his longer than Zach did. Cain's torso was more muscled than Zach's, probably because he was older.



"I don't know," Cain said. "I'd have to check the books to see how much debt has been accumulated."

She stepped back. "I'll call Ben and make arrangements to pick them up. I handle financial records for a living, so I can calculate the extent the ranch is in trouble. Then you can tell me if we can fulfill the terms of the will."

She jerked her face away from his hand brushing her cheek. "Why so shy all of a sudden? You came in here with sex on your mind. You smell like a mare in heat. I have to admit you shocked me yesterday. Never figured you for a multiple partner type of woman."

"I'm not. Only with you and Zach." Lily licked her dry lips. "Where's Zach?"

The lust in Cain's eyes sent lust spiraling to her throbbing core. "I want you."

Her knees threatened to buckle.

"I need you," he growled.

The scent of saddle soap and leather on him turned her on.

"I love you, Lily. I always have."

The man she'd loved when he was a boy stood before her as a man. She fell into his open arms. "Cain..." She breathed his name as his mouth captured the word. Their lips met, and their mouths recognized each other. Tongues became reacquainted as they tangled, teased and dared.

The sudden wet warmth that gushed from her pussy startled her into pulling away. "What are you thinking, Cain?"

"About how much I need to kiss your luscious pink lips."

"My lips are red." She ran her tongue over the lipstick she'd put on earlier.

His gaze lowered to the warm place nestled between her thighs. "Not the ones I'm itching to taste. Come here." His arm snaked around her waist, and she stumbled against him, her hands splayed on his chest.

"Does this mean you want to get married?"



Cain's hands kneaded the cheeks of her ass. "Maybe, but right here, right now is about me having you. Nothing else."

Lily bit her lip so as not to give him the satisfaction of hearing the moan forming deep in her throat. He squeezed his hand between their bodies and slowly unzipped her jeans. "Works for me, love—" His mouth stopped her words, and Lily kissed him with eight years of pent-up longing.

The breath whooshed from her lungs as she landed on a bale of straw. "Take off your clothes and spread your legs," Cain growled. She scrambled to do his bidding. She grew wetter at the flare of his nostrils. This was going to be a ride she'd not soon forget, if the anticipation didn't kill her first. "How do you want it?" he asked, slipping out of his pants. "Hard and fast? Slow and easy?"

Lily lifted her arms. "I want it every which way."

Dropping to his knees on the straw, Cain lifted her hips. "I need to taste you, baby. Come on my tongue."

A fever burned hot in Lily's loins and quickly spread to her toes. Cain's tongue licked her clit, turning it hard. She squirmed against his lips and pulled at his hair. His tongue stabbed into her, only to retreat and lave her nether lips. The moment he sucked her nub, the orgasm began. "Oh...I'm coming. Don't stop. Faster! Suck me! Please don't stop." She drummed her heels on the bale of hay as spasms wracked her limbs. Cain continued to torture her pussy, bringing on a second orgasm, stronger than the first.

Like a leaf in the wind, Lily floated back to earth, throbbing with satisfaction. Her legs trembled with the force of her climax. Her nipples burned and tingled. She winced at the swift invasion of Cain's cock, pushing against the inside walls of her sensitized pussy. He stilled. "Am I hurting you?" He gasped the words. His fingers dug into her hips.

"Just a little sensitive from coming."

He slowly withdrew until only the head remained in her hole. "I can't wait, baby. I have to have you. Wrap your legs around me."



Anxious to have his cock deep inside, Lily's legs encircled his waist, using her ankles as an anchor. His back muscles rippled against her feet. She held her breath and waited for him to drive into her. Instead, he became gentle, caressing her face, trailing his fingers to her breasts. Slow and easy, he entered her. The initial sense of disappointment at his tenderness gave way to wonder as he pinched her nipples and picked up speed to piston in and out. His balls slapping against her ass ratcheted her need. She kicked her heels on his back. "Faster, Cain. Stop teasing me."

Deep laughter rumbled in his chest. "I'm killing myself, baby. I'm holding back to please you."

Lily jerked at the sensation of a finger pushing into her ass. "What..."

Cain's breathing grew ragged, and his digit thrust deeper into her anal channel. "You're a virgin there?"

"Yes. I don't think..." She hated the waver in her voice.

"Sshh, baby. When I fuck your ass, you'll love it. You're not ready yet, but you will be."

Burning out of control, Lily rocked her hips in rhythm with his thrusting cock. The finger moving in and out of her anus brought unexpected joy. "Now, Cain. I'm coming...now...please...oh." Frantic, she bucked her hips, groaning with satisfaction when a second digit pushed up her ass.

"You like it, baby?"

"Yes. I want your cock there."

A low moan came from Cain's throat. "So do I, baby. It'll happen soon enough."

The climax hit her without warning. Cain's mouth captured her scream. He pounded into her, triggering a second orgasm. She spiraled out of control before the full weight of his body collapsed on her. "You're mine."

The words, along with the fingers still digging into her ass, showed a possessive side of Cain that she never knew existed. As



much as she loved him, he had to understand her feelings for Zach. If he couldn't accept a threesome, perhaps they weren't meant to be. "Yours and Zach's." She murmured the words against his neck, shivering in apprehension at his response. He didn't stiffen. Wasn't that a good sign?

He rose on his elbows and stared into her eyes. Unable to stop herself, she caressed his cheek. "You're beautiful."

"You really want both of us?"

The pucker between his brows quickened her heart. "Yes, I do. Now and always. The three of us belong together. Even when we were kids, I loved you both. You were my dark hero and Zach was the light one, always ready to laugh and have fun."

Cain's smile reached his eyes. "If it were anyone but Zach, I'd strangle you, but he's my brother, and I love him. I'm willing to share."

"Well, well, the hired help fucking the boss's daughter. What would Daddy think?"

Cain rolled and grabbed his shirt to cover Lily. Engrossed in each other, neither one had heard Dave enter the barn. "What are you doing here?"

Cain's steely words frightened Lily into action. "I'm sure he's picking up his gear, Cain."

Beside her, Cain's muscles grew taut. "Get out."

"Oh, I'm going. Lily's right. I dropped by to pick up my equipment." Dave slipped into the tack room and exited, carrying an old beat up saddle and reins. "Have at it, you two." He left, leaving a trail of laughter behind.

Lily jumped off the hay and yanked on her jeans and denim shirt.

"Where are going?" Cain demanded. "You don't need to—"

Lily fled from the barn. "Dave! Wait!" She jogged toward the foreman, who'd started to climb into his red pickup. This might be her last opportunity to talk to her father's foreman. "I have no idea what happened between you and Stephen. Can you clue me in?"



“And why would I want to do that?” Dave pivoted, his brows drawn together. The facial expression was the same one she remembered seeing her father make when he became confused or puzzled. “You’re the one who got me fired.”

The accusation startled Lily. “That’s not true,” she protested. “I haven’t spoken with my father in years.”

The speculative look in Dave’s eyes gave her a chill. “If it wasn’t you, then it had to have been your boyfriend.” He nodded toward the barn.

Lily bristled at Dave’s resentment. “Cain and Steve never discussed you.”

Amusement flashed in his eyes. “All grown up, but still gullible enough to believe a sweet-talking cowboy. Shame on you, Lily.” Before she could defend Cain, Dave snapped his fingers. “Carmen. Why didn’t I think of her before? She’d poison anyone she saw as a threat to her relationship with Steve.”

“Really, Dave. A bit paranoid, aren’t you?” Lily chuckled. “If my father had second thoughts about you, he must have had legitimate reasons. And I’m betting you know exactly what those reasons were.”

He rested his arm on the hood. “Guess you’ll never know.”

An aura of insolence curled around Dave, bringing a quiver down Lily’s arms. Suddenly anxious to get back to the barn, she turned. Her skin crawled when Dave grasped her shoulder. “What are your plans? Gonna stay around and marry the hired hand or go back East to your stuffy boardrooms?”

Put like that, neither choice held much appeal. “None of your business.”

“That’s what you think.”

Lily pulled away from his hand. “Are you threatening me?”

“I’m sure Dave’s not that stupid.”

Lily spun at the deep voice behind her. Great. The last thing she needed was a fight between Cain and Dave. “I can handle this.” Lily’s



temper spiked at the belligerent stare Cain shot in Dave's direction. It ticked her off to be placed in the helpless female category.

"Make sure you take all your gear this trip." The tone in her lover's voice brooked no argument. "If I see you here again, I'll have you arrested for trespassing."

Dave's lips twisted into a sneer. "Think you've won, Cain? Don't start counting your money just yet. You may already be in Lily's pants, but you still have to show a profit to get it all."

At the bitter words and tension vibrating between the two men, Lily realized how little she knew about what had been happening in her home. All the tension and innuendos went over her head.

Cain must have thought better of pursuing the argument because he wrapped an arm around her shoulders. "Let's go, sweetheart. Dave's leaving."

As much as she wanted to punch him in the gut, she accepted that showing Dave a united front was more important than defending her dented ego. As Dave tore out the driveway in a cloud of dust, Zach drove in.

"Jerk," Cain muttered as Zach slammed the pickup's door and strode in their direction, his usual cheerful smile noticeably missing.

"What's going on?" Zach asked. "That idiot almost hit me head-on." Used to the lighthearted man she'd come to know, Zach's serious demeanor surprised her. As a rule, the brothers were like night and day—Zach happy and fun-loving and Cain the solemn soul always ready to fight dragons for Zach and Lily.

"Nothing."

Zach challenged his brother. "Didn't look like nothing to me."

Lily stepped between them, slipping her arm around Zach's waist. "Dave's unhappy at the sudden turn of events. He's lost a good job."

Zach's mouth tightened. She realized that inside the happy-go-lucky cowboy dwelt a man of steel. "Did he threaten either of you?"

"Not really. Cain nipped the conversation in the bud. "Got time for a powwow, Zach?"



Lily's stomach flip-flopped. What was Cain up to?

"You two decided to get hitched?" A flicker of pain flashed in Zach's eyes. Lily saw a possible marriage between her and Cain from Zach's point of view, and her heart went out to him.

Cain straightened. "And if we have?"

Zach's cheeky grin returned. "I'd say it's about damn time, although after the little tease in the limo yesterday, I'll lay in bed every night lusting after your wife."

\* \* \* \*

Zach's own words slapped him upside the head as hard as a two by four. The fact he'd lose Lily as soon as she married his brother ripped a hole in his heart. He'd been chasing a fool's dream since he'd turned twelve. Cain and Lily belonged together. Lily and Cain came from the same cloth. Strong and bold, they took life seriously. He'd always been ready to instill peace when the two of them went for each other's throats over a silly argument. Least of all, he owed Cain. It was Zach's turn to be a man and step out of way of the two people he loved most. He turned toward the house. He needed to put plans in place, and there was no time like the present.

"Hey, where are you going?" his brother called.

Zach curved his mouth into a grin. Damn, he was good at these fake happy faces. "To figure out what I'm doin' with the rest of my life. You'll be the first to know."

Cain grabbed Zach's arm, then Lily's, and led them onto the veranda. "Let's put our cards on the table and discuss *all* our futures."

Zach twisted away. "Damn it, Cain. Don't you know when to fold 'em? Your future is with Lily. Mine is somewhere else."

*Stand tall, man.* He started down the stairs, until Lily squeezed his ass and he morphed into a jellyfish. With her hand where it rested, he'd have let her lead him into a forest fire.

"Let's talk in my room," Lily said.



Zach bit his lip and tasted blood to hold back a groan. Memories of fucking Lily hardened his cock. “The kitchen table is a fine place to have a conversation.”

“No. Carmen might show up.” Lily curled her hand around his and led him toward the staircase. He followed like a lamb going to slaughter. Cain’s footsteps sounded close behind. Zach tried not to gawk at the inside of Lily’s bedroom. The wheels in his head spun out of control. How many years had he fantasized about the two of them tangled in the sheets here?

“Slow down.” Cain’s voice put an end to his musings.

“What?”

“You’re thinking so fast I can smell your brain frying.”

Zach shrugged and plunked his butt in the rocking chair, while Cain and Lily chose the bed.

“Cain and I want you to stay, Zach.”

Zach searched Cain’s face to see his brother’s reaction. “It’s true,” Cain said. “And we’re not talking about staying as the hired help. The three of us will be a team. In all ways.”

Zach’s heart skipped a few beats before picking up the tempo. Hope rose. He forced himself not to jump to conclusions. No way would he make an ass of himself. “Care to explain?”

“Lily and I are getting married to fulfill the terms of the will. We’re asking you to join us in that union. In our hearts, we want you to be part of our married life.”

Surprise stole Zach’s speech. He closed his gaping mouth. Initial joy gave way to disbelief.

“Cat got your tongue?” Lily rolled to her stomach, cradling her chin in her hands. Her blue eyes sparkled.

“Are you guys crazy?”

Cain laughed. “Nope. It’s what we want. How about it? Are you in?”



The whole idea was crazy. Or was it? Zach gripped the arms of the chair. Cain removed Lily's shirt and tossed it on the floor. Next went her jeans, then Cain's clothes.

As much as he wanted to join them, his paralyzed muscles refused to cooperate.

"Do I need to strip you?" Buck naked, Lily stood before him, her peaked breasts inches from his watering mouth. She cupped their fullness and rubbed the turgid nipples across his lips. "Please?"

Zach shot up like a rocket, ripping buttons in his haste to rid himself of the shirt. With Lily's help, his Levis disappeared.

"Get over here," Cain growled from the bed.

Zach looked deep in Lily's eyes. "Are you sure this is what you want?"

"Now and always."

He dove onto the bed. "I'm starving. How about let's make you the filling in a sandwich?"



## Chapter Four

Lily needed more. Her tongue thrusting in Zach's mouth while Cain's cock rested between the cheeks of her ass drove her insane. Each time she tried to touch Zach's hardness, the two would press her closer between them, rendering her helpless. Cain's arms curved around her, and he played with her tits, holding them in his hands while Zach tongued the nipples until she wanted to scream in frustration.

"Tell us what you want, baby."

"Let me suck you, Zach."

"What about me?" Cain panted.

"Fuck me."

Without warning, Lily ended up on her back. Cain straddled her chest, his cock waving like a banner in front of her mouth. Rough hands spread her legs, and she almost jumped off the bed, feeling Zach's tongue push into her pussy. "Oh, please—" Cain's rock-hard shaft nudged her slightly parted lips into opening.

Lily lost herself in the ecstasy of her two lovers giving her so much pleasure. Zach's hard tongue fucked her like a mini-cock, poking and teasing until she exploded into a climax and flooded his mouth with her release. Greedily, he lapped it up.

Totally into working Cain's cock, she muttered a protest when he pushed her away. "No, let me swallow your cum."

"Later. We have bigger and better things in store for you. Right, Zach?"

"You betcha."



Lily sprawled face first on the mattress and let the waves of sensual bliss wash over her.

“Come here, baby, and sit on my face.”

“Can’t. Too weak.”

“Sure you can. Help her, Cain.”

Work roughened hands curved around her waist and hoisted her until her knees straddled Zach’s face. “There you go.” Cain raised her arms. “Hold on to the headboard. That’s it,” he encouraged as her fingers curled around the brass. Her body hummed like a well-oiled machine, itching to be revved.

Once again his mouth worked its magic on her pussy. A hand dipped into her hole. “It’s only me, lover. I’m after some lubricant.”

Excitement welled at Cain’s announcement. Her anus welcomed his fingers, the muscles tightening in appreciation. “Fuck me there, Cain.”

“In a bit, baby. Let me prepare you.”

Zach’s mouth worked like a vacuum, the suction on her clit almost painful. With three fingers fucking her ass, Lily lost control. Without warning, her body spasmed over and over until she feared she’d black out. She whimpered under her lovers’ kisses and caresses as they crooned their delight in her.

Breeze from an open window caressed her damp skin and dragged her back to the here and now. Her men lay on either side. “Hi there,” she whispered, hearing a smile in her voice. “You guys will kill me before I turn thirty.”

“You ready again?”

Lily swallowed the words “no way,” remembering neither man had ejaculated. She flipped to her side to face Cain. Sure enough the head of his cock poked her belly, ramrod-stiff. Zach’s member pushed against her back. Her pussy released more juice. “Yeah, I’m more than ready.”

Zach rolled to his back, bringing her with him. Straddling him, she couldn’t tear her gaze away from his gray eyes, so like his



brother's. Hooded with lust, they bore into her soul. He lifted her over his cock. Lily, prepared to play, gasped as he forced her down hard, embedding his dick to the hilt. "Sorry if hurt you." He breathed the words. "I needed to be inside you."

"Please?"

"Please what, Lily?" asked Cain from behind. "Please stop or please more?"

"More. I need more."

"Stretch forward, and give me your ass. Don't let go of Zach's cock." She leaned forward. "That's it. Spread your knees and push your butt back."

Expecting fingers, Lily's surprise at Cain's cock entering her ass, made her immobile. The pain she'd expected never came. Inch by inch he pushed in. Her position put Cain in control, and he steered her like a pro, alternating between moving her up and down on Zach's cock and back and forth on his own.

Lily went wild. She surrendered all will and let the sensation of two cocks fucking her take her. Vaguely, she heard the men moan their pleasure. Her mind-blowing orgasm lasted until both men had come. She closed her eyes and sleep claimed her.



## Chapter Five

Lily woke sore but happy. The morning sun's rays danced on the walls. She had to be the luckiest woman alive. Her mind replayed being sandwiched between Zach and Cain and moisture flowed from her pussy at the memories. With both men's cocks deeply embedded in her two holes, her orgasm had nearly torn her apart. She'd continued to writhe between them long after they'd shot their loads. Zach's moans and whispers of "Oh man, oh man" and Cain's encouraging words, "That's it, baby, keep coming," had curled her toes.

Where were they now? She needed them. Horny again, Lily slipped her fingers in her pussy and rubbed her clit with her thumb. Shortly, an orgasm ripped through her belly and snaked its way to her toes. Stars exploded behind her eyelids.

"Is this how you spend your mornings? Playing with yourself?"

Not even the amusement in Cain's voice dampened her spirits. "I needed you, and you weren't here. Where's Zach?"

The sound of his zipper sent a sharp ache straight to her cunt. He rolled on a condom. "I'm here now, baby. Zach's in town, but he'll be back soon. How do you want it?"

Pulling her knees to her chest, she let her thighs fall open. "Lick me."

"Sounds great for an appetizer."

On his knees between her legs, he hoisted her hips to bring her throbbing nub to his lips. She nearly climaxed again. "Oh god, oh god."



“Hmmm...” Cain murmured. “Nothing better than fresh pussy juice to start a day.” His tongue licked her slit.

“Fuck me with your tongue.” Lily realized she almost screamed the words, but was powerless to stop her frantic need. “Yes, yes!” She clutched his hair and ground her pelvis into his face while his tongue flicked in and out. “Harder. Faster.” She climbed higher and higher in search of the pinnacle that would push her over the edge. “I’m com—” Cain pulled back and blew his breath on her overheated hole. Lily pounded the mattress. “Bastard. Don’t you dare leave me like this.”

Cain rolled to the floor. “I have no intention of leaving you,” he panted. He placed a chair in front of the full-length mirror on the far wall.

With no pretense of being gentle, he dragged her off the bed. Muscles bulged in his neck, and he grimaced. A brief flicker of fear made her shiver. “What are you doing?”

He stood her in front of the mirror and settled in the chair. A quick glance over her shoulder turned her to mush. Cain’s cock pointed at the ceiling, big and hard. She’d never seen anything so beautiful. The slit in the engorged head beckoned her. She turned and sank to her knees. “Let me suck you dry.”

Cain grabbed her shoulders. “Not this time.”

He lifted her to her feet and spun her around to face the mirror again. “Back up, Lily, and straddle my thighs.”

She obeyed, mesmerized by their reflection in the glass. Her pussy hovered over his cock like a hungry wolf.

Cain’s hands cupped her breasts, and his thumbs rubbed her hardened nipples. “You’ve got nice tits. Sit on my cock. Nice and slow.”

As she lowered herself onto him, she stared at the mirror, fascinated by seeing his cock disappear inside her. Using her thigh muscles, she rose and sank. The slurping sound from her wetness drove her to move faster.

“Slow and easy, baby. Make it last.”



She decreased her speed until his fingers pinched her nipples. The sweet pain shot straight to her core. “Oh. I’m going to come.”

“On my terms.” Lifting her off him, he kicked the chair aside and forced her to her knees. His knee spread her thighs moments before he plunged into her.

“Yes! Yes! Fuck me, Cain.”

“Watch in the mirror.”

Twisting her neck she gazed into the glass. Slippery and wet, his cock pulled out and stabbed her cunt over and over. Unable to hold back, she let go and reached the pinnacle right as he came.

Basking in the afterglow, Lily tensed when the door clicked open.

“Oh. Sorry. I didn’t—”

Cain got to his feet, bringing Lily up with him. He tossed her on the bed. “Don’t apologize, Zach. We’re a threesome, remember.”

“That we are.”

Zach’s response stirred something in Lily. She patted the mattress beside her. “Come sit by me, Zach. Take off your clothes.”

He whipped his T-shirt over his head and shed his jeans. “Everything okay?”

“It is now.” He settled beside her, dropping a kiss on her lips.

Lily clamped onto his mouth, thrusting her tongue deep inside, as she touched his silken rod. He quickly grew hard in her hand. Cain licked her nape and slipped a finger in the crack of her ass. Lily was ready to roll once again.

No one heard the door open, but the loud gasp had them all sitting up. Lily’s heart plummeted as she looked at Carmen standing in the room, her eyes as wide as saucers.

“Carmen...”

The older woman whipped around and fled the room.

\* \* \* \*



A week later, Cain and Lily tied the knot in a quiet, subdued affair. Carmen had outright refused to be a witness at the wedding. Much to Lily's chagrin, her surrogate mother became distant and aloof since walking into her bedroom and finding the three of them in bed. No amount of coaxing from Lily could make Carmen discuss the situation. Other than a few muttered instances of, "It isn't right," there was no conversation at all. Cain and Zach had no better luck than Lily in trying to get Carmen to discuss the situation.

With Zach and the Justice of the Peace's wife as witnesses, Lily and Cain became man and wife. Lily had ignored the curious glances from the JP when she'd held tight to Zach's hand during the short ceremony. She wanted Zach to know she considered him as much of a husband as she did Cain.

The week had passed quickly, and today was no different than any day since the wedding. Lily had spent hours going over the ranch's financial books, only to end up disheartened. Even selling the remaining cattle wouldn't pay the outstanding debt.

Zach and Cain had offered their savings to pay some of the debt, but Ben had been adamant it wouldn't satisfy the will. They needed to make the ranch show a profit by working with what they had.

Lily paced the library floor, trying to come up with a solution. All of the brainstorming meetings had failed to come up with a way out.

"Anyone home?"

"In here," Lily answered Cain.

She glanced up from her spreadsheet when Zach and Cain entered the room. "Ready for another plan session?"

Zach scanned the library, the room that had been Steve's office. "Can we do it at the kitchen table? This place stifles my creativity."

"Sure."

They traipsed into the kitchen, stopping short at seeing Carmen at the counter. Lily almost backed out of the room. No. This was her home, and Carmen had to accept that she loved both Zach and Cain. No more pussyfooting around.



“Hi, Carmen. We’re meeting about the ranch. Want to join us?”

A loud grunt was the only answer she got.

Lily shrugged and gestured for the men to sit.

“I have an idea.” Lily and Cain focused on Zach.

“Well?” Lily smiled at the pride she heard in Cain’s voice. He loved his brother. “Let’s hear it.”

“We get rid of the cattle and raise horses. I figure we can buy a couple hundred head of wild horses and they’ll be eating out of our hands by year’s end. Then we send them to auction.”

When no one spoke, Zach drew himself up. “I did the figures. Well-trained cow ponies sell for good money. We’ll easily make back what we spend, plus a good profit.”

“Where do we get the money to buy horses?” Cain asked.

“We round up what’s left of the cattle and sell them at market.”

Lily fiddled with the salt shaker. “What’s to stop rustlers from stealing horses like the cattle?”

“We keep them contained in paddocks and the barns. We don’t allow them to roam like cattle, not to mention they’d take off anyway if left to their own.”

We separate the mares from the stallions. The wildest stallions go into isolated confinement. Given the slightest chance, a stud will break out every mare and filly.”

Lily wrote in her notebook. “An idea worth considering, Zach. Thanks for your input.”

The sound of Carmen’s methodical chopping of green peppers ceased. Lily glanced in her direction. The woman’s tense shoulders put Lily on guard. “Carmen? What’s the matter?”

“Nothing.” The knife once again worked its magic on the butcher block.

“I don’t believe you,” Lily insisted. “Come here and help us brainstorm. We need all the ideas we can find.”

“Not my place.”



Lily's temper rose. "It's not your place to be cooking in my kitchen either, but it doesn't seem to stop you."

"Lily, that's enough." Not even Cain's stern reprimand calmed Lily.

"I'm serious, Carmen. You're either part of this family or you're not. So you don't approve of what's between Cain, Zach, and me. That's your right. Just remember, we're the same people you've known and loved most of our lives. The lifestyle we've chosen hasn't changed that."

Other than the slow drip of the water faucet, silence permeated the kitchen. Lily instantly regretted her outburst, but to apologize now was too much like admitting she'd done something wrong. Why didn't Zach and Cain do something, say something? She cast a desperate plea in their direction. Cain glared and Zach shook his head, refusing to bridge the gap Carmen had created.

With a deep, shuddering sigh, Carmen turned to face them. Her eyes filled with tears as they rested on each one of them. "You're right. I don't approve of three people in a marriage that was created for two, but I'm old and set in my ways. Your father died with the faith I'd look after you, Lily. And you and you," she said, pointing first at Cain and then Zach. "Can't say he'd approve of this three-way nonsense, but that's neither here nor there."

The coconut crème pie Carmen plunked on the oak surface was as close to an apology as anyone sitting around the table would ever get. Lily sensed Zach about to laugh and kicked his shin.

"Ouch." His word earned him an elbow to the ribs from Cain.

"Thanks, Carmen," Cain said softly. "It's our favorite."

The older woman's lips curved upwards. "I remember. At least some things never change." She cleared her throat, and Lily realized Carmen would have her say. "It was never God's intention for a woman to have two husbands or to love two men at the same time."

"Some of the Mormon factions have several wives? Is that okay?"



Carmen shifted in her chair. “No, of course not, but I doubt he sleeps with all the wives at the same time.”

Zach’s eyes glinted with humor. “Can you imagine the wild night the guy would have with ten women in his bed?”

Zach ducked, and Carmen’s dish towel skimmed his hair. “What about babies?” she demanded. “What are you going to tell them?”

“Hey, I’m not ready—”

Cain rose. “We’ll cross that bridge when we build it.” He paused, and Lily shivered at his serious tone. “Rest assured, Carmen, any child born to Lily will be loved by both his daddy and his uncle Zach.”

Tears tracked down the wrinkles in Carmen’s cheeks, but were they tears of joy or sorrow? Lily wasn’t quite sure and held her breath. “Thank you, Cain.” Her dark-eyed gaze encompassed all three. “My beautiful children are all grown up now. An old woman like me has no choice but to change with the times. It’s either that or lose those you love and end up alone. I don’t want that.”

Lily jumped up, knocking over her chair to get to the woman who’d brought her up. “I love you, Carmen.” She hugged Carmen’s ample shoulders. “Don’t ever scare me like that again. If you’d ever left us...”

“Sshh.” Carmen crooned. “Let’s put all the misunderstandings behind us and concentrate on putting this ranch on the map.”

\* \* \* \*

Lily sat on the river bank and dangled her feet in the cool water, her toes tickled by the minnows nibbling at them. The bullfrogs’ deep-throated croaks sounded harsh in the quiet night. Moonlight danced across the river’s swimming hole much like it had eight years ago. She’d come back here since that night. Had Zach and Cain? Everything was unchanged. There wasn’t even a tree missing. The rope Cain had tied to an overhanging branch still hung there as if



waiting for Tarzan to swing across the river. She didn't need to examine the trunk of the old oak. She closed her eyes and saw the initials carved there. LC loves CY. LC loves ZY. At sixteen, she had never questioned her love for both boys. Life grew more complex with age. She'd love to be a teenager again and frolic in the water with her friends without a care in the world.

How she wished there'd been a way to include Zach in the wedding vows she and Cain recently had exchanged. Zach's sadness weighed heavy on her heart. Somehow she and Cain had to convince Zach he belonged in their marriage.

Hairs rose on her arms at a rustling in the woods behind her. Was it a coyote or a two-legged predator? She scrambled to her feet. "Who's there?"

Two tall figures emerged from the bushes. "Don't go off without telling one of us, Lily. It's too dangerous." Cain's reprimand echoed across the water.

"Lighten up, Cain. We found her, and that's all that matters." Zach's easygoing manner of speaking brought a smile to her face. An idea popped into her mind. "Come sit beside me."

In the darkness both brothers looked identical as they kicked off their boots and rolled up their jeans. When they'd settled on the grass, Lily took each one by the hand. "This is where it all started. What better place to say our wedding vows?"

"You've already done—"

"Not the three of us, Zach. Who wants to go first?"

Lily refused to be daunted by the silence. "I, Lily, take Zach and Cain Young to be my husbands now and always through all that life throws at us. I need both of you to make my life complete." When she'd finished she held her breath.

Zach cleared his throat. "I, Zach, take Lily Curran, to be my wife and friend through good times and bad times, now and always."

The soft kiss Lily placed on Zach's lips stirred her heart. "Cain?"



"I, Cain, promise to love and protect Lily Curran, now and always. I can't imagine a life without you and Zach as my family." Cain's arms pulled her close.

"Yes, yes, yes!" Happiness spiraled through Lily. Zach embraced her as well, toppling them off the banking into the water.

"Hmmm..." Zach murmured in her ear. "Now that we've had the ceremony, isn't the wedding night in order?"

"I second that." Lily trembled at Cain's deep-throated growl.

They climbed onto the grass and tore at their clothes. "Last one in does dishes for a week!" Lily hollered as she made a perfect dive.

"No fair, Lily! You had a dress on."

Lily chuckled watching her men struggle out of wet jeans. Slipping under the water, she swam to the opposite side, surfacing in the shadows of an overhanging evergreen. Cain and Zach hit the water simultaneously. Lily held her breath at the silence. She might be hidden from view, but so were Cain and Zach. Where'd they disappear to? The scream rising in her throat never emerged as she was pulled under the water. She surfaced, sputtering. "Are you trying to drown me?"

"Only with love," Cain whispered before his lips clamped over a turgid nipple. Zach laved her other breast.

Lily basked in the pleasure of both nipples receiving attention, and the sensuous water whetted her libido. "I love you guys. Now and always."

A hand slid between her legs, parting her labia. One, then two, fingers slipped in her moist channel. "More, please."

"My pleasure, ma'am," Zach said. A second hand joined the first. Her pussy stretched to accommodate four digits. Her tingling grew intense. A slight breeze blew over her heavy breasts like a lover's breath. As her men's fingers performed magic, her tongue fucked one mouth, then the other.

Nerves jangling with lust, she managed to speak. "I'm going to come. Slow down."



Fingers withdrew from her slick hole and left her empty, but she was denied time to regroup. With his back to the river's edge, Cain grabbed a tree root, letting his body rise to the surface. He beckoned her to come between his spread legs. She reached for his cock, surprised to feel a condom. "Will these work in the water?"

"Guess Zach will find out. Take mine off and suck me, baby." The water came to Lily's thighs. With the greed of a hungry lioness, she tore off the offending rubber and took Cain's cock deep while her fingers played with his balls.

"Bend over, sweetie." Zack's words tickled her nape. His fingers probed her pussy before travelling to her ass. A gasp escaped her throat as he pushed deep into her anus.

"Feel good?"

Mouth full of cock, she nodded at Cain's question.

"Deeper, baby. Let me feel the back of your throat."

Zach raised her hips, and his cock probed her ass. Lily pulled away from Cain. "Yes, Zach. Fuck me there. I need you inside me."

One thrust brought Zach home. His balls slapping against her pussy stirred her blood. She was burning up. She continued to suck Cain and wiggled her ass back and forth on Zach's dick. "More, please."

A low groan came from Zach. "Damn you're tight. You're driving me crazy. Stop pumping so hard, Lily. I'll spill before it's time."

Cain's cock jerked in her mouth, and Lily knew he was ready to spurt. "Zack. Rub my clit. Make me come."

The fingers did her bidding none too gently. Holding her engorged clit between a thumb and forefinger, he tugged, over and over again. None of them had control. Their hunger spurred them on. Her climax spiraled upward. The release set her free to plummet to earth. Greedy, she sucked Cain's cock, careful not to lose a drop of cum. Zach's cock throbbed its release in her ass.

Their ragged breathing was the only sound in the night. The crickets and frogs had given up trying to compete.



“That was so good. I want to do it again.”

Cain roared with laughter. “You’re insatiable, Lily.”

“Only for you two. Let’s go home.”



## Chapter Six

A persistent knocking jolted Lily from an out-of-this-world dream. The hands on the clock wavered in front of her eyes. After several blinks, her eyes focused. Five in the morning. Who would be banging on the door so early? Zach and Cain had left for work an hour ago. She rolled out of bed, staggered across the room and yelled out the window. "I'll be there in a minute. Don't come in your pants."

Lily yanked on one of Zach's T-shirts and grinned at the saying on the front, *I rise to any occasion*. He sure had done just that last night. "I'm on my way," she yelled. "Stop that god-awful pounding." She stubbed her toe and slipped down two stairs. "Shit!" Somehow she managed to grab the banister and saved herself a trip down the entire flight.

"This had better be good," she mumbled as she limped across the hall. She reached for the doorknob.

"Hurry up, Lily, and let me in." Lily shivered, hearing Dave's whiney voice.

"What are you doing here? You've been warned to stay off the ranch."

"Tryin' to do a favor for your lover, or at least one of them." The scorn in his tone slapped her in the face like cold water. How did Dave know about Zach? He gave her the willies, and she couldn't comprehend how her father had tolerated his presence for so long.

"Open the damn door."

"No. What do you want?"

A huge sigh, followed by some cursing, came from the porch.

"Look, Dave. Spit it out and get lost."



“I ran into Cain out on the northwest corner. He wants you to ride out and have lunch with him. You bring the food.”

A niggling sense of wrong lapped at the back of her brain. She vaguely remembered Cain’s sweet whisper in her ear this morning, suggesting the three of them barbecue steaks this evening. Why would he suggest a picnic lunch when they were having a special supper? Why had he sent Dave instead of calling her?

“Cain left his cell on the table this morning.”

Did the man read her mind? A quick trip to the kitchen confirmed the cell lay in the middle of the flowered tablecloth. “Where’s Zach?”

“Went to town for fencing supplies.”

Her suspicion mushroomed. “Why were you out there? You’re barred from the ranch.”

“I was picking up personal gear I’d left in the line shack in the area.” After a short silence, he muttered, “I’ve got better things to do than stand here wasting time. I delivered the message. Do what you want.”

Lily’s muscles relaxed at the heavy footsteps thudding down the wooden stairs. A powerful engine revved to life, the tires spewing gravel.

She took the stairs two at a time and found her cell phone in her jeans pocket. Zach’s phone went to voice mail. Lily disconnected without leaving a message. Giving no thought to what she wore, she slipped into an old pair of jeans and left Zach’s knee-length T-shirt on, not bothering with a bra. She’d drive the SUV instead of riding. The feeling something was askew wouldn’t leave her.

She skidded to a stop in the kitchen and threw two cans of tuna, a jar of mayonnaise and a loaf of Carmen’s homemade wheat bread in a bag, along with several colas. Halfway across the floor, she came back for a few knives and a spoon, deciding to grab Cain’s cell, but it wasn’t there. It had been on the table. Perhaps Zach stopped by to pick it up. Surely, she would have heard him. Why hadn’t he called out or come upstairs? They could have traveled together. A tingling



attacked her lower belly, remembering last night's fantastic lovemaking. Perhaps he figured she was still asleep.

Where was Carmen? Dave showing up had thrown her off-stride. For eighteen years Carmen had arrived at the ranch each morning by six o'clock. Every day Lily had awakened to the smell of bacon wafting under her door. Something was amiss. A sense of foreboding shrouded Lily, and her stomach clenched. A call to Carmen went straight to voice mail. She'd swing by Carmen's cottage on her way to see Cain.

Lily braked, slid from the SUV, and stumbled on the loose gravel. Her legs wobbled with every step. What tragedy would she find inside? She sucked it up and straightened her stance, hardly giving notice to the beautiful flower gardens throughout the yard. How often had she arrived to find Carmen on her hands and knees digging in the dirt, transplanting some of her precious perennials. Lily's stomach clenched as she zeroed in on Carmen's blue Ford Focus parked in its usual spot in front of the garage doors. *Please God, don't take Carmen, too. She's like a mother to me.*

Forcing her feet to move, she neared the cottage door. The slightly ajar door gave her pause. Perhaps someone had broken into the cottage. Were the thieves still inside? Had they harmed Carmen? The mere thought propelled her to swing the door open.

Lily blinked in the dim light and waited for her eyes to adjust. A scent of stale nicotine and sweat assaulted her nose when she expected the sweet jasmine lotion Carmen always used on her skin. She held her breath to avoid the foul odor. Why did it seem familiar? Once her eyes focused, she scanned the usually neat living room, horrified at the turned-over coffee table, the broken lamp on the floor and pictures off-kilter on the wall.

"Carmen?" Her voice barely squeaked in the quiet bungalow. "Where are you?" Lily spun around at a noise from behind the couch. She saw nothing to use as a weapon. She went for her cell and then realized she'd left it in the car. Thump. She could no longer put off



the inevitable. On tiptoe she craned her neck and gasped. “Carmen!” Carmen’s black skirt and pumps stuck out one end of the bright floral couch. Trussed up like a Thanksgiving turkey ready for the oven, Carmen’s incoherent grunts and moans came from under the gray duct tape across her mouth. “God, Carmen, who did this to you?” Lily tensed when Carmen’s eyes widened, seemingly fixed on something behind Lily. She turned to see what had terrified her. The whiff of foul body odor hit her at the same time as the fist.

\* \* \* \*

“Think we can round up enough cattle to settle all the debts? Dave must have rustled a good third of the herd.”

With a shrug, Cain reined in his horse. They’d been eating dust for over four hours. It was past time for a break. Zach was right. They might as well be sitting on a rubber raft in the middle of a dried up river bed with no rain in sight. “Probably not. It’ll kill Lily to lose the ranch, but if the three of us pool our savings, we can find another place.”

The grimace on Zach’s face matched the one he refused to let show. “Yeah, and carry an enormous mortgage for the rest of our lives.” Zach dismounted, pulled a thermos from the saddlebag, and poured a cup of coffee into the cover. “Want some?”

“I’ll pass. Thanks.” Cain checked to make sure the dogs had the cattle under control before sliding to the ground to join Zach. The ranch was only one problem. As much as he hated to face reality, he and Zach needed to discuss Lily. He’d have to be blind to miss the weight of sadness Zach carried around his neck. “You up for a talk?”

Wariness erased the tiredness in Zach’s eyes. “What about?”

“Lily. You. Me.”

Zach shifted his gaze toward the horizon. “Just say the word, and I’ll pack my gear. I figured it was only a matter of time.”



“Damn it.” The three of them would never have a solid loving relationship if Zach wouldn’t accept that he belonged. “When do you plan on shedding your insecurity? You’re too old to sing the same song.”

The younger man’s shoulders tensed. “Meaning?”

“Look, Zach. We’re brothers. I love you as a brother and as a friend. Why can’t you accept that?”

“No sane man wants to share his woman.”

Cain’s mouth quirked. “And your point? Look. Lily’s her own person. Hell, we wouldn’t even be married if it weren’t for that damn will.” Cain would like to believe that was a lie, but he feared he spoke the truth.

Zach’s chin jutted forward. “How would you feel if things were reversed? What if I was the one married to Lily and you were the other part of the triangle?”

Zach’s cell phone jangled and bought Cain some time to consider his answer.

“Hey, someone’s calling me from your phone.”

“How’s that possible?” Cain fished around his pockets. He must have left his cell at Lily’s place. “It’s probably Lily.”

“Hello?”

Cain’s stomach lurched when the color leached from Zach’s face. “Oh God, he’s got Lily.”

“Who?” Cain grabbed the blackberry. “Who is this?”

“Shut up and listen. I’ve got your wife.”

Dave’s tone oozed hatred and goose bumps raced up Cain’s arms. “What are you up to, Dave? If you even think about touching her--”

“You’re in no position to threaten me. You always were a cocky bastard. I’m holding all the cards.”

“What do you want?” Cain loosened his grip on the cell before he crushed it.

“That’s more like it. You wouldn’t want me to spill the beans to the lady.”



Dave's threat brought sweat to Cain's forehead. Why hadn't he confided in Lily? It hadn't been his place to play God and hide the truth from her.

"No need to do that."

Cain listened to Dave's instructions and disconnected the call.

"Where is she?" Zach mounted and calmed his nervous stallion. "Let's go."

Cain tightened the saddle cinch, more out of habit than because it was loose. "Relax. The horse senses your fear. I'm going alone." The firm jut of Zach's jaw told another story. "I mean it, Zach. There's no sense in both of us putting our lives in danger. Besides, it's me he wants."

"Why do you say that? Because you're the one married to Lily?"

Cain swung into the saddle. "This has nothing to do with Lily. Dave's using her as bait. He hates me because he thinks the old man cared more for me than him." Now was not the time to tell Zach the entire truth.

"Please, Cain. Let me go with you."

The desperate pleading in his brother's eyes almost changed Cain's mind. "Ride back to the ranch. Make sure Carmen's okay. Call the police and drive out to the northwest line cabin. I'll do my best to stay hidden until you and the cops get there. He sounds as if he's as ready to blow as a gasoline fire."

His mouth grim, Zach nodded. "You know Dave. Always quick to temper, but he'll come to his senses. He's probably already brought Lily home." Taking full advantage of his mount's edginess, Zach rode off amongst the dust.

Cain doubted Zach was right. There'd been a touch of insanity in the man he'd spoken with less than ten minutes ago. He should have seen this coming. Infatuation with Lily had dulled his senses. Dave's anger must have been simmering for weeks now. The reading of the will had snapped his tether on reality.



Cain figured he'd make it to the cabin in less than an hour. Zach should reach the ranch fifteen minutes later. His mind raced faster than his horse. Why hadn't they taken a ranch vehicle, instead of riding? Had Dave been waiting for such a day? His conscience began to prick him bad. He should have confided in Lily...told her the truth about Dave. And why had he kept the information from Zach? *Concentrate*. It's not the time for self-recriminations. Pushing negativity aside, Cain rode west. He had about four hours until sunset.

\* \* \* \*

Zach forced the tension from his body, and his mount relaxed. Flipping open his cell, he dialed 911. "This is Zach Young. Have the sheriff meet me at the Double L ranch. There's a situation at one of our line cabins, a possible kidnapping." He pocketed the phone and wondered what Cain hadn't told him. From the time they'd been kids, Zach had known when his brother lied by the way he glanced to right during a conversation. He had no doubt about Cain's sincerity regarding Lily. Their last night by the river had convinced him the three of them had a future. Sure, he had a few lingering concerns, but with time, they'd be a distant memory.

He, Lily, and Cain shared more than a physical attraction. They'd loved each other for years, and most importantly, they were hard and fast friends, now and always. Their shared vow brought a smile to his face. Now, that bastard Dave had Lily. If he so much as dared to touch a hair on her head, Zach would tear his limbs off. The niggling fear returned. What was Cain hiding that he hadn't wanted Zach to go with him? A simple phone call asking the sheriff to send a deputy to check on Carmen would have solved that problem.

Giving in to the urge to check his voice mails and missed calls, dread left him chilly when he discovered Lily had tried to call him from Cain's cell a few hours ago. Why hadn't she left a message? He spurred his horse into a gallop, anxious now to get home.



The gelding ate up the miles along with the dust, and a short while later, Zach reined him in outside Carmen's cottage. Seeing Lily's SUV parked in the driveway with the driver's door wide open put his nerves on edge. This must be where her nightmare had begun.

Zach burst through the open door. Carmen lay still as death on the floor. He knelt beside her and with trembling fingers felt for a pulse, letting out a slow breath when he found one. Using a jackknife, he cut through the duct tape on her hands, feet, and mouth. "Carmen? It's Zach. Can you hear me?" Her eyelids moved, but she remained unconscious. Straining with the effort, he lifted her onto the couch and cradled a pillow under her head.

Her whispered words stopped him in his tracks on his way to the kitchen for a glass of water. "He's going to kill Lily."

With a quick pivot, Zach was by her side. The swelling on the left side of her face looked painful. "No he won't, Carmen. Rest now. Help is on the way. I'll get you an icepack."

She caught hold of his shirtsleeve. "You don't understand. This is bad, Zach. Dave will tell Lily the truth, and then she'll hate your brother."

Zach's hackles stood at attention. "What truth?" So, he'd been right about Cain hiding something. "Tell me, Carmen. Perhaps I can help."

"It's Dave. He's Lily's half brother."

"What? Cain would never have kept something that important from Lily."

Carmen's attempt to sit up failed, and she flopped back on the couch. "Steve swore both Cain and me to secrecy. He wanted to keep the truth from Lily."

"But he's dead now—"

"A promise is a promise."

The housekeeper's agitation caused her to gasp for air. "It's okay, Carmen. Breathe deep. I can hear the ambulance. We'll find Lily, and she'll be okay."



Two medics rushed into the living room with a gurney. “Get the oxygen,” one said to his partner.

Zach moved out of the way and ran outside as another car pulled in. He opened the passenger door and jumped in.

“What the hell’s going on, Zach?” Brad Connors, the county sheriff, asked. “Dave has Lily? Don’t make any sense.”

Zach buckled up with barely a glance at his friend. He’d gone to school with Brad and still enjoyed a few beers with him at the local bar every now and then. “Move it. We might not have much time.”

“Shit like this don’t happen in Rock Bluff, Montana.”

“Well, pretend we’re in Hollywood, Brad. Let’s roll before we’re too late.”



## Chapter Seven

Lily's bruised body resisted her attempts to rise. She wondered if Dave had broken her leg. Her fear didn't stem from the rattler sidling across the rough wooden floor, seeking sanctuary, but rather from the crazy man straddling a rickety chair and watching her as if she were a lab specimen. She cringed at his gloating expression as he watched her futile efforts to stand. She gave up and lay in a crumbled heap, determined to ignore the hot, searing pain in her left elbow and knee. Thanks to the rag he'd shoved in her mouth, she was unable to cry out or curse. Her one attempt to remove it had earned her a punch to the ribs.

He moved so quickly, she didn't see the kick coming. Tears spurted from the corners of her eyes as his boot connected with her ribs. "Shut up, bitch," he growled. She suffered another kick to the face.

She hadn't made a sound, had she? The room swam in circles in front of her eyes. Where'd the rattler gone? From the corner of her eye, she caught sight of the snake curled in the corner on the far side of the room. One more blow or kick and she'd lose consciousness again. She had to stay awake and look for an opportunity to escape. The hatred burning in his eyes convinced her Dave planned to kill her. But why did he want her dead? Was it punishment for her father writing him out of the will?

She gasped as a flood of ice-cold water slapped her in the face and cleared her fuzzy mind. Rough hands jerked her upward. She landed with a thump on a hard mattress smelling of urine. "Wake up. I want you alert when I slice your throat."



He tore the cloth from her mouth. Lily worked her sore jaw and wondered if it was fractured. She tried to swallow, but her tongue, now the size of Texas, kept getting in the way.

“Here.” Dave thrust an old tin cup to her lips. “Drink. It’s water.”

Knowing full well she might be ingesting poison, she drank with the enthusiasm of a desert nomad. She opened her mouth to protest when he withdrew the cup, but caught herself in time. “What did I do to make you hate me?” she rasped. “I had nothing to do with my father’s decision to cut you out of—”

“Don’t you dare mention our father to me.”

The bump on her head must have addled her senses. Did he just say “our father”? Impossible. She studied his facial features, looking for any similarity. They both had blonde hair, as did her father. Plenty of people had blonde hair. “You’re my brother?”

Dave’s eyes widened before he burst into laughter. “Well, I’ll be damned. You didn’t know. I figured Cain would tell you first thing.”

Cain knew? The knowledge that the man who’d kidnapped and beat her was her brother paled in comparison to discovering her husband had hidden the truth from her since the day she’d returned home. This wasn’t happening. Dave was lying. He wasn’t her brother.

“Wonder why Cain kept the information to himself?” Dave appeared to be talking to himself. That convinced her he told the truth.

“Does Zach know?” Her heart pounded while waiting his answer.

Dave shrugged. “Got no idea.”

“I think you’re lying.”

“Bitch!” Lily rolled on the rancid mattress to avoid Dave’s fist.

“Why did you tell Cain?”

The question calmed Dave’s temper. “I didn’t. He overheard a conversation ’tween me and the old man one night. I think that’s why Steve asked Cain to witness the change of his will. You know, since he was already privy to the information.”



Keep him talking until help arrives. That one thought raced through Lily's head. "Do we share the same mother?"

The man's eyelids drooped as if in sadness before he drew himself up and sucked in his belly as if it would make him stronger. "Fraid not. You got the beautiful classy lady. The woman who gave birth to me was a whore."

There was no way Lily could picture the woman she remembered as her mother marrying a man who'd slept with a whore. "You mean like she had sex for a living?"

Dave's eyes narrowed into slits. Lily prepared herself for an attack, but quickly the anger passed and he smiled. "I guess you could say that. She'd get her hooks into a man and then bleed him until he had nothing left to give. Your daddy was smart, though. He managed to pay her off and go some place where she'd never find him."

"Did...did he know about you?" Even knowing it was a volatile question, she had to ask.

"Says he didn't. I believe him. When I showed up, he welcomed me into the fold like I belonged there."

"What happened between you?"

Dave's weasel eyes darted around the room. He raised his arm and she waited for a blow that never came.

"I'm sure Carmen filled you in. She's been on to me for quite a while."

"So it's true. You were rustling cattle from your own father?"

"I asked for a raise more than once. Cheap bastard wouldn't give me one. He owed me for all those years he wasn't in my life."

"So you sold his cattle off right under his nose?"

"I had no choice." Dave walked back and forth on the wooden floor like a caged tiger.

The last thing Lily wanted to do was to agitate him, but she'd done just that with one simple question. "I'm sure you didn't," she crooned.



“I had gambling debts. People were threatening my life.” He stopped pacing and stared out the one small dirty window. “I’ll get you some more water.” He moved to the hand pump.

Lily saw her chance to escape and grabbed it, along with the sledgehammer lying by the small woodstove. The workers must have left it here after pounding fence stakes. She bolted out the door, limped down the three porch steps around to the side, keeping her eyes on the corner of the cabin, and tried not to focus on the extra ten pounds she held over her head, making her biceps burn. Where was he? He’d made sure she was in no condition to run.

“Give it up, Lily. Put the weapon down and come back inside. Make it easier on yourself.” She shuddered at his serene voice. One minute the man was a raving lunatic, the next he came across like a mediator. His mood changes were a sure sign of insanity. “Your husband will be here soon. At least, the legal one. I’m not sure about Zach.” She cringed when he giggled. “Too bad the old man’s dead. I’d have given anything to see his reaction to your threesome.”

“You need professional help, Dave,” she yelled. “You’re not coherent. None of this makes sense.” She’d been expecting him to creep around the porch, not vault over the rail. He landed five feet away. Her muscles tensed. “Stay back or I swear I’ll use this.”

He smiled and stalked towards her. She swung the sledgehammer as hard as if she were playing a carnival game, determined to make the bell ring. He ducked, and before she could bring it up again, he knocked it out of her hands. A quick punch to her face brought her to the ground. Dirt and grit ground into her bruised cheek. She feigned consciousness until a familiar voice came from around the front of the line shack.

“Lily? Where are you?”

Cain! She opened her right eye. The left one refused to budge. There he was, standing at the corner of the porch. His image wavered and blurred in her vision. A spark of hope shot adrenaline into her,



making her forget the man who'd come to her rescue had lied. "Be careful. He's got a gun."

Dave had pulled his weapon and faced off with Cain. "It took you long enough, cowboy. Your wife wouldn't be quite so beat up if you'd hurried. I wouldn't plan on any bedroom reunions for a while. The little lady is quite pissed at you. Seems she didn't know she had a brother." He laughed at his own joke.

\* \* \* \*

Blood rushed to Cain's head. He barely recognized his beautiful Lily sprawled on the ground. The left side of her face was so swollen she couldn't open her eye. Blood had crusted on her upper lip from an obvious nosebleed. She attempted to stand but collapsed. "Out of my way, asshole, she's hurt."

"Her well-being doesn't matter." Dave scoffed. "For that matter, neither does yours, since I'm going to kill you both."

Cain closed his mind to Lily's sob and concentrated on the enemy. "To what end? Just to feel better?" He did his best to keep his eyes on his would-be attacker rather than at the .44 Magnum handgun pointed at his heart. "She's your sister, man. Lily had nothing to do with your father's choices in life."

"He showered her with all his love. I deserved some of it."

"Yes, I agree, but don't blame Lily."

"If she hadn't been born, he would have accepted me as his son and loved me. No one ever loved me."

Dave's voice broke, and his arm faltered. Cain made a move. Hooking a foot behind the man's calf, he knocked the .44 from his hand. It skittered across the dirt behind them. Dave twisted away and jumped up, aiming a well-placed kick to Cain's kidney. Cain's vision faded, and he fought the urge to vomit. Where had this man learned to fight?



“Hands in the air, Dave. Touch him again and it’ll be the last thing you do.”

Cain’s heart leapt to his throat. Lily had risen to one knee and held the .44 revolver pointed at Dave. The heavy weapon wobbled in her hands. “Lily...”

Dave laughed. “You aren’t going to shoot me. You can’t even hold the gun steady. You’re shaking like a leaf.” He advanced toward her.

Her father’s words came to her. *Aim at your target. Cock the hammer and squeeze the trigger.* “I have five tries,” she said and cocked the hammer. “One of them will hit you.”

Cain struggled to rise, only to fall back to the ground. “Lily, don’t—”

“Give me the gun, Sis.” Dave kept moving, his mouth curved in a scary grin.

“One more step and you’re a dead man.” The gun wavered, but not Lily’s voice.

The loud report of the .44 Magnum deafened Cain’s ears. The macabre grin on Dave’s face vanished, and his eyes widened as he looked down at the blood gushing from the hole in his chest. His gaze rose to Lily, who cocked the hammer again. “Didn’t think you had it in you,” he whispered before collapsing.

Cain crawled to Dave and searched for a pulse he couldn’t find.

“Is he dead?”

The lack of emotion in Lily’s voice scared him. “Yes.” Cain hitched his way to Lily, wincing at the excruciating pain in his lower back, and wondered what kind of damage his kidneys had sustained.

She pulled away from his arms. “Don’t touch me. Now or ever.”

His stomach knotted at her rejection. Would she ever forgive him for not telling her the truth? Cain was a man of his word, and he’d promised her father he’d stay silent. “You’re in shock, Lily. You’re shivering, for God’s sake. Let me hold you. Now and always, remember?”



She pinned him with eyes as dead as Dave's. They reflected no anger or pain. "How far did your lies go? Perhaps our marriage is one big fat lie as well."

He opened his mouth to defend himself, but changed his mind. Lily was close to hysteria and in no condition to listen to reason. Instead, he fished through Dave's pockets, looking for his cell phone. Just as his fingers touched it, sirens screamed in the distance. A dust cloud roared up the road. If only Zach had been fifteen minutes earlier. "Zach brought the troops."

"Is he in on it, too?"

For a swift moment, Cain was tempted to say yes, but that would be another lie, and he had no right to implicate his brother. "No. Zach knew nothing about Dave."

Her murmured "thank god" pushed his spirits lower.

"Jesus! What happened here?" The sheriff came to a screaming halt as he rounded the cabin. "Is he dead? The ambulance is about five minutes behind us."

"He doesn't need an ambulance. Lily and I do."

Cain almost smiled at Brad's astounded expression. "I'll call for a second one."

Zach rushed to Lily's side. Cain refused to look at the two of them hugging. Zach gently touched her bruises.

The sheriff cleared his throat. "Um, Cain, Zach filled me in about the kidnapping. I assume you shot Dave in self-defense?"

Cain jumped at the chance to keep Lily out of the picture. It was the least he could do after keeping such a secret from her. "That's exactly what—"

"I killed my brother."

"Brother?" The sheriff's focus shifted back and forth from Lily to Dave.

Cain shot the sheriff a warning glance. He nodded his understanding. "I'll take your statements after you two get some



medical treatment. I hear one of the ambulances coming now. Who's more in need of medical attention?"

"Lily. I'm fine."

"You look like hell. Can't they go in the same ambulance?" Zach inquired.

"No," Cain said. "Lily goes first."

Cain didn't miss the look that passed between the sheriff and Zach, but neither one made an argument.



## Chapter Eight

“Your kidney took a severe blow, but tests show no permanent damage. You’re one lucky cowboy.”

Cain’s attempt to smile at the doctor failed. He hurt too damn much. “I’m wondering if the ambulance tied me to the bumper and dragged me to the hospital.”

The physician poked and prodded. “A bruised kidney can make the patient feel like he has the flu.” He picked up his clipboard and jotted down a few words. “I’d like to keep you two more days to be safe. All right with you?” he asked, with his brows raised.

“I’d really like to go ho—”

“That’s great. I’ll see you tomorrow morning on my rounds.” Faster than a weasel, the doctor scurried out the door.

“Hey! Come back! I don’t want to stay here another night, never mind two.” Cain pounded the mattress. Dr. Keller was halfway down the hall. “Damn it!” He never got a chance to ask about Lily. Remembering her battered condition, Cain wanted to kill Dave all over again. He also remembered Lily wanted nothing more to do with him. He couldn’t persuade her to give him another chance if he was stuck in a hospital bed. Screw this. He inched his way to the side of the mattress and swung his feet to the floor. The intense pain rendered him helpless. He had no strength to stop his body from sliding to the floor.

“Whoa, Bro. What the hell you think you’re doing?”

Zach’s face swam in and out of his sight, while darkness closed in on his vision. “Help me back onto the bed.”



"I swear your croak outdoes ole daddy bullfrog's." His brother hauled him onto the mattress as if he were a featherweight. "What were you up to?"

Cain gritted his teeth until the pain somewhat subsided. "Lily?"

"Don't you worry about Lily. She's doing fine healing at home. Better than you by the looks. Can't say the same for her emotional condition." With a hesitant cough, Zach turned away. "She—"

"I know," Cain interrupted, "she hates my guts."

"I wouldn't go so far as to say that, but she's mighty pissed." The squeeze of encouragement Zach gave his shoulder put Cain in an even lower mood.

"I want out of here."

"The doctor says day after tomorrow."

Cain grabbed Zach by the shirt, dragging his face close. "Tomorrow, Zach. I want to go home tomorrow. Make it happen or there'll be hell to pay."

After prying off Cain's fingers, Zach backed away. "I'd better go. Carmen said she'd drop by. I don't want to wear you out."

"Did Lily sleep good last night?"

Zach dusted off his hat. "Wouldn't know. I stayed in the bunkhouse."

"Why? Lily needs you. Spend tonight with her. Give her the comfort and loving she deserves."

"No way. I won't do it."

Cain vacillated between wanting to hug Zach and shake him until his teeth rattled. "She needs you, Zach."

The tic in Zach's cheek grew more pronounced. It always did when he got stuck in his stubborn mode. "She needs both of us. We made a pact...wedding vows for three. Now and always. Remember?" Zach grabbed Cain's hand. "It wouldn't be right." He rose and paced the floor. "What would you do if our positions were reversed? If it was me Lily didn't want to have anything to do with?"

Cain kept his silence, knowing he'd feel the same way Zach did.



"I see you understand."

If Cain had the strength, he'd knock the knowing smirk off his brother's face. "Zack. Take care of her."

"Well, I gotta go. See you in the morning. I'll tell the nurses to have you ready to ship by nine a.m."

Cain stared at the ceiling and gulped deep breaths, accepting that he had no control over any situation at the moment. Getting riled would raise his blood pressure and ensure he spent two more nights here. His brother obviously stayed away from Lily out of guilt. Zach had yet to accept his right to love Lily. The three of them were equal partners. Except that at the moment, Cain wasn't an equal in anything. For all he knew, Lily may have called Hennessey and started divorce proceedings.

The sooner he got back to the ranch, the sooner he'd be able to put a stop to all this nonsense.

\* \* \* \*

How many hours had she stared at the numerous cracks meandering across the ceiling like a bad case of varicose veins? She'd played games with them as a child by following one after another until they dead-ended. Never once did she make it from one side of the ceiling to the other. Much like the dead end of her life.

The sun had been setting two days ago when Zach had carried her upstairs, and now it was close to setting again. She'd thought she could trust Cain with her life only to discover he'd lied to her. To her way of thinking, a lie was a lie whether outright or through omission. Tears ran unchecked down the sides of her face and pooled in the crevice between her neck and shoulders. His betrayal hurt, and she doubted she'd heal any time soon.

If his treachery hadn't been bad enough, she was stuck with him for a year. Either that or let the Conservation Department have the



ranch. She didn't care about the ranch for herself, but Zach deserved better. He hadn't asked for any of this.

A slight rap on the door tightened her gut. "Not now, Carmen. I'm tired."

"It's not Carmen."

Lily slid further under the covers. "Go away, Cain. We have nothing to say—"

The man of her thoughts boldly strode into the room. "There's plenty to be said. I made a huge mistake. Please forgive me." He lowered his body to sit on the edge of the bed. She scuttled to the other side. "Everything happened too damn fast. We never had a chance to get reacquainted."

"You knew Dave was my half brother and didn't tell me." Saying the words increased the size of the lump sitting in her chest.

Cain rose to face the window as if he couldn't stand the sight of her. "Your father was adamant that you didn't find out." After a short pause and a sigh, he continued. "He convinced me there was no need for you to learn your half brother was a thief and a rustler."

"So you hurt the woman you profess to love—the woman you married—to keep a promise to a dead man?"

"That dead man was your father, Lily. Not some stranger off the street. I gave him my word."

"It doesn't make sense. I'm not sure I can trust you again."

The door creaked further open, and Carmen entered the room. "Then you can't trust me either."

Lily's heart fluttered. "Carmen? What are you talking about?"

"The day Dave arrived on the doorstep, your father told me the whole story."

"So you knew, too?" Lily hadn't thought she could feel worse. She'd been wrong. "I want to be alone. Please leave. Both of you."

At the silent click of the shutting door, a loneliness as vast as a desert overtook Lily. Was she so like her father that she couldn't forgive a loved one's indiscretion?



Two doors down, Cain slept alone, like she did. She imagined Zach staring at the ceiling in the bunkhouse. Tears slipped out of the corners of her eyes and trickled down the side of her face. Suddenly, she sobbed for herself and for her brother, accepting she'd have to live the rest of her life with the knowledge she'd killed him. Tears flowed for her father and all the years they'd missed together because of his inability to put pride aside. The majority of her salty drops fell for her husbands. Forgiving was part of loving. Why hadn't she remembered that? Had she done permanent damage to their marriage? Cain's loyalty to her father was part of the man he'd become. Would she have done different if her father had asked her to keep a secret?

Like a fog clearing from the valley, she realized she needed to forgive and forget. She'd cast her pride to the winds and beg for forgiveness on her knees, if that's what it took to get her husbands back.

Lily slid from the king-sized bed and limped to the door. She opened it, stepping back in surprise. Zach and Cain stood in the hall, Cain's hand raised to knock. Cain's frown cancelled out Zach's grin. The two brothers looked enough alike to be twins. Cain's seriousness and Zach's light-hearted nature proved a perfect balance. God, how she loved them.

"Zach and I decided the boil festering between the three of us needs to be lanced," Cain said after clearing his throat. "Even if the outcome isn't what we want."

Lily's body responded to the yearning in his eyes, setting her pulse rampant. "You're right. Please come in," she said and stepped back. Fool! Why didn't she step up to the plate and admit she'd been on her way to find them? She slipped back into the still-warm bed and tugged the covers to her chin, patting the mattress. "Come sit and we'll talk."

A look passed between the two men, and her heart sank. "That might not be a good idea," Zach said, surprising Lily with his



restraint. He'd stolen a line that should have been Cain's. Zach had changed in the past few days.

"Zach's right, Lily. I doubt we'd get much talking done if we got next to you."

She pushed aside her sudden need for physical closeness. "I agree, baby. We need to deal with what has happened." Their reluctance to touch her was frightening. She wouldn't be able to tolerate life without them. They sat on the end of the bed...out of her reach. She had to make them understand.

"I'm sor—"

"No." Lily put her hand in the air to stop Cain's words. "You have nothing to be sorry for. I'm the one who needs to apologize."

Cain reached and took her fingers. "Lily, I should have told you. I was so wrong keeping allegiance to a dead man."

"No, you weren't. I would have done the same thing."

Easygoing Zach crawled up the bed and hugged her. "Then all's forgiven and forgotten?"

"Wait, Zach. I need Lily to understand I'll never keep the truth from her about anything for any reason again."

Wetness leaked from the corners of her eyes. "I believe you." She brushed the tears from her cheeks. "Damn pain medication makes me weepy. Please come here."

Happiness returned with both husbands snuggled against her. She cast aside all worries and hurts. Cain nuzzled her neck while Zack massaged tension from her shoulders. Being close to her men stirred a need inside. Her tightening nipples poked her T-shirt.

"Not now, baby," Cain said. "Give yourself time to heal."

"Take me out back and beat the crap out of me since I'm the only one around here fit enough for sex."

Cain cuffed Zach in the head. "Stop whining."

Lily laughed and it felt good. There hadn't been much to laugh about lately. The door swung open, and three mouths gaped at Carmen standing on the threshold.



“Oh, I’m sorry. I should have knocked...I’ll leave now.” She backed into the door.

Cain rose. “Hey, it’s all right, Carmen. Come in.”

Carmen’s attempt to laugh came out as a weak croak. “I guess I’d better remember to knock.”

Zach grinned. “Might save you some embarrassment.”

Carmen beamed. “Yes...well...I have the most wonderful news.

“What is it?” Lily asked. “We could all use some.”

“Sheriff Brad, just called. Seems all the neighboring ranches and local businesses have rallied to help so we don’t lose the ranch. As soon as they heard about Dave’s rustling and his treatment of Lily, they all donated a good amount of money to see us through. And that’s not all,” Carmen continued, her hands waving wildly. “Carter’s feed store will give us free supplies until the end of the year. And C&J Transportation offered to transport our cattle to the slaughterhouse free of charge.”

Lily’s heart almost burst with excitement. “That’s fabulous news, Carmen, but what about the conditions of the will?”

“Ben says he’ll find a loophole because of the circumstances of Dave’s treachery. It’s all going to work out.”

“Come here, my lady,” Cain said, rising from the bed and opening his arms. “Let me hug the bearer of such great news.”

With a giggle, Carmen hurried his side and wrapped her ample arms around Cain. Her weight knocked him off balance and they toppled onto the bed.

“Oh my!” Carmen struggled to sit up.

“I always knew I’d get you in bed one of these days, ma’am,” Zach announced.

All three of them slapped him in the head before dissolving into gales of laughter.

Lily grinned. “All’s well that ends well.” She hoped her father watched them from above and approved of this happy ending. After all these years, she had found a family. Up until now, everyone’s



focus had been on saving the ranch. Now she could concentrate on enjoying her husbands, while in turn they pleased her.

Cain helped Carmen to her feet. "Well, I'll go now and let you all get some rest."

"You don't have to leave, Carmen. Nothing will be going on here tonight."

Carmen shot them all a stern look. "There'd better not be. Two of you are in no condition for any shenanigans, so I'd better not hear this bed a rockin' tonight."

Carmen shut the door to laughter.

Once their laughter subsided, Lily clasped her lovers' hands. "I want you two," she whispered. "Right here. Right now."

"Lily," Cain said. "It's too soon. You have to heal."

"Cain's right, sweetheart," Zach added, dropping a gentle kiss on her mouth.

"There's nothing wrong with our mouths, my pussy, or your cocks."

"What are you suggesting?" Cain's voice grew raspy, and his eyes burned with a fever matching Lily's own.

Zach pulled up Lily's nightgown. "You're not that stupid, Cain."

Zach's mouth closed over her nipple, sending ripples of need through Lily. "Oh, yes. Suck it harder. Please. I'm on fire."

Her body convulsed at the touch of Cain's tongue on her clit. "Is this what you had in mind, my lady?"

Lily clutched the sheet in her fists. "Yes! Yes!"

"Not too loud, baby," Zach whispered in her ear. "I don't feel like dealing with Carmen's wrath today."

Lily lay spread-eagled and let her lovers' mouths drive her to the peak of insanity. It would be a long night as she had every intention of returning the favor. Now and always.

# THE END



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pam has always marched to the beat of a different drummer, or so says her mother. Growing up in Tiny Town USA with no neighbors, she discovered early on that her imagination was her best friend and creating stories became her favorite pastime when she wasn't out catching frogs. She now lives on 50 acres in rural Maine and writes hot romantic suspense and other genres.

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