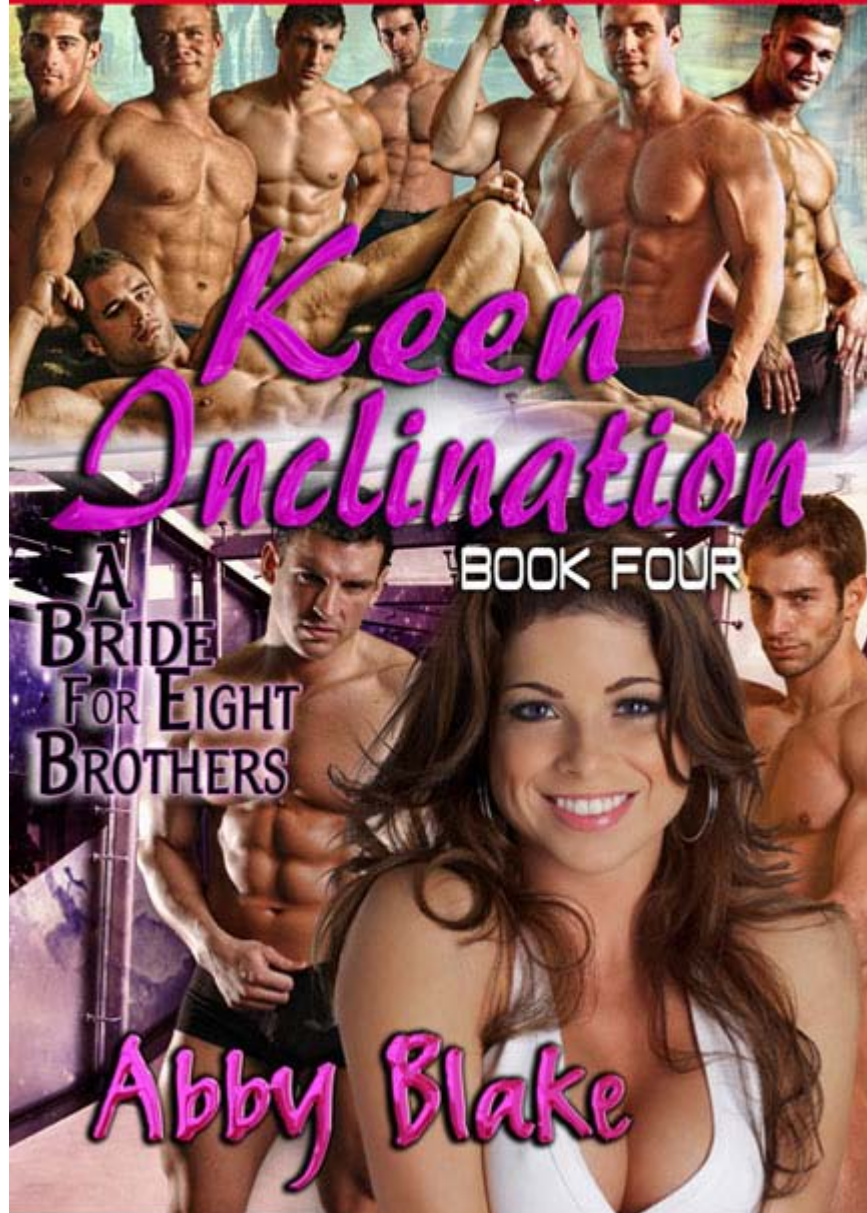


Siren Publishing

LoveXtreme Forever



## A Bride for Eight Brothers 4

### Keen Inclination

Mikayla's men are keen to start their family, but when things go wrong, can Mikayla really keep eight husbands happy? Feeling sad and rundown, and trying desperately to hide it from her men, Mikayla is glad to have some time on Earth with her best friend, Tracey. Her husbands Brock and John travel with her, but their concerns ratchet higher when they overhear her conversation.

With the news of the mouse tears aphrodisiac properties somehow leaked to the public, the jungle planet is now being raided on a daily basis. Lachlan and Bryce are spending more time rescuing raiders from their own stupidity than getting geological surveys done and are starting to wonder if this contract is even worth the effort.

To make matters worse, Peter's ex-fiancée is stirring up trouble again, and it seems someone on the jungle planet has an unusual plan for a couple of Mikayla's men.

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**Genre:** Ménage a Trois/Quatre, Science Fiction

**Length:** 23,387 words

# **KEEN INCLINATION**

*A Bride for Eight Brothers 4*

**Abby Blake**

**LOVEXTREME FOREVER**



**Siren Publishing, Inc.**  
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# **DEDICATION**

For Alexandra

# KEEN INCLINATION

*A Bride for Eight Brothers 4*

**ABBY BLAKE**

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## Chapter One

Mikayla hummed to herself as she peeled the vegetables for dinner. Tonight the researchers from the base next door were coming for the evening meal, and she hoped the happy sound masked her apprehension. Her men knew exactly how she felt about having other women around them on a planet occupied with tiny critters that could affect a man's libido, but it would've been very rude to turn the medical research scientists away. And besides, as Bryce not so tactfully pointed out, her men were working with these women on a daily basis, so not having them at her dinner table only affected her chances at making friends, not their contact with her men.

It would've been nice to have some female company, but she had very little in common with the medical scientists. The few times Mikayla had spent any time with them she'd been awkward and shy and maybe a little intimidated. Jacqueline seemed especially dismissive and always left Mikayla feeling unwelcome, even in her own home. And okay, as long as Mikayla was being honest with herself, maybe she hadn't been quite as welcoming as she could've been. But it didn't help that the three women had worked together for years or that they knew each other so well or that Mikayla felt like she



had nothing in common with any of them. Peter's ex-fiancée and the hell she'd put them through was probably a factor as well.

Feeling a little anxious over what should be a family dinner plus three seemed silly even to her own mind, but she couldn't shake the disquiet.

"Do you need any help?" Ryan asked as he and Ty came into the room.

"Thanks, but I've got everything under control." They were sweet to ask, but at least with the excuse of having to prepare dinner she could put off having to worry how she would deal with their guests. "They're due at six, right?" she asked, hoping against hope that the women had somehow needed to cancel.

"Just arrived," Ryan said cheerfully, but Mikayla could hear the strain in his voice. Their guests weren't supposed to be here for at least another hour, and by turning up early they gave the subtle inference that Mikayla wasn't quite up to standard. She tried to rein in the bitchy thoughts. God, just because she felt intimidated by the women, it didn't mean they'd gone out of their way to make her feel inadequate.

Ty wrapped his arms around her, almost as if he could see into her mind and all the insecurities swirling inside. "It's going to be fine," he said reassuringly. "The others can keep them entertained while we help with dinner."

Oh, so, fucking fabulous. Not only was she going to worry about dinner being perceived as served late, she also got the chance to fret over why three women would turn up early to spend social time with her husbands.

She slammed the vegetables onto the chopping board, her irritation growing with every slice. Why her husbands had actually invited the women was completely beyond her anyway. Matt and Bryce, and Ryan and Ty spent more than enough time working with the women during the day. Wasn't that enough?

“Maybe,” Ty said in a suspiciously casual voice, “we should cook dinner, and you can go spend some time with our guests.”

“No,” she said just a tad too quickly. It seemed so ridiculous that she felt this way, but she couldn’t shake the feeling of inadequacy. She was damned if she would hand over her favorite chore to Ryan and Ty just so she could go supervise three bitchy women who were probably making a play for her husbands as she stood in the kitchen arguing— “I mean, yes. That would be wonderful. You two can cook and I’ll go supervi...I mean socialize with our guests.” Ryan’s lips quirked at her slip, but he nodded and grabbed the knife she’d been using.

“Not a problem,” Ty said as he washed his hands. She watched a moment longer as her men quickly took over then turned to the dining room, determined to be a perfect hostess.

As she entered the room, it quickly became apparent that Jacqueline was holding court as if she were some kind of royalty. Six of Mikayla’s husbands sat around the table listening to the woman as if she were the most fascinating thing on the planet.

“So I ran a complete chemical analysis and found that the combination of pheromones rather than a single chemical is what increases the potency of the mating musk.” Jacqueline flicked her blonde curls over her shoulder and leaned closer to Peter.

“Hi,” Mikayla said, feeling uncomfortable in her own dining room. “Can I get anybody a drink?” Jacqueline glanced in her general direction without actually looking at her, dismissed Mikayla with a flick of her fingers, and continued talking. Mikayla tried very hard not to take offense, but no matter what argument she came up with, she couldn’t convince herself that Jacqueline’s behavior was because of her quirky scientific brain and not some deliberate attempt to be offensive. The woman leaned closer to Peter and touched his arm

“So I double-checked the base compounds and found that the musk can’t be created artificially. There isn’t anything on Earth that could be used to synthesize an equivalent, so the only way to make

what the medical consortium wants is to cultivate the Apodemus Non-terra Melanurus. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to adequately replicate the natural environment for it to produce the pheromones we need."

Mikayla wanted to roll her eyes at the woman's self-absorbed behavior. Why didn't she just use the word "mouse" like everyone else? She seemed to be deliberately using scientific words in an attempt to make Mikayla look stupid. Perhaps Jacqueline missed the part that Mikayla had been working side by side with Ryan and Ty when they named the furry critter. But unfortunately, none of her husbands seemed to notice the snub, and the fact that her men seemed to be hanging on Jacqueline's every word just served to piss Mikayla off more. She noticed the other two women hanging back, staying out of Jacqueline's way, and headed over to ask them if they would like a drink.

Without showing any indication that she'd seen Mikayla move, Jacqueline called the other two women into the conversation, effectively leaving Mikayla standing alone once more. It didn't escape her notice that Misha and Keira practically ran away from her in the process.

Lachlan watched her for a moment but went back to listening when Jacqueline asked him a question about the geological terrain or something equally as boring. Mikayla was trying to slip away when Bryce caught her arm and hauled her onto his lap. As comfortable as she usually felt sitting on her husbands' laps, tonight it felt like the equivalent of being relegated to the kiddy table. She wasn't part of the conversation, she wasn't expected to participate, and it felt worse than hiding in the kitchen and worrying about her men.

She cuddled into Bryce for a few moments and tried to find her self-confidence. She was a happily married woman, and she trusted her husbands to remain faithful. There were no mouse tears on the base, and even if there were, she knew her husbands well enough to know they'd do everything in their power to resist the mating musk's

influence. Hell, they'd practically turned themselves inside out trying to protect her when they'd first arrived on the planet. She had no reason to believe they wouldn't do the same if it happened again.

Feeling better than she had in quite a while, Mikayla leaned up to kiss Bryce on the cheek, whispered a thank you in his ear, and headed back to the kitchen.

She just needed to get through this dinner.

\* \* \* \*

Finally, the longest meal in history was done. Mikayla actually looked forward to doing the dishes and putting the whole damn thing behind her. Peter hadn't yet come back to the kitchen after escorting the female scientists to the door, and even though Mikayla was a little annoyed at being left with the chore, she was also grateful for the time alone.

It was probably pretty silly, but being married to eight men meant alone time was rare and precious. And for some reason, something she craved more and more lately.

"There's my princess," John said as he entered the kitchen with Brock and Lachlan. She smiled to hide her reaction to being no longer alone as John stalked closer. He grinned, acting for all the world like he was a hunter and she was his prey. "Change of plans." He wrapped his arms around her and lifted her off her feet. "Brock and Lachlan are going to break some dishes—"

Brock interrupted with an affronted-sounding, "Hey."

John rolled his eyes but amended his words. "Brock and Lachlan are going to finish doing the dishes because you, my lovely princess, are needed elsewhere."

John lifted her higher and wrapped her legs around his waist. "So, change of plans."

"Why?" she asked, trying to ignore the very hard cock pressing against her crotch.

“Do I need a reason to want to spend some quality time with my wife?” He said it with a smile on his face, but she couldn’t help noticing that he wanted an answer.

“No,” she said as she pressed a kiss to his cheek. “I’m just a little wiped out is all. It’s been a long day.”

He grinned, pulled her closer, and started walking from the kitchen. “That, princess, is exactly why there is a change of plans.”

He kissed her all the way back to his living quarters, slow, delicious, drugging kisses that made her feel pliant and relaxed in his arms. When they entered his rooms, she was surprised to find the area lit with tiny little lights that flickered in a similar way to candles. She knew they weren’t actual candles—the station’s safety devices would have detected open flame and moved to extinguish the danger—but they created the same ambiance.

John carried her straight to the bathroom, where they found Peter preparing a hot bubble bath. The delicious smell of vanilla filled the small area, and she couldn’t help but wonder how long they’d been planning this.

“Perfect timing,” Peter said as he stepped closer, lifted her from John’s arms and pressed a kiss to her mouth. He smiled as he stripped her clothes off, and then, with his usual fastidiousness, folded them neatly.

John held a hand out and steadied her as she stepped into the gloriously hot water. It took a few moments to adjust to the temperature, but then Mikayla leaned back and closed her eyes, simply enjoying the water’s caress.

The bath wasn’t very big, so it didn’t surprise her that neither of the men tried to join her in the water. Already feeling calmer, Mikayla half opened her eyes as Peter pressed a soft washcloth to her skin. He worked the vanilla-scented bath wash over her arms and shoulders, stopping to massage the tight muscles of her neck, before easing her forward and continuing the sensuous movement down her back.

She couldn't help but moan in relief as muscles she'd held tight through the entire dinner finally began to loosen. Peter stopped what he was doing, wrapped his arms around her upper body and kissed the back of her neck.

"We know tonight was difficult for you, but they're quite nice people once you get to know them." Mikayla wasn't so sure, but she kept that thought to herself.

Peter held her a moment longer then resumed his movements with the washcloth. When he was finished, John stepped closer with a large towel, helped her out of the bath, and very slowly rubbed her dry. By the time he was finished, she was feeling very, very awake. He grinned when he saw her face then bent and swung her into his arms.

Naked, the three of them stretched out on John's bed. Mikayla tried not to react to Peter's decision to stay. Until recently, he'd been a very private lover, taking her gently, reverently, and never sharing their time together with one of his brothers, but since the mouse tears pheromone had affected him, he'd been more willing to show her his kinky side. Mikayla was very glad to know the true man inside, but even under the mouse tears influence, he'd still been the one to show her the gentler side to kinky sex.

They encouraged her to snuggle into John's embrace, and then Peter smoothed a scented cream over her arms and shoulders, down her spine, over her ass, and down to the end of her feet. She writhed with the soothing sensation, feeling both relaxed and energized at the same time. John helped her to roll over, and Peter repeated the process, taking special care with her breasts and her belly and then lower between her thighs.

Moaning now with need, Mikayla gasped when Peter lowered his mouth over her pussy, pushed her thighs wide, and laved her like ice cream. Over and over he licked the wet folds, teasing the sensitive flesh until she growled her need. Two masculine chuckles reached her ears a moment before Peter thrust his hard tongue deep into her core, fucking her as John held her close.

Her legs quivered, her pussy pulsed, her breathing jammed in her throat. Peter held her there, licking slowly once more, humming against her swollen clit as she writhed with need. John smoothed his hands over her aching nipples, toying with the sensitive nubs until she thought she'd explode. But then they stopped, pulled away, and grinned as she growled at them both.

As soon as her arousal dropped from boiling to simmer, they started again, John caressing her stomach and breasts, Peter tongue-fucking her until she could barely remember her own name.

But when they stopped again, she writhed frantically in their hold. Hell, this was the sort of thing Brock and Lachlan usually did. Had the brothers been sharing notes?

"Please," she begged, unable to force more than that one simple word past her lips.

"Shhh, princess, we'll take care of you," John said as he brushed a hand through her hair.

"Now?" she asked, uncaring that the word was breathless with desperation.

"Yes, now," Peter answered as he surged over her and slid his cock deep inside her hungry pussy.

But he loved her slowly, his thrusts relaxed and lazy. He grinned when she tried to lift her hips, trying to claim more of him, trying to speed their race to orgasm. When he pulled away, she damn near whimpered at the loss, but John lifted and rolled her over his body, and she quickly slid down to impale herself on his waiting cock. She sighed as he thrust up to meet her, fucking her harder, faster, deeper.

She was at the brink, ready to fall over the edge, when John stopped all movement and held her down. Mikayla could barely breathe. With her swollen clit trapped between them, her arousal continued to climb. Even without moving, her orgasm swelled closer. Her men must've sensed just how near she was because she heard the hurried squirt of lube and then felt Peter push quickly into her back passage. All three of them held still as her climax rushed closer.

And then, like an elastic breaking under tension, her orgasm snapped, shaking every muscle, rasping every nerve, sending heat through every vein in her body. She gasped as they held her tight between them, both men groaning as her ass and pussy caressed their hard cocks.

Finally, she lay quietly in their hold, warmth melting through her as exhaustion tried to claim her. But then her men started to move, Peter sliding into her ass as John lifted her off his cock. Up and down, again and again, over and over, they slid their hard cocks into her body. She quickly went from exhausted to excited, completely spent but totally needy.

She felt another orgasm building deep, and she damn near screamed when Peter leaned over and bit her ear. "Are you ready?" he asked wickedly.

Ready for what? But her unasked question was answered as both her men started to pound into her body. No longer controlled, no longer restrained, they fucked her harder, faster, their rhythm broken, their breathing harsh.

Peter thrust hard into her ass, ramming his cock deep into her back passage as his climax claimed him. His movement drove her clit hard against John, her orgasm so unexpected that she screamed her surprise. John gripped her hips, grinding her against his pelvis, wringing every shiver from her release as his cock pulsed and throbbed inside her.

Finally, absolutely and completely exhausted, Mikayla closed her eyes, wanting nothing more than to sleep. Slowly, carefully, Peter pulled his softening cock from her ass, and John pressed a kiss to her forehead. She barely felt the washcloth as Peter cleaned her up, and she mourned the loss as John moved away for a brief moment.

She fell asleep in their arms, very glad that Peter chose to stay.

\* \* \* \*



John held his wife as she slept. He'd been very worried for her tonight. They'd invited the medical scientists so that Mikayla would have some female company, but maybe it hadn't been the smartest decision they'd made recently.

Jacqueline was a rather typical example of some of the personalities they encountered in their field of science. She was highly educated, extremely intelligent, and unless she was talking about her research, completely antisocial.

It was probably unfair for the brothers to expect Mikayla to understand the woman's quirks. Mikayla was sociable and accepting—practically the opposite of Jacqueline and the other researchers from the medical consortium—and though Mikayla had tried tonight, she hadn't quite been able to find common ground. Unfortunately, it would also seem that Jacqueline hadn't tried at all to get along with their wife. If anything, she'd become territorial when Mikayla had tried to engage Misha and Keira in conversation.

Maybe the brothers should've listened to Bryce. Having been an undercover cop for almost ten years, his instincts about other people were very well developed. He'd labeled Jacqueline a first-class bitch almost from the moment he'd met her, and no amount of explanation from his brothers had changed his mind. Considering that Jacqueline had seemed to go out of her way to make Mikayla feel unwelcome in her own home tonight, John was beginning to agree with Bryce.

Over the last few months, Mikayla hadn't really seemed herself, and all of the brothers had commented on the loss of her usual happy demeanor. Ironically, it had been the reason for tonight's dinner. They had hoped that by getting to know the medical scientists better, Mikayla might forge a friendship or at least an understanding with the other women, but in actuality it had probably been a humungous mistake.

"Peter? Are you asleep?" John asked in a soft whisper. Peter lifted his head from the pillow and looked at him in the dim light. The flickering pretend-candlelight might've been good for setting the

mood, but it certainly didn't help a person see clearly. "I'm going to go talk to the others and make sure we don't have a repeat of tonight."

Peter nodded his agreement and pulled Mikayla closer.

It didn't take John long to find his brothers. They were all gathered in the dining room discussing the exact subject he'd planned to raise.

"Could it still be from the miscarriage?" Brock asked Matt as John walked in the door.

Matt shook his head slowly. With his background in pathology, he at least had some understanding of how pregnancy and hormones affected the female body. "Her hormones should've returned to normal months ago. It's more likely that she's still grieving in an emotional sense."

"So what do we do?" Ryan asked. "How can we help her?"

"Well, for starters we can make certain never to invite Jacqueline and her minions for dinner again." Lachlan and Bryce both smirked at John's description, but none of the brothers actually disagreed with his suggestion.

"How about we just make certain that she knows her husbands love her," Bryce said quietly. "I reckon her miscarriage probably undermined her confidence as a woman. The last thing she needs is the type of hostility Jacqueline projected tonight."

Whether Jacqueline's behavior was intentionally offensive or not didn't really matter. What mattered was how it affected Mikayla.

"Okay," John said, feeling a little better that his brothers agreed with his assessment of the situation. "We keep Mikayla close, show her how much we all love her, and just be there for her if she needs us."

They nodded in agreement. Unwilling to stay a moment longer when he could be holding his wife in his arms, John left and headed back to his room.

## **Chapter Two**

*Nearly six months later...*

The loud, clanging alarm was the most fucking annoying, unwelcome sound in the history of the planet. This was at least the third time this week. Quickly, Lachlan reached for his gun and went to investigate.

Ever since word of the mouse tears mating musk had hit the intergalactic news stations, every moron and his friend had landed on the planet trying to capture a little mouse of their own. The most irritating thing was that none of them understood the overwhelming effect the musk had on human males.

When Lachlan had gone to investigate the last alert, he'd found two men frantically jacking off. It was not something he wanted to see again, but he suspected it was about to become part of his daily routine. The men had been practically cross-eyed with arousal, and it was only a matter of time before they'd turned to each other. Lachlan was fairly certain that hadn't been their intention when they'd gone looking for the furry little creature.

He'd grabbed both men and dragged them back to their sorry excuse for a space cruiser. With little fuss, he'd managed to set the controls to auto-lift and then watched as they left the atmosphere. They were probably still revolving around the planet in synchronous orbit, but hopefully, they were smart enough to leave once the musk's effects wore off.

"Have we got a location?" he asked Bryce as they met in the hallway.

“Less than three hundred yards from the aft border.” This stupid planet had so much interference that they couldn’t clearly detect the magnetic pole, so they had to use the same descriptions they used when the main station was in transport and technically considered a ship. Side by side they ran to the back exit of the building. Lachlan was pleased to see Bryce carried both a stun weapon and a traditional military issue handgun this time.

Even though they both preferred bullets over stun bolts, they didn’t really want to hurt anybody. Half the time the invaders behind the incursions needed rescuing rather than shooting, but it didn’t mean Lachlan or Bryce would hesitate to use deadly force if Mikayla or the female scientists were in danger.

\* \* \* \*

“Where’s Mikayla?” Brock asked as the alarm sounded.

Ryan and Ty were already moving toward the weapons cabinets. Fortunately, none of the raiders had entered the compound so they hadn’t needed to use the stun guns yet. But they were fully prepared to defend their home if the need arose.

Ty glanced at the time. “She should be in the kitchen,” he said as he strapped the weapon holster to his shoulders. Brock nodded and headed out the door, checking that his stun gun was still fully charged. He, Lachlan, and Bryce had decided to carry a weapon at all times. Peter and John had no experience but were quickly learning how to use a stun gun. Ryan and Ty both had shooting experience, mainly with tranquilizer darts, but the very nature of their work in the lab made carrying a weapon dangerous. An accidental discharge of an electronic weapon inside the lab could result in severe damage to the lab and any occupants, humans included.

Brock called his wife as he entered the kitchen. She didn’t answer. A quick glance around the room found half-peeled vegetables but no Mikayla. It seemed strange that she would leave dinner partially

prepared, and concerns he hadn't considered for a few weeks made a way back into his thoughts. He headed to John's office but met the man halfway. John went back to the offices to check there, and Brock turned toward the living quarters.

Each moment he couldn't find Mikayla ratcheted his concern tighter. Over the last few months, Brock and his brothers had watched their wife slowly lose her self-confidence, despite their best efforts to stop it. In some ways, it had happened so gradually that it was only when Brock remembered a particular moment from the past and compared that to the woman she was now that he noticed just how much she had changed. All of the brothers knew it would take time to recover emotionally from her miscarriage. They'd minimized her contact with the female scientists as best they could, but Brock couldn't help feel there was more to it now.

But right at this moment, she had to be on the base. She knew she was supposed to stay with one of her husbands or be in the kitchen. When the raiders had started arriving, they'd all been in agreement, Mikayla included, that they would create a protocol and stick to it.

He went to the intercom unit on the wall just inside his quarters. He buzzed each room in the building until his brothers checked in. Ryan and Ty were still near the lab, and Matt was inside the communications room monitoring the invaders' movements. Brock had seen Lachlan and Bryce head out the back door, so he knew if she wasn't with Peter or John that they had a serious problem.

Feeling a little panicked, Brock did a quick sweep of his and Lachlan's quarters and was about to move to Matt and Bryce's when he heard a soft noise in the bathroom. He called her name, but Mikayla didn't answer. Weapon raised, he headed cautiously through the doorway.

\* \* \* \*

The raiders weren't hard to find. The three men were already affected by the musk and were literally rubbing themselves raw. One was even trying to hump a tree. Lachlan didn't even want to think about the splinters that would cause.

He pulled out his electric gun and stunned splinter-boy almost out of mercy. The other two seemed barely aware of his and Bryce's presence and in the end needed to be stunned as well.

"I've been in some pretty dangerous life or death situations," Bryce said on a deep laugh, "but I didn't think I would ever be involved in something as fucked up as this."

Lachlan nodded his agreement. It was looking more and more unlikely that the proposed mining would go ahead. Unless they could find an exclusively female workforce, chances were that the mineral ores weren't plentiful enough to deal with the chaos that the mating musk would cause.

The fact that the company the female scientists worked for had sworn him and his brothers to confidentiality, and threatened to withdraw the vitamin supplement if they'd refused, just made the whole thing more frustrating. The supplement was the only weapon they had to combat the mating musk's effects. Add that to the fact that the company decided against arranging for security to protect their staff—effectively leaving the women vulnerable to attack—and Lachlan was ready to break their contract and get his family the hell off this strange jungle planet.

Unfortunately, he wouldn't leave the three female scientists alone to deal with the raiders, and it would seem by the smug attitude of the decision makers at the medical research company that they knew it, too. It didn't help that his time in the defense forces had left him with a publicly available download listing his exemplary service history and supposedly heroic deeds. He didn't feel like a hero. He felt like a man who'd lived through a nightmare and barely returned whole.

The worst of the current situation was that sooner or later somebody was going to end up dead, and Lachlan sure as hell hoped

it wasn't him who had to pull the trigger. He'd had to kill enough people to last him a lifetime. He suspected Bryce felt the same way.

It took a little longer to locate the ship belonging to these guys—they'd hidden it under several layers of vegetation—but Lachlan's tracking skills were becoming quite adept on this planet, and they found it eventually.

By the time they made it back to the three unconscious men, they were masturbating in their sleep. "We really should volunteer someone else for this part of the job," Bryce said as he grabbed one of the men and swung him onto his shoulders in a fireman's hold while trying not to touch anything that wasn't inside the man's clothing. Helpfully, the unconscious man still had his hand wrapped firmly around his dick.

With two heavy unconscious raiders of his own to carry, Lachlan decided to drag them both back by their collars. At least if they ended up with a bruise or two on their collective asses they might think twice about coming back.

The ship's systems had been password-disabled, but it only took a few moments for Bryce to break into the software. Obviously, his time as an undercover cop had given him skills few would consider necessary for honest folk, but they were coming in very handy on this planet.

They stood back as the ship lifted off the ground and headed into orbit. Hopefully, the raiders would wake sore and sorry in a few hours and decide that the mouse tears just weren't worth the risk.

\* \* \* \*

Brock found Mikayla in the bath. The headset from her music player was turned up so loud he could hear the song from the doorway.

"Baby girl," he said as he knelt down and touched her hair softly. She practically leapt out of the bath at his soft caress.

“Shit, Brock,” she said breathlessly as she pulled the headphones from her ears. “Talk about giving a girl a heart attack.”

“Mikayla,” he said quietly, “what are you doing?”

At first it looked like she would give him some smartass answer, but then she took a deep breath, shrugged slightly, and said, “I just needed a little bit of time to myself.” She looked away from him, trying to hide the tears in her eyes, and he found himself wondering if she was understating her need to hide. It certainly seemed that she was hiding, and considering the half-peeled vegetables, she was having trouble concentrating as well. None of them had known where she was, and that concerned him a great deal. With raiders landing on the planet, it was very important for everyone to know where everyone was.

But he’d been especially worried about his wife lately. It wasn’t anything specific, just a feeling that she was pulling away from all of them in an emotional sense. Almost like she was rethinking the whole eight husbands thing. They hadn’t really discussed trying for another baby. He planned to raise the subject when their access to medical care was adequate, but he wondered just how she really felt about risking another miscarriage. Just because it was unlikely that she would suffer a second ectopic pregnancy, it didn’t guarantee it wouldn’t happen.

The trouble was Brock really couldn’t be certain how much was observation and how much was coming from his own insecurities, so he hadn’t said anything to her. Most women only had to deal with one or two husbands, not eight. What would happen if Mikayla chose to leave some or all of them?

As he tried to figure out how best to protect her—from the current raiders *and* her own concerns—John barreled through the door and came to a sudden halt behind him.

“Hello, princess,” he said with a lascivious grin. Brock didn’t need to guess what his brother was thinking.



“Call the others. Tell them we found her.” John gave him an annoyed look, but Brock just shook his head. Their brothers were busy dealing with intruders, so climbing into the bath with their lovely wife was probably not a responsible choice at the moment.

“Baby girl,” Brock said as he ran a soothing hand up and down her spine. “John is going to stay with you while we sort out this latest batch of raiders. And then we’re going to talk about what’s going on in your head.” She nodded and tried a sad smile, but it was obvious that whatever she’d been thinking before he came in was not good.

A knot formed in his stomach. Something told him things were changing. Somehow the idyllic life he thought they had together wasn’t quite as solid as he’d once believed.

He helped her from the bath, dried her off, and sat her on the bed. “Stay,” he said when it looked like she might follow him. John helped her get dressed and then lay down beside her and pulled her into his arms.

“I’ll tell the others you two want some alone time, but I can’t promise to keep Lachlan away. He’ll know something’s up the moment he sees me.” She nodded again, not even trying to reassure him that everything was all right. Brock made eye contact with John, and then left the room quietly.

In the hallway, he took a deep breath, preparing himself to lie to his brothers and pretend that everything was fine.

## Chapter Three

“Seriously?” Ryan asked and then laughed harder.

Lachlan was still trying to *not* imagine how many splinters humping a tree would cause when Brock came into the room. The man smiled and laughed with the rest of them as Bryce gave them all a very comical description of the three raiders they’d just sent home, but Lachlan could sense something wasn’t quite right. He also realized that Brock wasn’t in the mood to talk about it.

“I’m just glad it was a tree. I swear we’re liable to find them humping each other one of these days. What part of ‘quarantine’ don’t these dickheads understand?”

“Is the vitamin supplement still suppressing the pheromones’ effects?” Brock asked, sounding very serious.

Lachlan glanced around the rest of his brothers. None of the others seemed to have noticed Brock’s strange mood, so Lachlan answered the question quickly and resolved to get answers to his own questions later.

“It’s still effective, but maybe not as effective as it once was. Either that, or the mouse tears are getting more potent. I would suggest that we consider not taking the supplement unless we’re planning to leave the building. I don’t want the only thing that inhibits the effects of the mating musk losing its potency.”

“True,” Ty said, still laughing. “Hell, we could all end up humping trees.” He acted out a rather crude version of what could happen, and the rest of his brothers laughed with him.

“I suppose it makes sense,” Ryan said, looking thoughtful. “I’ll let Misha know.”

“No, I’d rather the medical consortium didn’t know. We’ll continue to accept the weekly allocations, but we’ll just store the excess. The way they have been acting lately, I wouldn’t put it past them to cut off our supply if they felt it were in their company’s best interest.”

“We probably need to hire more security ourselves,” Bryce said, concern creasing his face. “So far these raiders have come in small numbers. If we get a larger raiding party, we could be in trouble.”

“Or the trees could,” Ty added, still laughing.

“Oh, shit, what if there were enough of them to make a daisy chain?” Ryan added.

Lachlan shook his head in an effort to dislodge that image. He hoped like hell he’d never have to try and break up a group of mating musk affected men humping in a circle. Today’s experience had been unpleasant enough.

“Where’s Mikayla?” Bryce asked curiously as he finally stopped laughing.

“Spending some quiet time with John,” Brock said, projecting a calm Lachlan was certain the man wasn’t feeling. He watched as his brother tried to force a relaxed smile onto his face. “I volunteered to cook dinner.”

They all groaned as Brock knew his brothers would and Lachlan watched curiously as Brock headed into the kitchen, thereby forestalling any more questions about their wife. Obviously something was amiss, but even more concerning was Brock’s unwillingness to share.

He followed Brock into the kitchen and caught his brother’s disappointed sigh.

“I think we should renegotiate our contract,” Brock said as if to override any questions from Lachlan. Lachlan noticed the tension in Brock’s shoulders and really wanted to demand answers. But Brock was a far better Dom than Lachlan, and if Lachlan pushed too hard, Brock would simply shut down and keep his secret forever.

“Sure,” Lachlan answered carefully. “It’s probably a good idea. We are spending more time on security than surveys and research.”

“True,” Brock said as if he hadn’t actually considered that angle.

“Okay, I’ll contact our lawyer,” Lachlan said, watching his brother closely. Brock looked over at him but waited for Lachlan to elaborate. “If nothing else, it might at least alert the mining company to the medical consortium’s attitude toward protecting its staff.”

Brock nodded, and Lachlan could practically see his brother looking at the suggestion from all angles.

“Okay,” he finally agreed. “In fact, it might be a good idea for John to head back to earth for a while. Maybe he could take Mikayla along.”

“Only if you go with them,” Lachlan said. He sure as hell didn’t miss the relief in his brother’s expression. Whatever was going on, Brock and John seemed inclined to keep it from the rest of them.

“Okay,” Brock said again. “I think that would be a good idea. John and Mikayla and I will head back to Earth for a few weeks, renegotiate the contracts, and hopefully get us extra help with security.”

Lachlan nodded, watched his brother’s body language closely for a while, and then turned to leave the room.

“They’re in my bed,” Brock said quietly. Lachlan raised an eyebrow. It wasn’t uncommon for the brothers to do a certain amount of bed-hopping to be with their wife, but usually, intimate alone time with Mikayla was done in their own beds, not someone else’s. He waited for Brock to elaborate, but it seemed that he’d said all he was going to say. Lachlan nodded his thanks for what he expected was a cryptic clue and headed to his and Brock’s living quarters.

\* \* \* \*

John lay on the bed, his arms wrapped around Mikayla. He'd held her for less than a minute before he realized she was trying hard not to cry.

"I'm sorry," she said quietly. "I don't know what's wrong with me. I just can't seem to fight it. I'm not even sure why I feel so sad."

Remorse cut through him, and he pulled her closer. He hadn't even noticed how much she'd withdrawn from them until today. With all the chaos of the mouse tears, the female scientists, and the constant arrival of raiders, he hadn't given any thought to how his wife might feel in the center of it all.

He was still trying to figure out what to do when the door opened quietly. John wasn't even surprised to see Lachlan. If any of his brothers had picked up on Mikayla's unusual behavior, it would be Lachlan. Irrational anger tromped through John's mind, unfairly blaming his brother for not alerting him to concerns he himself hadn't seen.

"Little one," Lachlan said, managing to sound both sad and annoyed at the same time. He leaned over and smoothed the hair away from Mikayla's eyes. "John and Brock are going to take you to Earth. We want you to see a doctor first and then spend some time relaxing."

She nodded tiredly, her eyes still closed. John couldn't help but wonder if Lachlan had noticed her gradual withdrawal why he hadn't done anything until now. His ability to read body language was sometimes a little freaky. But then again, the change had been so gradual maybe even Lachlan hadn't realized just how far she'd moved away from the vibrant, sassy woman they'd all fallen in love with.

Then the part about taking her to Earth sank in.

"Brock and I think it would be a good idea to renegotiate our contract," Lachlan said to him. John nodded. He'd been thinking the same thing ever since the raids had started. This was not the situation they'd signed up for, and it would be a plausible excuse for getting Mikayla off the planet without upsetting the others. Although, he

suspected that, like him, his brothers would be happier to have her somewhere safer until they could sort out the security issues.

“I’ll go run a systems check on the cruiser. Brock’s driving,” Lachlan said as he headed out the door. John nodded again and then pulled Mikayla closer.

“Hear that, princess? Big brother still won’t let me fly the family spaceship.” She smiled slightly, and he felt reassured by the fact that she hadn’t withdrawn completely. She was hurting and very tired, but at least she was still acknowledging his presence. “It’s not like I crashed it on purpose,” he said on a pretend grumble, trying to inject a hint of “normal” into their conversation. She nodded slowly and then wriggled closer.

When he and his brothers had discussed buying their own intergalactic transport, John had nearly gagged at the exorbitant expense, but with the current situation, he was very glad his brothers had insisted. The trip back to Earth would take just over thirteen hours. If they had to wait for commercial shipping lines, it could’ve taken weeks to get Mikayla back to Earth.

“I’ve packed some things for Mikayla,” Brock said as he came in the door. “Give me a minute to pack some stuff, and I’ll get Mikayla to the cruiser while you grab some clothes.”

John nodded and then leaned forward to press a kiss to his wife’s cheek. “I love you,” he whispered, unable to think of any way to reassure her more than he already had. Reluctantly, he rolled off the bed and let Brock lift Mikayla to her feet. John nodded once and then headed for the door.

\* \* \* \*

Lachlan watched his normally controlled brother practically twitch with agitation as he filled him in on the last twenty-four hours since they’d left the jungle planet.

“She’s okay,” Brock said through the intergalactic connection. “The doctor said everything is fine. Mikayla’s tired and rundown and low on vitamin D.”

“That makes sense,” Lachlan said, turning the information over in his mind. “Vitamin D deficiency can trigger depression in space travelers. I’ll check the UV lights on the station are working correctly.” Brock nodded his agreement. Either the lights they used as an equivalent for the Earth’s sunshine weren’t working the way they were supposed to, or there was something on the planet draining vitamin D from their bodies. Either way, Lachlan and his brothers probably hadn’t been affected because of the vitamin supplement they were taking to counteract the mouse tears’ effects.

“Anyway, the doctor has suggested she take vitamin supplements while she’s off planet, but the good news is that she should be fine in a few days.” He ran a hand through his hair and huffed out a tired breath. “But emotionally, she’s still pulling away. I can feel it, Lachlan, and I don’t know how to stop it. I wish you or Bryce were here. Maybe you could tell me what we’re doing wrong. I feel like we’re losing her.”

“I doubt you’re doing anything wrong,” Lachlan said sympathetically. It wasn’t often that Brock was unsure of himself. “Just keep her close.”

Lachlan didn’t voice his theory out loud for fear that it was very close to the truth. He suspected that their beautiful wife was considering leaving them partly because the female scientists seemed to undermine her confidence and partly because she was frightened to fall pregnant again. He and Mikayla had very briefly discussed trying again when they got back to Earth, but the closer that time came, the more she seemed to withdraw into herself. Of course a vitamin D deficiency would probably exacerbate those emotions.

Brock ran his hands down his face and made an obvious effort to try to pull himself together. “We’re booked on the next sky-pod to California. Hopefully spending time with Tracey will help.”

Lachlan nodded and went to say something when the proximity alarm started howling again. “Damn, the raiders are getting bolder and far more stupid. This is the third group today. We’ve started wearing protective gear just so we don’t end up splattered in something unpleasant.” He gave that last word a whole lot more meaning just by the way he said it.

Brock nodded, seeming in control once more and closed the connection. Lachlan had barely a moment to consider his brother’s uncharacteristic behavior as he headed to the communications room to gather his equipment and find out where the raiders had landed.

\* \* \* \*

It was probably really silly considering that Mikayla had eight husbands, but arriving at Tracey’s home made her feel like she finally had someone she could lean on for a little while. Her men were very supportive, but it felt awful to lean on them when it was her own fears causing the problem. It would seem, however, that the doctor’s theory was proving correct because the more time she spent in the sunshine the more she felt like herself.

Tracey took one look at her and pulled Mikayla in for a hug. How she managed to get John and Brock to leave the room was a mystery, but leave they did. They hadn’t left Mikayla alone for a single moment since they’d boarded the cruiser back on the jungle planet. She understood what they were doing, and she was somewhat annoyed by it, but she wouldn’t give them grief for trying to help her.

“What’s going on?” Tracey asked immediately.

Mikayla tried to smile reassuringly, but when Tracey gave her a knowing look, she said, “Just working through some stuff in my head.”

“Stuff?” Tracey asked. “What sort of stuff?”

“I’m just being silly. Everything’s okay. I’m fine really.”



“I know you,” Tracey said with a wag of her finger, “you’re not fine, and the last thing you would’ve done is lean on those husbands of yours, so explain to me what this stuff is about and we can work through it together.” Mikayla smiled slightly. Yes, Tracey did know her. She knew how Mikayla sometimes struggled to retain her sense of self when faced with eight very large men with personalities to match. She loved them dearly, desperately even, but it would be very easy to stop being herself and become the helpless, pathetic female she’d always despised. As much as she enjoyed their coddling, there had to be a limit.

“So talk to me, Mikayla?” Tracey asked slowly as if she was measuring every word. “Is this about getting pregnant again?”

Mikayla shrugged, trying to hide just how scared she felt. When she’d learned she was pregnant, she’d been so excited, but that high had dived to a new terrifying low when she’d miscarried. Time hadn’t made things less painful. In fact, the passage of time had just made the memories more powerful. She closed her eyes as if by admitting the truth without seeing anything it would somehow make it less damning.

“I don’t think I can go through it again,” she said, nearly whispering. The tears leaked out of her closed eyes and Tracey made a sympathetic noise.

“Do your husbands know how you feel?”

Mikayla shook her head but added, “I think they suspect it, though.”

“Good,” Tracey said, sounding for all the world like an avenging angel. “It’ll save me time if I don’t have to kick their asses. You need time to heal—emotionally as well as physically. Take a year or two off from planning a family. Just enjoy being married and forget about babies for a while.”

Mikayla nodded, feeling a guilty relief that someone else shared her opinion. She kept telling herself it was silly to be reacting the way she was, but she just couldn’t shake the fear. And of course that

niggling doubt of her own worth as a woman reared its ugly head, and she once again found herself wondering if her husbands would be better off without her as their wife. What if it happened again? What if she was never able to give them children? Maybe if she got out of the way, they could find several wives between them and have a whole houseful of kids within a couple years.

"I should let them go," she said, shaking her head sadly, "but I'm such a coward. I don't want to live without them." She whispered the words even as she meant to hide the thoughts.

"No," Tracey said, sounding horrified. "You love those men, and they love you." Tracey glanced at the closed door, and Mikayla found herself kind of hoping that her men were listening. Maybe if they knew she was willing to step aside, they'd take the hard steps for her.

"You listen to me Mikayla Davidson," Tracey said angrily. "Not one of those men will ever look to replace you. They love you with everything in them. I may not have met Bryce face-to-face, but if he's as much like Matt as you've told me, he'll never let you go either. You're it. You're the one for all of them." She took a deep breath, grabbed both of Mikayla's hands, and squeezed reassuringly. "They will love you until the end of time whether you stay with them or not. Don't you dare go doing something stupid out of misdirected loyalty. All you will do is make yourself and eight wonderful men miserable."

Mikayla nodded. Her heart squeezed at the thought of hurting her guys, but she worried that she'd never find the courage to try to become pregnant again. She feared that years into the future, when they were old and gray and there weren't any Davidson children to carry on the family name, her husbands would grow to resent her.

"John is renegotiating the mining survey contract, so we'll see what happens before I make any firm decisions."

Tracey still looked worried, but she nodded once as if she sensed Mikayla couldn't take much more and then changed the subject.

They spent some time talking about day to day stuff, catching up on each other's lives. By the time Mikayla finished telling Tracey

about the mating musk of the mouse tears and the interesting effects it had on the human male population, they were practically giggling like a couple of schoolgirls.

“Thank God we landed on the planet at the beginning of mating season. The stuff seems far more potent now.”

Tracey wagged her eyebrows suggestively, and Mikayla laughed again. “Ah, no. If it’s potent enough to have raiders rubbing against trees, I don’t even want to think about what eight husbands would be *up* for.”

They giggled again at Mikayla’s double entendre. A moment later, Rick came through the front door. He was dressed in his police uniform and smiling widely. “That,” he said as he stepped toward Tracey, “is a very lovely sound to come home to.” Rick kissed his wife tenderly and then turned to Mikayla with a broad smile. “So did you get out without your husbands, or are they lurking on the other side of the door?”

“Other side of the door,” Mikayla said, feeling happier than she had in months. Things weren’t perfect, and she still had a lot of emotions to work through, but at least she had a clearer outlook. How could she have forgotten how much her husbands loved her?

## Chapter Four

“Shit, get Mikayla out of here.” John’s whispered order had Brock going immediately to red alert. They were in the middle of New York standing out the front of their lawyer’s offices. What the hell could be so dangerous? “That’s Peter’s ex,” John growled as he moved to intercept the woman. She’d spotted Mikayla and was marching in her direction.

Brock grabbed Mikayla, turned her around, and headed into the nearest dress shop. Hopefully, she hadn’t seen Jessie Evans. The woman was toxic. Even after she’d had a breakdown in open court, she’d continued to harass Peter via intergalactic messages. Her last had almost been comical. She was sorry—yeah, right. She still loved him—still? She would do anything to win him back—never going to happen.

Without the threat of further legal action, Peter, Mikayla, and all the brothers had simply ignored Jessie’s ever increasing messages. They would probably need to file for a restraining order before long, but with the distance between Earth and the jungle planet, they’d felt safe. Too bad they hadn’t considered having the worst luck in history by running into the woman in a crowded city on a planet that few knew they were visiting.

“What’s going on?” Mikayla asked, sounding a little alarmed. He considered lying, but she hadn’t been happy about them keeping her in the dark over Peter’s legal battle, so he caved and told the truth.

“Jessie Evans is just outside. John is making sure that she knows to send any further communications via our lawyers.” Mikayla nodded, but he could see her curiosity and concern. “Please just let

John handle it this time.” Mikayla hadn’t been herself lately. The last thing she needed was to be called all sorts of nasty names by a woman with no class and zero sympathy for others.

“Okay,” Mikayla said, moving to look at some of the clothes. Stunned to near speechlessness, Brock opened and closed his mouth several times. He’d at least expected to have to argue a little.

Mikayla tried on three dresses before John joined them in the clothing store. He looked pale, so it was a pretty good guess that whatever Jessie had said wasn’t good. He wanted to ask for a word by word accounting but didn’t want to upset Mikayla, so he stayed quiet. Mikayla saw John and stepped into his embrace for a moment.

“Thanks,” she said and then pressed a quick kiss to his mouth. “I just don’t have the energy to deal with that woman right now.” He nodded, looking surprised by her attitude, and then quickly changed the subject.

“So how many dresses should we buy for our lovely wife?” he asked Brock.

“I’m thinking at least a dozen.” She smiled but shook her head.

“Ten?” John asked hopefully.

“Two,” she said with a big grin. It was so wonderful to see her smile that Brock didn’t even care that she refused to let them spoil her. “And maybe another bra,” she said, digging her fingers into her ribs and adjusting the support garment yet again. At home, the only time she wore one was when the female scientists came to visit, and thankfully that was a very rare occurrence.

All of his brothers preferred her breasts unbound, but as she led them into the undergarments section, wicked ideas swirled through Brock’s head. There were so many sexy things to choose from. She saw the look on his face and laughed happily.

“And how long do you think they’d stay on?” she teased.

“Not the point, baby girl,” he said as he pushed several different styles into her hands. “I think you need to try these on.” She glanced

at the tags, blanched at the price, and went to put them back. “That wasn’t a request, baby girl.”

She smiled, rolled her eyes like a very naughty sub, and moved toward the fitting room. As soon as she was out of earshot, Brock turned to John. The man didn’t need any prompting.

“She wants a meeting with Mikayla. Says she wants to apologize.”

“You told her to go to hell, right?”

“Damn straight,” John said. “Apart from the fact I don’t believe a word of what she says, she was just a little too excited to see Mikayla. We should get out of New York as quickly as possible.”

“Agreed.” Brock checked the time. “Your appointment is in fifteen minutes. Mikayla and I will wait in the reception area. I was going to take her shopping, but with that bitch hanging around, I don’t want to chance it.”

“Maybe we should bring her into the meeting,” John said casually, maybe a little too casually. When he saw Brock’s expression, he started to explain. “She’s got a quick intellect and a good mind for business. I think it would help her to be more involved.” Brock just stared at his brother for a few moments. There was no doubt Mikayla was intelligent, and she’d proved she could cope with pressure when she’d been thrust into the middle of Peter’s court case, but did she really need the stress of the family business when she’d had so much to cope with lately?

John must’ve interpreted his hesitation correctly because he added, “I think she needs to feel part of the business as well as part of the family.”

Brock nodded slowly. He didn’t want Mikayla stressing over the family business as well as her family, but he could see John’s wisdom. It wouldn’t really hurt for her to feel more involved in the business side. They’d both heard her whispered confession to Tracey, and it had taken every ounce of strength not to burst through the door and yell at her for her foolish assumptions. Only Tracey’s fierce

rebuttal had calmed his shrieking nerves. He couldn't lose Mikayla. He wouldn't allow it.

\* \* \* \*

John looked at his brother and wished he could read minds. Brock was always so controlled that even when he was on the verge of losing it, he still seemed calm. Ever since overhearing the conversation they should not have been listening to, John had wondered how to give Mikayla another reason for staying with them. Giving her a more personal stake in the family business was probably a little selfish in some ways—it was one more reason for her to hesitate if she chose to leave them—but John felt the good outweighed the bad in this case.

Before they could go into more detail, Mikayla stepped out of the fitting room and headed back to them. She went to put several of the outfits back on the rack, but Brock stopped her.

"They're uncomfortable," she said as she tried again to hang them back where they belonged.

"Uncomfortable how?" Brock asked with a broad smile.

"Uncomfortable as in I would rather wear a suit of armor."

"Perfect." Brock grinned as he snatched the outfits away from her. "John and I want a fashion show tonight. You can point out the places these outfits are making uncomfortable, and we'll kiss them all better."

She smiled and threw her hands in the air, but John didn't miss the way her eyes darkened with arousal or the way she moved her legs as if to quell the tingling between them. It was almost like the real Mikayla was emerging once more. It was only now when she was starting to be herself again that he realized just how much she'd withdrawn in the last six months. Taking a year off even thinking about baby making, per Tracey's suggestion, was a great idea. But

how could they convince Mikayla without letting on that they'd heard the conversation?

The meeting with their lawyer went better than expected. Mikayla bought up a few points that John hadn't even considered, and their lawyer had seemed fairly confident he could convince the mining company that the contract was void due to the current working conditions. Their lawyer also made a few discreet enquiries about the medical consortium and discovered that they had indeed been relying on Lachlan's war hero status to keep their staff safe instead of hiring security of their own. Their lawyer had every intention of playing the two companies against each other and winning a favorable outcome for the Davidson family.

"We'll be in California for another week," Brock said to their lawyer as they left the office. "Then we're planning to head home, hopefully with a new security team on board."

"Just make sure they're all female," the lawyer said with a grim smile. "I don't even want to think about the legal ramifications of employees getting injured humping trees." The man shuddered, not the slightest trace of humor in his voice. John wanted to laugh at the image the lawyer conjured but managed to keep the urge under control and nodded instead.

Brock was already whispering in Mikayla's ear by the time they reached the elevator. Her legs wobbled as they stepped into the empty compartment, and Brock wasted no time pressing her between her two husbands.

"Baby girl," he whispered quietly. "John and I are going to remind you of all the reasons you married us."

She nodded and looked over her shoulder to give John a soft smile. Every instinct he owned screamed at him to urge her to her knees and ram his cock deep into her heavenly mouth. She pressed back against him as his dick grew against her ass cheeks. "I know what you're thinking," she said in a voice full of promise. "You, too," she said to Brock.



The walk back to their hotel seemed to take forever. Desperate to make love to his wife, John lifted her in his arms and carried her the last few hundred feet. By the time they made it to their room, his cock was nearly hard enough to tear through the material of his jeans.

“Hands and knees,” Brock said as soon as the door closed.

Mikayla dropped to all fours immediately, a soft smile gracing her beautiful lips—lips John planned to have wrapped around his cock any moment.

Brock nodded as John stripped off his clothes and knelt in front of Mikayla. She licked his cock as soon as he was close enough, and the unexpected caress sent his blood pressure soaring. It had been so long since they’d been together intimately that he wasn’t sure he would last through the first hard suck on his aching flesh.

Naked, Brock knelt behind Mikayla, lifted her dress over her hips and pulled her panties halfway down her thighs. The first slap took John by surprise. Again and again Brock’s large hand landed on Mikayla’s ass. “Why are you being punished, baby girl?”

She shook her head, her uncertain gaze meeting John’s own confused expression. Punished?

“This is for not talking to us.” Brock slapped her again, even harder. “This is for not trusting us enough to tell us how you felt.” The slaps didn’t abate, and for a moment John wondered whether he should intervene. Brock seemed angrier than John had ever seen him. “And this is for doubting that we love you.”

Tears flowed freely from Mikayla’s eyes, but she didn’t protest. Brock rubbed his hand soothingly over her reddened flesh. “Don’t leave me, baby girl,” he said, sounding on the verge of tears himself.

Mikayla’s expression showed her own concern, but then Brock did something else, and she closed her eyes for a moment and moaned loudly. As the heat from Brock’s spanking finally morphed into desire, Mikayla’s eyes darkened with arousal and a sensual smile graced her face. John couldn’t resist rubbing his cock gently against her lips. Without warning, she greedily sucked him into her mouth.

She worked his cock frantically, sucking harder as she shook with her own orgasm and Brock thrust into her from behind. The hard, urgent pace meant John's cock slid deeper down her throat every time Brock thrust into her pussy. She practically screamed around his erection as her whole body shook with release. John couldn't hold back his own orgasm any longer. Heat boiled in his groin, and then cum burst from his cock, filling her mouth, splashing her throat with his seed.

She swallowed convulsively, refusing to let him pull away. He caressed her hair and face as Brock finally stopped thrusting into her and held still. Brock leaned over, still lodged in her pussy, and kissed the back of her neck. "I love you, Mikayla," he said very seriously. "Please don't ever forget that."

Mikayla finally released the suction she had on John's cock and looked over her shoulder to Brock. John couldn't quite believe the hurt he read on Brock's face and again wondered if he should intervene. But Mikayla knew exactly what to say.

"I'm sorry, Master."

With a stifled groan, Brock wrapped his arms around her and rolled them both onto their sides on the floor. Still intimately joined, he closed his eyes and held his wife like she was the only anchor in his suddenly rocky world. John felt a touch of embarrassment for having witnessed something so intensely private. Brock had never shown any weakness in front of his younger brothers, and to witness it firsthand was somewhat humbling.

Both Lachlan and Brock always seemed like the responsible older brothers. Always in control, always doing the right thing, making the hard decisions, and it was easy to forget that they were human with the same frail emotions as the rest of them.

John moved away, quietly hoping Mikayla could reassure his brother that she had no intention of leaving.

## Chapter Five

Emotion sat like a heavy ball in her stomach. She'd been so caught up in her own misery she hadn't even noticed how difficult it had been for Brock to deal with everything that had been happening.

Caught in the vise-like grip of his arms, she lay quietly and accepted his intense embrace. She'd seen the concern on John's face as he'd left the room, and she'd felt even more wretched knowing that she'd let her husbands down.

"I'm sorry, Brock," she managed to whisper. "I didn't mean to hurt you. Please forgive me."

"I forgive you, baby girl, but you need to promise to be honest with me, with all of us, from now on. If you have a problem, you need to discuss it with your husbands, not bottle it inside."

She nodded again, struggling to keep the tears at bay.

"Good girl," he said, his hand stroking up and down her arm, over her hip, and to the edges of her sore bottom. "Let's get cleaned up. I need to take care of your ass or you won't sit comfortably for a week."

"Maybe that's a good thing," she said, still feeling remorse for what she'd put him through. "It might remind me not to keep secrets."

He laughed quietly. "That it might," then added thoughtfully, "but it will also stop me from spanking you again this week, and I suspect that you have quite a few spankings coming your way, baby girl. It's been a long time since I got to play with my sub properly."

Brock carefully rolled away from her, got to his feet, and lifted her into his arms. "Tomorrow," he said conversationally, "we'll go to California and visit Tracey and her husbands for a while. Then John

and I are going to lock you in our hotel room and keep you naked for five days straight.”

\* \* \* \*

Lachlan cursed at the latest proximity alarm. Now the bastards were landing in the dark as well. It didn't matter that he wasn't asleep or that they had night-vision equipment. It still pissed him off that they'd even think of trespassing in the middle of the fucking night.

He was halfway to the communications room when Ryan, Ty, and Bryce met him in the hallway. “We've got this one,” Ty said with his usual trademark smile. “You can answer the subspace communicator.”

Now that he was close enough, Lachlan could hear the insistent buzzing noise. He glanced back at his brothers, but they were almost at the end of the hall before it occurred to Lachlan that if it had been Mikayla, they wouldn't have been so keen to hand over the task.

When he saw the ID code, he wanted to run in the opposite direction, too. As much as he loved his mother, she could be a royal pain in the ass when something was on her mind.

“Hi, Mom,” he said, trying not to sound anything but neutral. The woman's talent for reading body language was as freaky as his own, and he knew any sign of weakness would lead to a lecture on whatever subject took her fancy.

“Lachlan, you look tired,” she began without preamble. He tried not to roll his eyes in irritation. Their parents were all well aware of the situation they were dealing with, so his mom should know exactly why he seemed tired.

“What's up, Mom?” he asked, trying not to sound exasperated. If she'd just get to the point, he'd be able to deal with whatever disaster she wanted him to handle and then he could go back to bed.

“I met a lovely young lady today,” she said casually. She'd started many a conversation with the exact same opening line when she'd

been trying to set him up on a date. Had she forgotten he was married now? He raised an eyebrow, letting his irritation leak into his body language. She noticed.

“Well anyway, she said she was Peter’s fiancée and—”

Lachlan cut off her words. “Is she still there?”

His mother looked a little alarmed at his vehemence but shook her head. “We just wondered what was going on. Your fathers reckon Peter would never marry anyone besides Mikayla, but Sandra and I were wondering if maybe you’d finally reconsidered. I mean, with Mikayla’s miscarriage, it makes sense that you would take on a few extra wives to complete your family.”

She took a deep breath but started talking again before Lachlan could get his temper under control enough to set his mother straight. “You know, none of you are getting any younger, and Sandra and I didn’t birth eight sons between us just to end up with no grandchildren.” She folded her arms, and he sensed her deliberate attempt to intimidate him into silence. It may have worked when he was seven, but she seemed to have forgotten he was a grown man.

“First of all,” he said, but she went to cut him off. He widened his stance, crossed his arms, and lowered his voice. He loved the woman dearly, but she sure could push his buttons. “First of all,” he repeated, “Jessie Evans is dangerous. She is not engaged to Peter, and the last time Peter saw her was in court as she tried to sue us for everything we’ve got.” His mother opened her mouth, but he spoke over her before she could get the first word out. “Secondly, you are very lucky that Mikayla didn’t overhear that rant. If I ever hear you talk so callously about her miscarriage again, I will refuse to take your calls. Are we clear?”

His mother nodded but looked really shocked at his harsh words. A moment later her expression turned to one of remorse as if she’d just realized what she’d said. “Oh, honey, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean it the way it came out. You know we love Mikayla. It’s just that we’d love grandchildren too, and with all eight of you married to the same

woman...” Her words trailed off as she realized she was digging herself back into the same hole.

“Mom,” Lachlan said, trying to see the argument from all angles, “we will have children. If Mikayla can’t carry them herself, we’ll work something out. Please just let it go for now.”

“O...okay,” she said, seeming uncharacteristically unsure of herself. “But what should we do if Jessie turns up again?”

“Call the police and have her arrested. I’m going to contact our lawyer and get a restraining order in place. Jessie Evans has gone far enough.”

His mother nodded, but she still seemed hesitant.

“I’ll let you know if she comes back.”

Lachlan nodded, said his goodbyes, and then leaned his elbows on the desk. He scrubbed a hand over his face and tried not to think about how devastated Mikayla would’ve been if she’d overheard that conversation. For the first time since she’d left with Brock and John, Lachlan was very glad she wasn’t close by.

He had no idea how long he sat there contemplating the situation, but he nearly jumped a foot in the air when he heard his brothers’ laughter as they came in through the security door at the front of the building. Shaken by his own uncharacteristic behavior, he went to meet them and get a run-down on what had happened with this group of raiders.

\* \* \* \*

She’d very literally been naked for three days straight, and she was beginning to think the whole wearing clothes thing was overrated. Any time the inclination took them, Brock and John turned to her with a wicked grin and moments later she was either screaming in orgasm or begging for one.

Brock had stayed true to his word and spanked her more than once. But right now she had a plug up her ass big enough to prepare

her for one of their cocks. It had been so long since she'd had anal sex with any of her men that Brock had insisted they take time to prepare her. Of course both Brock and John had "inspected" the damn thing several times in the last half hour, and thanks to their attentions she'd been on the verge of explosive orgasm the whole time.

Frustrated and needy, she dropped her hand to her clit just wanting to take the edge off, but John saw her, nodded at Brock, and the next thing she knew she was ass up face down over the sofa with her arms stretched out in front of her. She tried to wiggle so that she could press her clit against just about anything, but they held her trapped.

Brock tapped the end of the plug, and liquid warmth burst through her abdomen. He pulled it out a little way and then pushed it back in, then did it again and again, slowly fucking her with the plug. She moaned, but the sound was quickly stopped by John's cock. He wrapped her arms around his hips and stepped closer, forcing his cock deeper. He held her still, fucking her mouth in the same slow, lazy rhythm Brock was using.

She growled her irritation, but John managed to extricate his cock despite her desperate sucking and near death grip on his thighs. He stepped away.

"Naughty subs don't get rewards," Brock warned as he pushed the plug back into place.

"I'll be good," she promised but then ruined it by adding in a sexy voice, "very, very good." John laughed, and Brock landed a slap on her ass. A minute later, she found herself sitting on the most uncomfortable chair in the history of uncomfortable chairs, her hands secured behind her back, her legs tied open, and her clit and ass throbbing.

She growled when Brock turned back to his book and caressed her knee absently. "Be a good sub and I won't use the O-ring." Damn, she was frustrated enough that even the thing she despised the most didn't

seem worse than sitting on this chair, on the verge of orgasm, waiting for her husbands to let her come.

“O-ring?” John asked curiously. Brock pulled the despised mouth piece from his pocket and Mikayla nearly choked on how close she’d come to actually wearing the damn thing. She shut her mouth, grinding her teeth together just in case Brock changed his mind.

John looked more than a little curious, and she really, really wanted to tell him not even to think about it. But of course talking now would give Brock the perfect excuse to put the damn thing on her, so she kept quiet and dropped her head down to avoid making demands with her eyes.

“Good girl,” Brock said, obviously aware of her reaction.

They made her wait, but eventually John knelt at her feet and touched her intimately with his tongue. She moaned at the delicious sensation, nearly crying with relief when Brock loosened the straps on her legs and John pulled her pussy closer to his mouth.

Brock stood behind her, playing with her aching nipples as he watched his brother bring her to the brink of orgasm. Her entire body shook, her breathing labored, her back arched, her toes curled, but then John pulled away. She wanted to scream at them, but she bit her tongue because Brock had left that damn O-ring right in her line of vision.

With her arms still secured behind her back, she could only wait helplessly, hopefully begging them with her body without demanding enough to earn the gag.

“Good girl,” Brock said again as he soothed her hair away from her eyes. “Good subs get rewarded.” She tried to hide her relief, but he saw it anyway and ran a soothing hand over her chest and shoulders. “Stand up.” She shuffled to the edge of the seat, grateful to feel Brock’s steadying hand between her shoulder blades. John urged her onto her knees and then eased her forward, lowering her head and shoulders to the floor. He released her wrists from their bindings,



helped her move her arms to a more comfortable position, and massaged the tired muscles.

Brock removed the butt plug and left the room for a few moments. When he came back, she could clearly hear the sound of lube as he slicked his cock. The blunt head pressed against her anus, and she eagerly pressed back against him. He slapped her thigh, ordered her to stay still, and then eased into her back passage. She panted as the delicious sting wound dark desire through her. He fucked her carefully, like she was fragile, and she wanted to growl at the slow burn, but when he pulled from her completely, she just wanted to cry.

He moved to the edge of the sofa and lay back. John lifted her off the floor and carried her over to Brock. He arranged her over Brock with her back to his chest. John pushed her knees almost to her shoulders and held her there as Brock worked his cock back into her ass. She sighed with relief as John pushed her legs wide and fit his cock against her pussy.

Their movements started awkwardly, but they soon found a rhythm and fucked her like she hadn't been fucked in months. Over and over, harder, deeper, each of her men made love to her like she was the only woman in the universe.

She cried out as Brock grabbed her nipples roughly, twisting the sensitive nubs until she melted around the pleasure. He lowered one hand to her clit, and she was lost.

Heat burst through her abdomen, the rocking-rolling sensation of having them both inside her while her body went into meltdown, stealing her voice, stealing her breath, stealing her sanity. She screamed as every muscle shook with release.

Vaguely aware of them both coming at the same time, Mikayla closed her eyes and thanked the heavens for her amazing men. John leaned over to kiss her softly as Brock shifted to nibble on her earlobe.

Exhausted, she closed her eyes.

\* \* \* \*

“She’s asleep,” John said, feeling pretty good about the whole fucking-their-wife-into-unconsciousness thing. It was stupid and macho bullshit, but he couldn’t quite convince himself not to be so satisfied.

“Go get cleaned up,” Brock said. “I’ll stay here.”

John laughed at Brock’s obvious contentment, and then pulled his softening cock out of Mikayla’s heavenly warmth. She was achingly beautiful like this. She lay sprawled across Brock’s big body, her legs open, her face relaxed in sleep, and John couldn’t think of any place he’d rather be.

But the shower beckoned, and the sooner he got cleaned up, the sooner he could hold Mikayla for the rest of the night. The communicator buzzed before he could get three steps, so he turned and answered the damn thing. Luckily it was Lachlan. Anyone else might’ve been shocked by him answering the sub-space communicator naked as a jaybird.

“We have a problem,” Lachlan said immediately. “Where’s Mikayla?”

“Asleep,” John answered, feeling a little irritated. Did Lachlan think he wasn’t looking after their wife?

“Good, but grab a headset,” Lachlan ordered. Peeved at his brother’s highhanded attitude, John did as ordered only because he was concerned for his wife. If Lachlan didn’t want Mikayla to hear, then it was a solid bet that it wasn’t good news. As soon as he had the headset in place, he nodded for Lachlan to continue.

“A few days ago Jessie Evans introduced herself to our parents as Peter’s fiancée. I set them straight, but today she arrived with a handful of papers claiming that Mikayla isn’t really Mikayla Noone. Mom sent them to our lawyer, and he says the papers look legitimate enough. Bryce put a call in to some old friends, and we’re trying to verify the information.”

John wanted to yell at Lachlan for being fool enough to believe anything provided by Jessie Evans, but he didn't want to risk waking Mikayla, so he ground his teeth together and nodded instead.

"Jessie is claiming that none of our marriages to Mikayla are genuine and that we provided fraudulent information to the courts." Fuck. The woman wasn't satisfied with trying to take their money and assets. Now she was trying to throw their asses in jail as well.

John nodded again, this time too worried he wouldn't be able to control his temper if he so much as opened his mouth.

"I think," Lachlan continued, "that there is a logical explanation. We just have to find it." John nodded in agreement and moved to take the ear piece off. Twelve months ago, if Mikayla had woken and found them talking on the communicator in complete silence, she wouldn't have let up until he'd relayed the conversation word for word. He wasn't so sure her reaction would be the same at the moment, but he didn't want to risk it.

Swallowing down his anger, John finally managed to speak in a level voice.

"We need to see the doctor again day after tomorrow, and then we were planning to head back to home."

Lachlan nodded, relief obvious on his face. "Good," he said, "we'll hire female security staff as soon as we can, but with the vitamin supplement, we should at least be able to protect Mikayla if things get out of hand."

"I'll let you know when we're leaving," John said carefully, hopefully giving Lachlan the message not to call while Mikayla was around. Jessie Evans had already done enough damage, and until they knew what the hell was going on, he'd rather Mikayla not be involved. Considering the way she'd reacted when Brock had basically hidden her in the clothing store while John dealt with Jessie's unexpected appearance, he felt fully justified in protecting her this way. She'd been angry when they'd hidden the original court case from her, but that was before she'd had several months of doubting

herself. She was just beginning to find her true self again, and John was determined to give her time. They'd explain it all later, hopefully when it was all sorted out.

## Chapter Six

“Welcome home, little one,” Lachlan said as he pulled her into his embrace. “I’ve missed you.”

She smiled happily and very nearly bounced from husband to husband as she greeted them all after stepping off the cruiser. She looked happier than she had in months, and Lachlan smiled gratefully at Brock and John. Whatever they’d said or done had worked. She was back to being the woman they’d married, not the stressed, timid woman she’d become in the past few months.

Ryan and Ty wrapped themselves around Mikayla and did their usual disappearing act. Lachlan smiled. Hopefully, Mikayla had gotten some sleep on their trip because she wasn’t going to get any with those two. She waved over her head, obviously more than happy to go along with the twin’s plans.

\* \* \* \*

Mikayla giggled happily as Ryan and Ty rushed her from the room. She suspected that the others were merely waiting for her to get out of earshot before they discussed their trip and her reactions in minute detail. She loved that they cared so much, but even now, when she knew that most of her emotional issues and concerns had been blown out of proportion by a lack of vitamin D, she couldn’t help worrying that she wasn’t the woman they needed.

Surely they deserved a woman braver than her. She’d never considered herself a coward before, but everyone had a breaking point. Maybe she’d found hers. Put simply, the thought of becoming

pregnant again filled her with mind-numbing dread. Somehow, in her head, pregnancy had become synonymous with fear and anguish, not the beginning of a new life. Even knowing on an intellectual level that her anxiety was higher than the situation warranted still didn't give her the ability to overcome it. She just hoped she could hide it long enough from her husbands to get over the damn problem.

Finally reaching Ryan and Ty's quarters, the twins wasted no time in getting all three of them naked. Hands roamed over every inch of her skin, relearning her shape, igniting the flames of her arousal. She moaned as Ryan took a nipple in his mouth and Ty stroked a hand over her already dripping pussy.

"We missed you, darlin'," Ty said in between soft kisses and stinging little bites on the back of her neck. She moaned as Ryan bit down on the nipple he held captive and then swirled his tongue around and around the aching nub.

"I missed you, too," she managed to gasp out.

"Can't wait," Ryan said as Ty lifted her up and Ryan grabbed her knees, encouraging her to wrap her legs around his waist. His hard cock pressed against her, sliding into her pussy slowly as Ty dripped lube against her ass. Incredible tingling sensations skittered all over her as Ty finally pushed his cock into her back passage.

They stayed that way, just breathing, Mikayla simply enjoying the feeling of being one with her men. Gentle kisses and soft sighs filled the moments, but then Mikayla's muscles pulsed of their own volition, and her men began to move.

In and out, harder, deeper, but in slow rhythm like they were savoring every sweet stroke. Mikayla could feel her orgasm building rapidly. Ryan and Ty started moving faster, their coordination perfect as they built the speed, the motion, the friction. Mikayla ground her teeth, trying to hold back her climax, but then Ryan whispered three little words and she was lost.

Every nerve ending tingled as energy exploded outward. She held onto Ryan, crying out as orgasm overwhelmed her and her men's

movements faltered. They held her tight, their breathing rapid as she pulsed around their cocks, dragging their climaxes from them.

“I love you, too,” she managed to whisper in response to Ryan’s words.

Swallowing hard, she held back the tears that threatened. It was so silly to feel this way when her men so obviously loved her, but she couldn’t hold back the worry that maybe she didn’t deserve them.

“Shower time,” Ryan said happily. A moment later, Ty moved away from her, and Ryan, still intimately joined with her legs around his waist, carried her into the bathroom. By the time they finished “cleaning” her, she was so exhausted that she had no more time to worry. She slept soundly for the first time in a long time.

\* \* \* \*

Finally able to talk without fear of Mikayla overhearing, John and Brock filled their brothers in on what they’d learned in their limited amount of investigating while on Earth.

Basically, Mikayla Noone hadn’t been born.

She existed. She had social security records, job and travel history, and taxation records, but they only went back to her eighteenth birthday. Everything before that was a blank. No school or medical records could be located. It was possible that she’d been born off-world, but those records were always transferred to the central human database, so there should’ve at least been some trace of what Mikayla Noone did or where she’d been before she’d suddenly appeared at age eighteen.

The momentary uncomfortable thought that Mikayla wasn’t human flitted through John’s head. But he quickly dismissed it.

Of course, he knew that none of his brothers would love Mikayla any less if she wasn’t human—they weren’t that narrow-minded—but there were few species compatible with humans in a reproductive

sense. The brief moment of anger that she might've been lying to them quickly melted into guilt for not trusting his wife.

"So now what?" Peter asked, looking about as confused as John felt. "If Jessie can get this information in front of a judge, the last verdict is liable to be overturned. I really, really don't want Mikayla to have to go through that again. Surely Jessie would find a way around the eighth brother issue this time.

"I guess we need to ask her," Brock said. He didn't look happy about it, but did they really have a choice?

"No," Peter said stubbornly. "We'll figure it out without upsetting Mikayla."

"Fine," John said, feeling caught between protecting the woman they loved and needing to know the truth. "We won't ask her unless Jessie manages to get a court date before we can figure it out."

His brothers nodded in agreement.

\* \* \* \*

"Time to feed you," Ryan said as he rolled off the bed and offered Mikayla a hand up.

"What time is it?" she asked, still feeling very relaxed and lethargic.

"Dinner time," Ty said with a wink. "Although considering that it's Peter's turn to cook, we're considering renaming it to 'inedible, jaw-breaking, unidentifiable-goo-on-a-plate' time."

She giggled quietly but didn't say a word. As much as she loved him, Peter really was an awful cook, and she sincerely hoped there never came a day when they had to rely on his culinary skills to keep them alive.

Mikayla barely made it to her feet before Ty lifted her into his arms and carried her into the bathroom. "I missed you, darlin'," he said as he lowered her to sit on the vanity while Ryan adjusted the water temperature in the shower.



“I missed you, too, but didn’t we already have a shower?”

“That one didn’t count,” Ty said as he pulled her close and kissed her breathless.

When she could finally get her voice working, she nodded in agreement. Was there such thing as too clean?

“Anything interesting happen while I was away?” she asked, as Ryan fiddled with the water pressure and Ty gathered some towels.

“Not really,” Ryan said in a suspiciously neutral tone. She glared at him a moment before turning his answer into a question.

“Not really?” she asked, waiting for one of them to expand on the non-answer.

“Well,” Ty said, shrugging casually, “we did have to untangle a raider who got stuck in a tree.” Almost as if he was warming to the diversionary story, he smiled and began to fill in details. Mikayla winced when she heard what part of the poor man had been held captive by a tree knot.

“Anything else?” Mikayla asked when Ty finally finished his story.

“I wonder if the others would notice if I kept you in my bed all week,” Ty said, obviously avoiding answering her question. She kissed him, ready to demand a real answer, but then reality intruded, and she wondered if she really wanted to know. Uncomfortable with the self-revelation, she tried not to overthink it as she took the coward’s way out and stuck with the current topic.

“As much as I love the idea, I’m certain that your brothers would not only notice but probably be a tad upset.” Completely pissed would be closer to the mark, but Ryan and Ty managed to look crestfallen all the same. “Besides,” she added, trying to ignore their feigned miserable expressions. “I’ll be back in the lab tomorrow.” They both brightened considerably.

“That’s true,” Ryan said with a wicked expression, “we’ll need to find time for several coffee breaks.” Mikayla rolled her eyes at his lascivious expression and wagging eyebrows.

“True,” she said, already looking forward to doing some actual work tomorrow,

She laughed happily as Ty lifted her and the three of them managed to step into the shower stall together. Within moments, she was on the verge of climax, and by the time they’d finished making love to her again, they were very late for dinner.

\* \* \* \*

“They’re hiding something from me,” Mikayla said to Tracey over the subspace communicator several days later.

“Maybe it was just them excited for you to be back,” she said thoughtfully, “but knowing how much they worry about you, I think you’re right. It’s probably more than that.”

Mikayla nodded as she slid onto the chair in front of the screen. “Trouble is I don’t think I want to know.”

“Mikayla,” Tracey said, sounding concerned. “Do you have any idea what it could be about?”

“Jessie Evans.”

“Seriously? I thought the courts settled that already.”

“So did I,” Mikayla said, “but we ran into her in New York and Brock and John hid me in a clothing store, and I sort of...well I sort of let them.”

Tracey looked at her as if she’d grown a second head.

“I know,” Mikayla said in answer to the unasked question, “but I was just feeling so worn out, and it seemed easier to let them take care of me than face whatever vitriol that woman wanted to hurl.”

Tracey leaned back in her chair and watched Mikayla for a moment. “I’ll accept that. You were tired and sad, but what’s your excuse now?”

Mikayla grimaced at Tracey’s easy summation of her current predicament. How many times had she explained her need to retain her independence amid eight husbands? Yes, she’d been tired and

unhappy, but that wasn't the case anymore, and she really didn't have any excuse for remaining in the dark.

"I guess I need to go hunt down some answers," she said, feeling a rueful smile spread across her face.

"Now that's the Mikayla I know."

Mikayla waved to her friend as she leaned over to close the connection. "Thanks for reminding me."

## Chapter Seven

She marched into his office just the way she used to. Lachlan sat back in his chair and threaded his fingers together as he waited for her to say what was on her mind. She looked beautiful. The fear and stress she'd struggled with was gone and the vibrant, passionate woman was back—at least for the moment.

"I need to know," she stated bluntly.

"Agreed," he said and watched as her determination morphed into delight. As much as he wanted to protect her, she had a right to know the accusations that were being launched in her direction. Knowing that she wanted to know made it so much easier to treat her the way he always had.

She crossed her arms and waited for him to explain.

"Jessie Evans is claiming that you are not Mikayla Noone." He watched her smile falter and then her face flush with anger.

"That heinous, callous bitch. I suppose she managed to figure out that Mikayla Noone wasn't my name until I turned eighteen. Did she figure out who I was? Did she fill you in on all the sordid details?"

She was shaking and looked ready to wring the woman's neck, but all Lachlan could think was how proud he was of her. Instead of letting the woman undermine her, Mikayla was ready to kick some ass.

"No, she didn't," Bryce said from the doorway. "She doesn't know your real name."

"My real name," she said, emphasizing the word "real" with an almost growl, "is Mikayla Davidson." She turned to face Bryce and Matt as they came in the room. "Before I married you my name was

Mikayla Noone. Noone as in No One. Who I was before that is none of her goddamn business.”

“I totally agree,” Bryce said affably. Mikayla was holding her jaw so tightly that Lachlan was beginning to fear for her teeth. “But the courts might think otherwise.”

“Why?” she asked, obviously irritated beyond measure.

“Because Jessie Evans is claiming that our marriages are not legal and that we provided false information to the courts the last time.”

“Oh for fuck’s sake,” she said, sounding completely and totally exasperated. “Jessie Evans is a fucking cow.” Lachlan really wanted to spank her ass for swearing but couldn’t quite wipe the broad smile off his own face. When his wife had a reason she was quite magnificent in her anger. “Call our lawyer. Tell him to contact this man,” she said as she typed a name and contact details into Lachlan’s data tablet. “He will confirm that my details are sealed and none of Jessie Evans’s goddamn business.”

“Okay,” Lachlan said happily, “problem solved. Thanks, Mikayla.”

She looked shocked by his answer. Jessie Evans deserved every harsh word that came out of Mikayla’s mouth, but he was happy to let the matter simply drop now. If Mikayla was able to provide them with enough details to discredit Jessie Evans’s information, then that’s all he needed to know.

“You—” She cut herself off, looked between the three of them, and tried again. “You don’t want an explanation?”

“Nope,” Bryce said as leaned against Lachlan’s desk and crossed his ankles. He was the picture of relaxation, and Lachlan grinned as Matt tried to follow his lead. Matt, however, wasn’t quite as successful, and his need to always be in control reared its head.

“But if you want to tell us...” he said but trailed off when he saw Bryce’s reaction. “Fine, okay, shutting up now.”

Mikayla smiled at him, her anger completely gone.

“You’re not going to be happy until you know,” she said quietly.

Matt shook his head. “No, honey, I’m fine. I know who you are now. That’s what’s important.”

“So you have no curiosity over what happened before I met you.” Lachlan tried to hide his laugh as Mikayla looked very confused. It was obvious Matt really wanted to know.

“N–no,” he lied. Mikayla half grinned, half frowned, but told him anyway.

“It’s not that big a deal,” she said, shrugging her shoulders. “You already know I didn’t have any family before meeting you and your brothers. As a kid I was bounced around in the foster system. By the time I was sixteen, I wanted nothing more than to be in charge of my own life.” She ran a hand through her hair, and Lachlan realized with a small jolt that she wasn’t nearly as calm as she was pretending.

“Anyway, there aren’t many jobs a sixteen-year-old can get that will pay the rent and buy food, so I fell in with a group of people who weren’t exactly honest. By the time I realized what they actually were doing, I was in pretty deep.” She took a big breath as if there wasn’t quite enough oxygen in the air and then lounged against the wall in an obvious effort to appear calm. “So, basically, I turned state’s witness, helped to prosecute the leaders, and got myself and a couple of others out of the mess we were in.”

Lachlan glanced at Bryce and realized he was probably thinking the same thing he was. The level of security surrounding her new identity meant that the people she’d testified against were seriously high on the criminal food chain. The fact that Bryce hadn’t been able to learn anything through official channels meant that Mikayla was probably lucky to have walked away alive. Thank God they hadn’t tried Bryce’s unofficial channels.

“Are you safe now?” Bryce asked. Lachlan could see the muscle ticking in Bryce’s jaw and suspected he was feeling as worried as Lachlan. All the color had drained from Matt’s face.

“Yes,” she said reassuringly. “Even if they manage to figure out who I am, the people who went to jail because of my testimony are long dead. Do you remember the Andromedes Prison ship disaster?”

Andromedes? Hell, did he ever. While transferring notorious crime bosses, the intergalactic transport ship had been attacked and boarded by members of a major crime family. The captain had ordered the self-destruct, and the explosion had obliterated the prison ship and the ship belonging to their attackers. Passengers on a passing cruise liner had recorded the whole thing. About a year later, the prison ship’s internal security images had been released on intergalactic news channels and left very little doubt as to the fate of both the prisoners and crew.

“Fuck me,” Matt said on a breathless wheeze as he finally took a seat.

“Matt,” she said as she moved to sit beside him. “It’s okay. Even if there are any family members left, the government seized all their assets and I doubt they have enough money to worry about seeking revenge. I was a pretty small piece of the case that convicted them, and they didn’t know my part in it.”

“Then why take a new name? Why not go back to your old name?”

“Because it wasn’t who I was anymore. Mikayla Noone might’ve been no one, but the memories I have of my childhood were not worth holding on to. I wanted to start anew. If I hadn’t fallen for Jet’s lies, I might still be Mikayla Noone, quiet, efficient administration assistant.”

She smiled that hauntingly sexy smile, and Lachlan wanted nothing more than to drag her over his desk and love her until they didn’t have the energy to move. “I know what you’re thinking,” she said to Bryce.

He laughed and asked his question anyway. “With that type of experience behind you, how did you fall for Jet’s lies?”

She shrugged and tilted her head to the side. Her smile seemed a little crooked. "I guess, like a lot of people, I wanted to be loved so desperately I didn't try to look past the surface."

"And now?" Matt asked as he pulled her onto his lap.

"Now, I am loved by eight very incredible men who I know will love me regardless of my colorful past." Matt looked very relieved by her answer.

Bryce looked thoughtful for a moment and then said a little hesitantly, "I might still have the right contacts to create a background to go with the rest of you."

Mikayla smiled slightly. "Angels or devils?" she asked.

"Angels," Bryce said with a smile. "All legal and, well, sort of aboveboard, I promise you. I have a friend who creates rock-solid backgrounds for undercover cops. I'm certain he can fill in a few blanks for you."

"Okay," she said, looking more relieved than Lachlan would've expected. "Maybe if there are enough details, Jessie Evans and her bloodhounds might back off."

"It's settled then," Bryce said with a nod as he stood up. "No time like the present." He grinned as he left the room and Lachlan marveled at how easily Bryce could contain his curiosity. Despite the fact that Lachlan would deny it until his last breath, he really wanted to know Mikayla's name before she'd changed it.

She snuggled into Matt's embrace and looked more relaxed than she had in a long time.

"Why don't you two go take a nap," Lachlan said with a quick wink, partially wishing he could be there as well but also realizing that Matt needed to spend some quality time with their wife. The man still looked very pale.

Mikayla smiled at Lachlan, mouthed the words "thank you" and then whispered in Matt's ear. A smile broke across Matt's face at the same time he lifted their wife into his arms and carried her from the



room. Lachlan laughed quietly as he realized the ungrateful bastard hadn't even said goodbye.

\* \* \* \*

Matt's arms trembled slightly as he held Mikayla close. He'd known she was reluctant to talk about her past, but he never would've guessed the reality. God, he wanted to lock her in his room and never let the world near her again.

They'd barely made it out of Lachlan's office when the proximity alert started shrieking once more. He could hear Lachlan cursing as he collected his weapons, and Matt got out of the way as Bryce bolted down the hall to the communications room and then came running back a moment later.

"What have we got?" Lachlan asked him.

"We've got two ships. One aft," Bryce said as he ran toward them. "One...ah...not aft?"

"Not aft?" Lachlan asked with a raised eyebrow. Bryce just shrugged. He'd spent most of his life on Earth, so it was no surprise he wasn't familiar with ship terminology.

"Stay with Mikayla," Lachlan ordered Matt.

"We'll be in the lab. I'll keep her safe." Matt promised as he put Mikayla on her feet and grabbed her hand.

Together they ran to lab and found Ryan sitting calmly reading the intergalactic news on the computer.

"Did you know," he said as they entered the room, "that the mouse tears have been declared an illegal substance?"

"What?" Mikayla and Matt asked at the same time.

"Nice of the medical consortium to tell us, huh?"

"You have got to be kidding me," Matt said, knowing he sounded completely pissed off. The only reason they were still on this strange jungle planet was because they were protecting the female scientists. If the profit—legal profit at least—had been taken out of the mouse

tears equation, then it was a good bet that the medical consortium would pull their research funding. Considering their track record, it was even more likely that they would abandon their scientists right here.

“Are the girls safe?” Matt felt Mikayla bristle at his use of the term “girls,” but he didn’t have time to apologize. With two ships worth of raiders and probably the rest of his brothers outside trying to track them down, he felt responsible for all four women in his care.

“Ty is with them,” Ryan said reassuringly. “I was talking to them when the alarm sounded.”

Matt nodded, grateful that he didn’t have to figure out how to keep Mikayla safe and somehow get the scientists here or Mikayla over there. Ryan seemed a little too calm and entirely engrossed with his computer until Matt realized he was monitoring the teams’ movements.

Lachlan and Bryce had headed toward the larger of the two raiding vessels and John, Brock, and Peter had headed out the front door to intercept the smaller craft. Matt almost held his breath as twin images from their own satellite played on the screen.

“Oh my,” Mikayla said with a stifled laugh. “You weren’t kidding when you described the potency.” On the screen you could very clearly see John stun two men who’d basically wrapped around each other and were pressed together like a sandwich. Matt had the fleeting hope that they were gay and then dismissed his concern just as quickly. What did he care if those two ended up having an awkward conversation? They shouldn’t have been on the planet in the first place.

Lachlan and Bryce weren’t so lucky. Five women had stepped off the larger ship and quickly spread out. Even on the tiny screen it was obvious that they were well armed and fully prepared to defend themselves.

“Call Bryce and Lachlan back,” Matt said urgently.

"I can't," Ryan said frantically as he did something and started talking to John. Within moments Brock, Peter, and John were all headed toward Lachlan and Bryce's position. Fortunately, Lachlan and Bryce had already discovered the armed-to-the-teeth status of their newest visitors and stopped to assess the situation.

Matt could finally breathe when he saw his brothers all head back to the station without making contact with the raiders.

Within minutes they'd all gathered in the dining area, and a swift agreement followed. Only one of the female scientists, Misha, had argued to stay, but when Ryan showed her the news bulletin, she'd blanched and quickly agreed with everyone else.

Whether their contracts were void or not, none of them were willing to risk their lives any longer to stop the harvesting of what was now an illegal substance. It was like being caught in the middle of the poppy fields as a drug war broke out. None of them wanted to be the collateral damage.

"So we're all agreed." Brock glanced around the room as everyone nodded. "Okay, we need to move as much as we can into the ship part of the stations. We'll leave the rest behind for now and hope it survives until we can come back with an armed escort. Let's get this done."

Everyone scattered in different directions, and soon it was only Matt and Mikayla sitting at the table.

"Are you okay?" Matt asked his wife. She looked pale, and he knew she hated change. It wasn't until her confession about being shuffled around from foster home to foster home that he really understood her love of stability.

"I'm fine," she said absently, even though it was very obvious that she wasn't. She must've seen the incredulity on his face because she smiled and tried to be more convincing. "Really, I'm fine. I know that we're taking most of the station with us, and all of my husbands will be there. It's just that sudden change dredges up a lot of memories I'd rather forget."

Matt held her for a moment and then stood up and stepped back to see her face more clearly.

“Hopefully one day you’ll share some of those memories.”

“Why would you want to know?” she asked, sounding surprised that he would ask.

“Because your memories are part of who you are. Even when we convince ourselves that they can’t hurt us anymore, something like this, the sudden change, comes along and throws a wrench in the works. If your husbands know what might trigger these sad memories, we can make certain that we’re there to help you through them.”

She smiled at him, stood, and touched his face with obvious affection. “You’ve got a noble streak a mile wide, haven’t you? You knew in just a few moments that I was in trouble that day you met me. You’ll always know when I’m feeling scared. It’s just part of who you are, Matt Davidson.” She stepped into his embrace and wrapped her arms around him. “In some ways, I owe you so much. If you hadn’t gotten involved that first day, my life could be very different. And not in a good way.” She ran her hand over the frown mark on his forehead. “But I promise I will share some memories with you soon.”

## Chapter Eight

After three weeks of living in cramped conditions, Mikayla was practically ready to scream. She'd finally told the rest of her husbands about her fear of becoming pregnant again, and their reactions had ranged from guilt and remorse that they'd asked her to have their children to absolute horror and anger that she would feel the need to hide her feelings from them.

Having had time to come to terms with her own emotions, she could see their reactions were born from their love and fear for her. Mikayla had spent most of the last few days trying to smooth over the upheaval and reassure her men that she wouldn't keep that sort of information from them again.

But still, a little space would be nice.

She managed to make it all the way into the kitchen only to find Ty seemed to have had the same idea. "Need some alone time?" he asked with a smile.

Mikayla nodded, feeling a little bit childish in her need to get away from men who did everything they did because they loved her.

"I can go," Ty said hesitantly. It was obvious that he'd started to prepare the evening meal, and Mikayla was more than happy for the help. Feeding herself and eight men had been a challenge. Feeding three extra women, all of whom seemed to think they were above domestic chores, took a lot of planning.

"No, that's okay," Mikayla said as she stepped to the sink and began rinsing vegetables, "we can be alone together."

Ty smiled, and Mikayla caught the first real sign that her husband was beginning to feel the strain as well. The ship only held just under

half of the living space the station had in total, so they'd all had to make compromises. Add that to the fact that the medical science station-ship mysteriously hadn't started and they'd had no time to fix it before leaving the planet urgently, tempers were fraying at an alarming rate.

"Everything okay?" Mikayla asked quietly.

Ty looked at her for a moment and then blew out a big breath. "Fine," he answered, sounding rather tired. "It's been hard sharing a ship with those women. They don't seem to have any inclination to make allowances at all. The three of them have been arguing with Ryan since we left the planet." He turned and whispered conspiratorially, "I think Ryan is about ready to stun their asses. Next time they piss him off, you're liable to hear three dull thuds as they hit the ground."

Mikayla giggled a little and then placed her hand over her mouth. "I think I'd cheer if he did," she said, a little shocked at her own reaction.

Ty smiled as well, nodding his agreement. Mikayla had thought the female scientists were difficult to deal with back on the planet, but that was nothing compared to the angst they were causing now.

"I have half a mind not to feed them," she said as she went back to washing vegetables. "But it would only mean they'd have to use the kitchen to fend for themselves, and I sure don't want to be left to clean that mess up."

\* \* \* \*

Ryan saw Jacqueline come into the lab and tried to hide his irritation. Three weeks of attempting to avoid the woman in the cramped space of the ship was starting to wear on him. Unfortunately, Jacqueline had made it rather obvious that she had no respect for Mikayla, or for her marriage vows, and therefore saw him and his brothers as available rather than married men.

“Where’s Bryce?” she asked in a tone that suggested she had a right to know. The woman was nothing if not direct. At first Ryan had dismissed her behavior as the quirks of her personality. A lot of scientific researchers had difficulty in a social setting, and he’d just figured she was one of them. He’d never been quite so wrong in his life.

“I’m not sure,” he answered honestly. Bryce could be anywhere on the ship. It’s not like they had a roster.

“What about Matt?” she asked in an imperious tone.

“Sorry,” he answered, trying to remain polite but having difficulty. He breathed a silent sigh of relief when Ty came back into the lab.

“Jacqueline? Anything I can help you with?” Ty asked as he walked past her, heading back to his desk.

“Call Bryce and Matt for me,” she said in a helpless-sounding voice that somehow came across as a command. Ty looked to Ryan for clarification, but all Ryan could do was shake his head in irritation. Perhaps calling Bryce would be a good thing. He’d been the first to notice Jacqueline’s predatory ways, and despite his brothers’ explanations of the type of personalities often found in their line of work, Bryce had steadfastly held to his own beliefs. Ryan nodded slightly, and Ty went to the communicator to track down Bryce and Matt.

“They’re in their quarters,” Brock told him from the control room. “I’ll send them your way.”

“No need,” Jacqueline said sweetly, “I’ll just go meet them there.” She left the room before Ryan and Ty could think to stop her.

\* \* \* \*

“Hell,” Bryce said as he rolled off the bed and onto his feet. Jacqueline wanting to meet them in their quarters was not a good sign. Fortunately, Matt agreed with him because they both headed for the

door at the same time. If they could get into the common areas of the ship, they'd be a lot safer.

Bryce laughed softly as he realized they were essentially running from one little female, but the danger Jacqueline presented was far more than physical. None of them would ever be unfaithful to Mikayla, but Jacqueline seemed determined to undermine Mikayla's faith in her men.

Well, Bryce sure as hell wasn't going to let his wife down.

They'd barely made it halfway to the lab when Jacqueline came around the corner. The woman must've run to get there so fast. Lord knew they were both moving double-time.

"Oh," she said, looking disappointed. "I was hoping to speak to you two privately." Considering that they were the only three in that particular hallway, it should've been private enough.

"Why?" Bryce said as he crossed his arms and tried to look intimidating. Jacqueline simply ignored his body language, threaded her hand into the crook of his arm and attempted to turn him back toward their living quarters. Bryce managed to untangle himself. To hell with being polite. If the woman couldn't understand his silent signals to leave him alone, then maybe he needed to be more direct.

"I have a proposal for you two that I think you'll find very interesting." She turned to Matt and walked her fingers up his arm. Matt took a step away.

"What sort of proposal?" he asked in an annoyed voice.

"This sort of proposal," she said with what was probably supposed to be a seductive laugh. She pulled some sort of perfume bottle from her pocket, sprayed the stuff on her neck and stepped closer to them both.

Bryce felt the effects immediately. His cock hardened against his jeans, his breathing became labored, and his head filled with sensual images of fucking, claiming, marking his woman. He heard a strangled groan as the perfume—obviously made from mouse tears—affected Matt as well.



“Now,” Jacqueline said as she sighed happily, “wouldn’t it be more comfortable if we took this back to your quarters?”

“I have a better idea,” Matt said as he lifted Jacqueline over his shoulder. For a single, suspended moment Bryce worried that his brother wasn’t thinking clearly, but one look at the determination on Matt’s face was enough to put his mind at ease.

Jacqueline giggled happily as Matt marched down the hallway. She wasn’t quite so impressed when, after they made it to the lab in record time, Matt unceremoniously dumped Jacqueline onto one of the lab tables.

“Where is it?” Matt demanded as he ran his hands over Jacqueline’s clothes trying to find the perfume bottle. Jacqueline shrieked in outrage, but Matt finally found the offensive concoction and relieved her of it.

“Call Lachlan,” Bryce said in a strained voice to Ryan. “And steer clear of her,” he said, pointing at Jacqueline, so angry that he didn’t even want to say her name out loud. “She’s wearing a perfume made from mouse tears.” Ryan nodded and went straight to the communicator.

Bryce and Matt took up aggressive positions in front of both the doors. There was no way Jacqueline was leaving the room wearing a perfume designed to rob a man of his choices. Bryce ground his teeth against the need to find his wife and work off some of the strain. First he needed to contain Jacqueline, and then he needed to make sure he was in control of himself. The last thing he wanted to do was hurt his wife.

It seemed to take forever but Lachlan finally made it to the lab. He took one look at the rigid stances of the four men in the room and quickly realized the situation.

Unfortunately for Jacqueline, the woman chose that exact moment to leap off the table and have a very unladylike tantrum. Before she could shout out more than a couple of horrible threats, Lachlan threw a bucket of soapy water over her. They all watched impassively as

Jacqueline screamed like she was melting and then very inelegantly threw herself onto the floor and kicked her feet like a bratty three-year-old.

“Are you two okay?” he asked Bryce and Matt. When they shook their heads he said, “Head back to your quarters. I’ll deal with this.”

Bryce glanced over at Ryan and Ty, nodded his thanks to Lachlan, and turned to hurry back to their quarters. Matt was right behind him.

\* \* \* \*

Mikayla was feeling a little better just from being able to spend some time alone. Talking to Ty had helped, but he’d headed back to the lab once dinner was under control. It had been a rough few weeks for all of them, but they were almost back to Earth, and they’d soon be able to wave goodbye to the female scientists. Mikayla was humming softly when Ryan and Ty came into the room. Ryan looked pissed, and Ty looked more annoyed than she’d ever seen him. For two men who were usually joking around, it was a pretty sure sign that the close quarters were affecting everyone.

“Jacqueline kept some of the mouse tears,” Ryan said immediately, his voice laced with anger. Fabulous. The woman was not only condescending and predatory in her attitude, but it would seem that she had no idea how dangerous the mouse tears really were. What the hell had she been thinking? She should’ve just left the dangerous cocktail on the planet. It was, after all, considered an illegal substance now.

“What happened?” Mikayla asked, concerned for all involved. After their experiences on the planet, she knew that men operating under a full dose of the mouse tears weren’t in control of their own impulses.

“We managed to counteract the effects with the vitamin cocktail, but that bitch wasn’t aware that we had any left,” Ty said, practically grinding his teeth to dust.

“She exposed you deliberately?” Mikayla said, feeling her hackles rise. One very smart, self-involved scientist was about to get a boot up her ass.

“It’s okay,” Ryan said as he pulled Mikayla into his embrace. “Lachlan has already taken care of it.”

“Wish I’d been there to see that,” Mikayla said without any humor. “What about Misha and Keira? Were they involved?”

Ty shook his head and tried to smile reassuringly, but Mikayla could see the strain around his eyes and noticed the hard erection pressed against his pants. “They knew nothing about it. It seems that Jacqueline decided to help herself to a few of your husbands. Fortunately, Ryan and I weren’t her actual targets, so we got a fairly mild dose in comparison.”

“Tell me where the hell the husband-stealing bitch is so I can go scratch her eyes out.” Mikayla threw the spoon she’d been holding into the sink. “Who were her actual targets?” she growled, trying to calm down even though her temper spiraled higher.

“Matt and Bryce,” Ty said in a calm voice, obviously trying not to upset Mikayla any more.

“Where are they?” she demanded.

“In their quarters,” Ryan said as he grabbed her hand. John stepped into the kitchen and quickly took over the dinner preparations.

Ryan and Ty both looked relieved, and the three of them practically ran from the room. “What about the others?” She could feel her heart pounding hard as her stomach twisted with anxiety. Nothing her husbands did while under the influence of such a powerful drug was their fault, but she’d be crazy to not at least try to protect them.

“Lachlan, Brock, Peter, and John were in a meeting when it all unfolded. Lachlan has the perfume Jacqueline used and is currently waiting for the bitch to stop screaming before he dumps another bucket of soapy water over her head.” He grinned, but there was no

humor in that smile. “None of the others got close enough to be affected.”

Mikayla nodded. “What about you two?” she asked again. “Are you going to be okay?”

Ryan flashed that mischievous grin she adored and asked, “Is that an invitation to come watch?”

“Always,” she said, really meaning it. She had no more secrets to tell, and she planned to keep it that way.

They finally reached the door to the room Matt and Bryce currently shared with Ryan and Ty. Mikayla noticed that Ryan unlocked the door that was usually never locked and stepped inside in front of her, obviously trying to protect her if Matt and Bryce’s condition had worsened.

Fortunately, it hadn’t.

Bryce and Matt looked very pleased to see her and very, very aroused but more in control than she’d expected.

“Damn,” Matt muttered as he looked down at his erect cock. “It was just starting to go down, and you stepped in the door.”

“I can leave,” she said with a big grin on her face.

“Not a chance,” Bryce said with an answering smile.

“Clothes off, Mrs. Davidson,” Matt said as he stepped closer and lifted her dress over her head. He shook his head when he saw she wore a bra but quickly removed the offending garment. Her panties hit the floor a moment later.

Naked, surrounded by four of her aroused husbands, Mikayla could already feel desire winding through her, plumping her breasts, tightening her nipples, heating her pussy. Ryan and Ty lounged against the wall seemingly willing to watch, at least for the moment.

Bryce ripped his shirt over his head, threw it to the floor, and pulled her into his arms for a breath-stealing kiss. She felt Matt press naked against her back, his thick, hard cock rubbing against her crease. “I want your ass,” he whispered and then began sucking on her earlobe.

“That means I get your delicious pussy,” Bryce said as he dropped to his knees and arranged her legs over his shoulders. Matt balanced her from behind as Bryce licked and sucked her pussy like a man possessed. His tongue thrust hard and deep, his fingers kneading the muscles of her thighs as he gradually worked her legs wider and pushed his tongue even deeper. She was shaking, panting, begging, about to explode in orgasm when he slowed the pace and licked her leisurely.

Nearly boneless with need, Mikayla barely managed to get her hands tangled in his hair before he pulled away. Matt held her up as Bryce placed her feet on the ground. “I love you,” Bryce said sincerely as he stripped off his jeans and then lifted her into his arms. He took the two steps back to the bed and then lowered onto the edge. He pulled her down, flattening her breasts against his chest and holding her still in his arms.

She wanted to squirm, still so close to orgasm that she could almost taste it. She felt Matt’s hands smooth over her ass before he dipped his fingers lower and caressed her moist pussy lips. She gasped at the too soft sensation and tried to press back onto his fingers. He laughed and pressed a hand against her lower back, effectively pinning her against Bryce and making it impossible for her to move.

She moaned as Matt rubbed his cock against her slippery pussy and eased into her body. Almost as soon as he was in, he pulled back quickly and slammed in again. He grabbed her hips, holding her steady as he plunged into her over and over. She screamed as her orgasm broke and every nerve ending in her body vibrated with pleasure. Wave after wave of liquid heat drenched her veins, and she panted hard as Matt slowed his movements.

Calloused hands caressed her spine, and Mikayla felt Matt pull away. Bryce lifted her, managing to fit his cock against her still pulsing flesh and pushed into her pussy. Leisurely, he fucked her, and she gasped as cold lube landed on her anus. Matt massaged it into her

back passage, his thick fingers setting her nerve endings ablaze once more.

Finally, he fit the head of his cock against her rosette and pushed past the muscle. Her ass immediately squeezed him. He growled as the grip tightened. For a moment he held still, and then he exploded into action. Bryce kept pace with his brother, thrusting harder, faster, deeper into her pussy as Matt did the same in her ass.

Breathing harshly, both Matt and Bryce seemed to be grinding their teeth. Mikayla could barely breathe as Matt used his hips and cock to press her harder between them. Her swollen clit jammed against Bryce's groin, her ass and pussy full, her body crushed between two men who loved her. Mikayla gasped as climax suddenly belted through her.

Both men groaned as her ass and pussy caressed their cocks and demanded their climax in return. They held still, and she could feel them pulsing inside her, pumping their cum deep into her body.

"I love you," Bryce whispered as Matt kissed her neck.

"So do I," Matt added.

"So do we," Ryan said from the spot where he lounged against the wall, "and right now, I think you two need to move."

Matt looked over his shoulder, and whatever he saw made him move out of the way. Bryce laughed softly as he rolled Mikayla onto her back and lifted off the bed also. Ryan and Ty advanced on her, their cocks stiff, their breathing harsh and labored.

"I need that beautiful mouth," Ty said to her as he caressed his cock.

She nodded her approval, and Ryan helped her onto her hands and knees in the middle of the bed. She licked the head of Ty's cock playfully, but he growled low in his throat and pressed harder against her mouth. Ryan thrust into her pussy in one hard lunge, jolting her and forcing Ty's cock further down her throat.

She swallowed and Ty groaned as she ran her tongue over the silky flesh of his cock. Matt and Bryce had disappeared into the

bathroom to get cleaned up, but when they came back their cocks were just as hard as they'd been a few moments ago.

They stood watching as Ryan and Ty fucked her, increasing their speed as their need for her grew. Soon they were slamming into her pussy and mouth, branding her, claiming her, sending her excitement higher.

She groaned as Ty caressed her face with his hands at the same moment that Ryan pinched her clit. Orgasm burst through her, shaking every limb, as she sucked harder on Ty's cock and her pussy clenched around Ryan. Her arms shook as Ty grabbed her head, surged into her mouth, his cum pumping into her throat as Ryan swelled and hurled his seed into her pussy.

Her arms collapsed. Ty's cock fell from her mouth, but Ryan followed her down and pinned her to the bed. He kissed the back of her neck as he whispered, "Bryce and Matt need to paint you, darlin'. Shall I let them?"

She nodded. For some strange reason this always turned her on. Ryan and Ty stood back, smiling as Matt and Bryce helped her to sit on the edge of the mattress and whispered what they wanted her to do.

Practically writhing against the mattress from their dark words Mikayla opened her legs, dropped a hand to her pussy, and captured her clit between two fingers. When her men groaned in appreciation she pressed harder, teasing and flicking the hard nub until she shook on the edge of orgasm once more.

"That's it, sweetheart," Bryce encouraged. "Show us how much you want our cum."

She whimpered as heat curled through her, the eroticism of the moment overwhelming her senses. Her back arched as her fingers sped up, the wet, slippery sound joining her men's harsh breathing as Bryce and Matt neared completion.

The first hot jolt of semen hitting her breasts tipped her over the edge and she vibrated all over as climax claimed her. Each splash of

warm liquid increased her pleasure, and she closed her eyes as her men groaned their orgasms.

Panting harshly, Bryce and Matt leaned over and massaged their cum into her skin.

“I love you,” Matt whispered as he lifted her into his arms and carried her into the shower. She held on to him sleepily as Bryce stepped in behind them and cuddled her close. She laughed out loud when she felt two hard cocks pressing against her tired flesh.

By the time they finally left the shower, Mikayla was exhausted, sated, and very, very happy.



## **Epilogue**

Mikayla hummed quietly as she and Peter followed their nightly ritual of doing the dishes together. It took nearly four weeks to get back to Earth, and it had affected everyone badly. Unwilling to take the cruiser and risk spending time alone with Jacqueline, Lachlan had basically been the woman's shadow for the rest of the trip. Mikayla had been very glad to finally see the woman handed over to authorities.

The station was currently in synchronous orbit over North America, but without viewing windows, Mikayla felt like she could be practically anywhere in the universe.

"Is Jacqueline all right?" she asked as Lachlan came into the kitchen.

It was probably a little silly of her to worry for a woman who'd basically tried to steal a couple of her husbands against their will, but it seemed that Jacqueline's problems weren't as clear-cut as that. The woman honestly believed she'd done nothing wrong and couldn't seem to relate her actions back to what essentially amounted to attempted rape.

Bryce and Matt had been very angry with the woman by the time the mouse tears finally wore off, and Mikayla had to acknowledge that if the mouse tears had affected women instead of men, she'd be pretty pissed and a whole lot shaken if a man had tried that on her.

"Jacqueline is currently explaining her behavior to medical personnel," Ryan said as he followed Lachlan into the kitchen. "A very small amount of the perfume she created has been preserved as

evidence if she ever makes it to trial, and the rest has been dispersed into space.”

“Trial?” Mikayla asked with a shudder. She really, really didn’t want to find herself back in a court room again. Between all the problems Jessie Evans had created in recent years and the court case when she was seventeen, Mikayla had endured just about enough legal bullshit to last a lifetime.

“Don’t worry, little one,” Lachlan said. “It’s very unlikely that Jacqueline’s case will make it to court. The doctors are already saying that she suffers from a type of narcissistic disorder. She honestly doesn’t understand what she did was wrong, and the best place for her is under medical supervision, not prison.”

Mikayla nodded, hoping that was the case. If the woman was ill, then she needed treatment. It was also a relief to know that she wouldn’t be doing medical research anymore. Mikayla shuddered at the thought of the damage that could be done by a person with access to medical science and no discernable conscience.

“And now for the good news,” Ty said as he pulled her into his arms. “We have a new contract.”

“We do?” she asked, feeling just a touch of excitement. “Where?”

Ty gave her a quick squeeze and said dramatically, “Proposed mining planet M652wd.”

“Uh-huh,” she said, trying to inject as much sarcasm as she could into one tiny little word. Ty and Ryan just grinned, and she finally looked to Lachlan for an explanation.

“It’s a planet fairly similar to Earth. There is already a small farming colony established, so we shouldn’t run into any unexpected problems from furry critters.”

“Good to know,” she said with more than a little relief.

“What about the rest of the station?”

“Already taken care of,” Ryan said, sounding rather cocky. “We have an armed escort of mostly female soldiers, provided by the medical consortium in exchange for not suing their asses.”

“We threatened to sue them?” she asked apprehensively. All this legal action was starting to wear her down.

“Of course,” Ty said, sounding just as cocky as his twin. “They sent a woman with a history of unusual behavior into a dangerous situation and put lives at risk. The bad press would’ve been a public relations disaster, and it turned out far cheaper just to provide the escort, help us retrieve the rest of our equipment, and get us set up on a never heard of planet far away from their medical research.”

Mikayla couldn’t help but grin with him. In the end, the medical consortium was responsible for the behavior of their employees, and it did make sense that they should also be held accountable for fixing the mess. At least the Davidson brothers had managed to replace the canceled contract.

“So tell me about the new contract,” she said, trying to sound enthusiastic. Change wasn’t always bad. She had to remember that. And besides, her husbands and the station were all going with her, so it wasn’t really that big a change.

As the rest of her husbands joined them in the kitchen and began discussing the details of the next planet, Mikayla took a moment to watch her men interact. They always worked as a team. Even when they disagreed, each opinion was valid and they found a way to work together.

And in that moment Mikayla felt like the luckiest woman in the universe.

It didn’t matter where they were going. In the end all that mattered was that they went together. Lachlan must’ve seen her dreamy expression because he pulled her into his embrace and whispered all the things he planned to do on the trip to the new planet.

Yes, change could be good.

Especially when it was *that* inspiring.

**End of Book 4: Keen Inclination**

**To be continued in  
Book 5: Hot Inspiration**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

Visit her website at [www.abbyblake.webs.com](http://www.abbyblake.webs.com).

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