

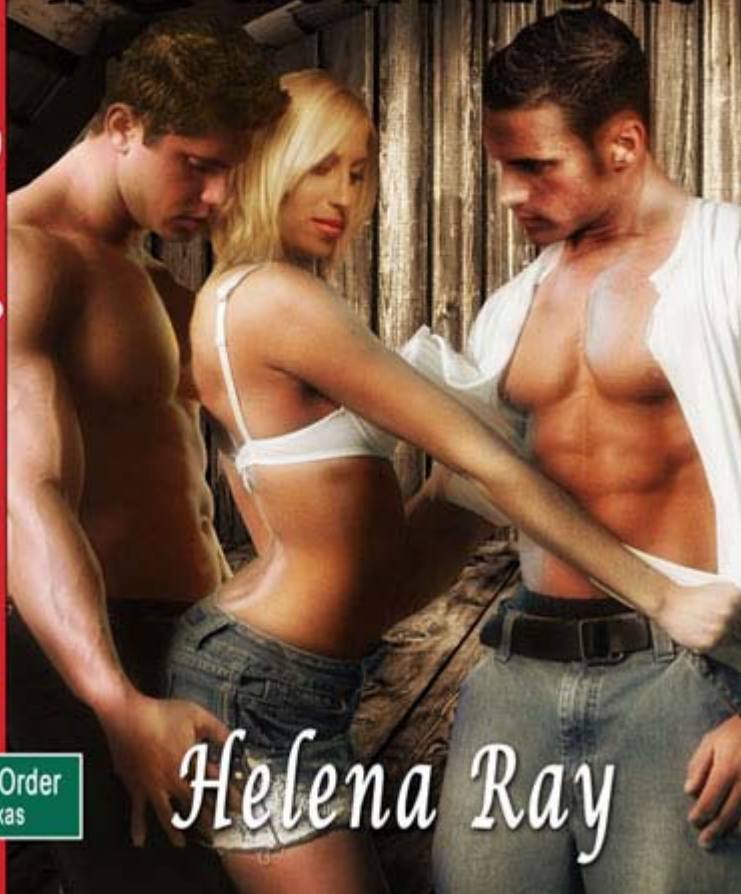
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Male Order
Texas

A Bride *for* TWO ROUGHNECKS



Helena Ray

Male Order, Texas

A Bride for Two Roughnecks

Alexis Darnielle is fed up with her life as a ballerina in Kansas. She travels to Male Order's world-famous dance hall, the Twirling Lasso, to learn how to relax. Roughneck Tristan Burke is eager to help the sheltered virgin learn to lower her guard in more ways than one.

However, there's more to Tristan than meets the eye. He and Jeremiah Pierce, the Twirling Lasso's handsome owner, are the heirs to the Burke Pierce Energy fortune. When Jeremiah falls for Alexis, too, she finds herself the object of two sexy oil billionaires' affections.

But big trouble is brewing at Burke Pierce. Before Alexis can start loving Tristan and Jeremiah, the three of them need to find their way out of big oil's biggest legal scandal. Alexis sees a way to save the day and her two men, but first she needs to overcome her past and learn to let go.

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

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DEDICATION

To Sarah, for sticking with me through the worst and two-steppin'
with me through the best.

A BRIDE FOR TWO ROUGHNECKS

Male Order, Texas

HELENA RAY
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Prologue

I fell. I fell on stage. I fell while dancing Juliet.

Alexis Darnielle relived the night's performance over and over again as she headed toward the stage door of the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. All her life, she had waited for the moment when she could dance in front of thousands of people and share her passion. And to do it while dancing the lead in Sergei Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, her favorite ballet by far...It made every tear, every bead of sweat, and every droplet of blood drawn in breaking in a new pair of pointe shoes worth it.

She pushed through the stage door, a tattered pair of those damned shoes clutched in her fist. Instantly, the crowd reacted. The gasps, whispers, and high-pitched complaints of tiny ballerinas still optimistic about the world were deafening. Alexis kept her head down and watched a pair of military boots fall into line next to her dainty flats.

A few days ago, the crowd's reaction had been joyous, and she'd been overjoyed to receive them. She'd smiled and gracefully accepted all their praise. She'd signed old shoes and programs, telling each little hopeful girl that her dream would come true, too, someday.

How wrong she'd been.

"Alexis, this way." Her bodyguard took her by the upper arm and guided her toward the black town car awaiting her. She blinked the tears out of her eyes as she scurried past the row of bystanders that she knew had come to gawk at the fallen prima ballerina.

Well, she would make sure their glimpse was brief. The bodyguard opened the door to the town car, and she dove in. They pulled away from the crowd in silence, and Alexis rested her forehead against the window as she watched the lights of downtown Kansas City flicker by.

"Rough performance tonight, huh?"

Alexis shook her head against the glass and didn't bother to turn to Clint, her driver.

"You saw it?"

"Uh..." He paused, and Alexis's gut twisted a bit more. He had heard about it. Already. "I'm sorry, Miss Alexis. Everyone waits outside the Kauffman Center and—"

"No need to apologize, Clint. They were right."

God, she never would have given the performance of that night only a few weeks earlier. Before her stalker. Before the attack. Before the paranoia and the police reports and the arrests. Not that any of it mattered now. Her understudy would dance for the rest of the ballet's run. Receiving that news had twisted like the knife she pretended to stab herself with night after night in the ballet, but she understood her artistic director's reasoning. Since the attack, she hadn't been the same dancer he'd hired as a principal in the Kansas City Ballet, and she hadn't been worthy of Juliet.

Watching the town fly by, Alexis wondered what exactly she had achieved in her life, aside from dancing. An objective inventory of her life produced fairly dismal results. She was twenty-five years old and lived by herself. She had friends in the ballet, yes, but she was fairly certain they weren't like the friends most girls had. It was such a

competitive environment, and each always had a dagger handy should one of the girls slip and turn her back.

And her love life...What love life? She had devoted every waking moment to dance for as long as she could remember. And while the occasional heterosexual male wandered through the doors of Kansas's ballet studios, eligible bachelors were few and far between. Alexis knew that she was in her sexual prime, and it irked her to no end that she had not yet burst into the world of carnal exploration. In short, as much as it intimidated her, she was damn ready not to be a virgin anymore.

An idea began to form in Alexis's head as Clint pulled to a halt outside her apartment. She and her college "friends" had planned a road trip to California to audition for the Los Angeles Ballet that wove through famous dance locations in the Midwest and Southwest. They had, of course, gone on the trip without her as soon as she was cast as a principal at the Kansas City Ballet, but she still had the scribbled-on road maps stashed in the glove compartment of her Jeep.

Clearly, her life in Kansas City wasn't working. Maybe it was time to shove a few dresses and leotards into a bag and head out. Maybe it was time to start a new life and shed her image as the sheltered, helpless ballerina.

Maybe it was time to become a woman.

Chapter 1

Dusk had just settled on the outskirts of Male Order, Texas when Alexis steered her beat-up Jeep off the farm-to-market road and down a small dirt road. Signs on the highway promised this would take her to the Twirling Lasso, an establishment claiming to be “Home of the Finest Country Dancing in the World.” After too many hours on the road, Alexis was itching to partake in some of that dancing herself.

She parked in the dirt lot surrounding the building. For an establishment of so much notoriety, it was certainly unimpressive. The whole thing comprised of a rickety building with rusting aluminum siding, a neon sign with a cowboy and a flashing lasso, and an old bus out front rustier than the building itself.

Just when Alexis was about to give up on this stop on her road trip, the sound of a live band playing country music seeped out of the cracks in the building, calling to her. Ever a country girl, the sound of a banjo and a pedal steel always had her running to the source. She surveyed the parking lot. Nothing looked too shady here, so she could leave her luggage in the car, right? She spared a glance to her belongings and laughed inwardly at her uneasiness. As if anyone would want to steal her two bags packed with nothing but clothing and dance shoes.

She stretched one denim-clad leg out of her Jeep, then hauled the rest of her tall stature to the ground. Her height was always a concern when dancing with a partner. Being five foot eight wiped out a good portion of the male population as partners, and the rest fled, preferring to dance with a more diminutive woman.

Alexis determined not to dwell on the predicament and focused on knotting her long blonde hair in a ponytail before she entered the dance hall. It was so nice to dance without her hair plastered back in a perfect ballerina bun. Hell, it was blissful just dancing without constantly thinking about her technique, her turn-out, her extension... She shook her head free of those thoughts and bounced toward the entrance.

As she approached, a man and a woman burst through the poster-covered wooden door, laughing and hooting, already a little drunk even at the early hour.

"Well, hello there, little lady," the man said, turning his sight on Alexis.

"Hey, darlin'! My, my, aren't you cute?" His female companion joined in greeting her.

"Um, hi." She shifted from foot to foot, uncertain what to do in the face of such exuberance.

"You're new 'round these parts, ain't ya?" The man took off his black cowboy hat and took a little bow in front of Alexis. He was handsome in a dignified sort of way, with black hair peppered with silver. He stood a few inches above Alexis and his female companion. She was tall, with dyed brown hair in a braid that fell to the middle of her back.

"Well, I'm just on a trip across—"

"Ooh, we got us a tourist!" The woman clapped her hands and jumped a little. "Welcome to The Twirling Lasso, hon. I'm Janet Willis, and this here's Winston Fairchild." She indicated the man next to her, and he tossed one arm around Janet and extended the other toward Alexis.

"Alexis Darnielle." She tentatively took the hand offered to her and shook it. All of this was a little much for her. After all, she had promised herself not to develop any attachments on this trip.

“Well, Alexis, you pretty thing, come on in.” Janet turned and walked through the door, pulling Winston along with her. “You don’t mind going back in, honey?”

Winston sighed and followed Janet. “Whatever you say, darling.”

Alexis looked around at the suddenly empty entrance and decided to follow them through the door.

“ID, please.” A man in a cowboy hat sat perched over an old cash register with a beer in hand. Alexis handed him her driver’s license, and his eyes widened. “Well, I’ll be. Kansas!” He stood up and leaned over the register, calling out to someone behind Alexis. “We got us an out-of-towner, Max!”

She turned around to see an opening carved in one wall with a precariously balanced wooden beam serving as a bar. A mustachioed bartender waved in her direction. “Out-of-towners get a free beer!”

The band started back up, drawing Alexis’s attention to the dance floor. It was a wide concrete dance floor, and as the band played on, more and more men and women crowded the floor to dance the Texas two-step to an upbeat country number. After paying her cover, Alexis headed toward the tables covered in red-checkered tablecloths jammed in the corners of the dance floor. Even though the evening had cooled, the low ceiling trapped all the humidity coming off the dancers and raised the temperature throughout the hall.

Janet waved, and Alexis joined her and Winston at a table. The music blared at such a volume it made conversation nearly impossible, so she focused her attention on the dancers gliding across the floor. Their movements appeared effortless, no attention to the arch of their feet in the cowboy boots, no obsessive spotting of their turns, just people dancing and having a good time. She sighed and placed her chin on her hands, wishing that for herself.

“Well, aren’t you a wistful little one.” Janet interrupted her thoughts. “They really weren’t kidding about that ‘Finest Country Dancing’ thing.” Her smile was proud.

“But those of us not blessed with such ability are just fine, as well,” Winston said from across the table. “Before meeting this one, I was all left feet.” He gestured at Janet, and she slapped him on the back.

“And don’t you forget it!”

Winston laughed and gave Janet a quick kiss.

“You fancy man with your fancy car and your fancy house,” Janet teased, although Alexis didn’t quite understand.

The band started back up with a mid-tempo number laden with pedal steel. She watched as dancers once more crowded the floor. Looking around the bar, she noticed more men searching for partners than women. And from the looks of the men, that didn’t bother her at all. She noted the work-toned arms as men led their partners out onto the floor, and their tight, boot-cut jeans showed off several perfectly formed asses. These were real mean, unlike those Alexis knew back home. She felt herself flush just looking at them, but clamped down on any arousal. She couldn’t let herself go there, not yet.

A hand landed on Alexis’s shoulder, and she turned around to see the finest specimen of rugged attractiveness she had ever seen. He wasn’t terribly tall, but he made up for it in the muscular mass of his arms and chest. A sweep of dark blond hair shaded disarmingly bright blue eyes. His features were perfectly chiseled with a strong jawline and a small cleft in his chin. Just looking at him, Alexis couldn’t breathe.

“Would you like to dance?” Oh, god. His voice was a slow Texas drawl that made Alexis feel like honey was running through her veins.

She cleared her throat and dared to look directly into that startling gaze. “I’ve never two-stepped before...” She paused and looked at Janet and Winston, who nodded their encouragement. “But there’s a first time for everything, right?”

“Yes, indeed. There is.” Something darker in his tone made her pussy zing to life, wanting a certain first time to happen, and soon.

She accepted his extended hand, and he led her to the center of the dance floor. He arranged her body in a dance hold, and Alexis noticed that he was the perfect height to partner her.

“Okay, do you know the basic step?” he asked, settling one hand on the small of her back. Something inside of Alexis cried out for him to move his hand lower. Again, she tried to silence that base voice.

“Kind of. Slow, slow, quick, quick?”

He laughed at her description and began the dance. She struggled to force her feet to comply with the rhythm and found herself dancing on her toes, even though that was entirely unnecessary.

“Whoa, just relax there.” He slowed their dance. “You just gotta feel it. Stop worrying about your feet.”

“I’m a ballerina. My feet are my life.”

A smile spread across the man’s face. “Well, well. A ballerina.” He stopped dancing and held her at arm’s length. “I’m becoming quite the fan of the ballet.”

She felt her entire body erupt in a blush at his latent admiration of her assets, such as they were. She had always thought of herself as quite plain-looking, but clearly this cowboy thought different.

He brought her back to his body and resumed the dance. “I’m Tristan,” he offered, giving her a sly smile that revealed a set of perfectly white teeth.

“Alexis.” Her face burned with the power of her blush. Just being around him made her heart beat faster and sent a jolt straight between her legs. Never had a man affected her this way. She didn’t feel like the inept virgin around him. Instead, she became a creature of need, dominated by carnal desires she never knew she had.

Tristan turned her out, and for a moment, she felt the relaxation and freedom she had admired on the dance floor. When he pulled her back to him, he pressed the full length of his body against hers. Being so close to him set her pussy on fire, the musky scent of cologne and sweat filling her nostrils and intoxicating her.

He kept her against him, and suddenly, she felt a foreign sensation against her mound. A hard, denim-clad bulge pressed against her, and she realized that pressure came from his cock, hardened from his arousal. Alexis looked up into Tristan's eyes, and the weight of his stare indicated that he meant for her to feel his erection.

The song ended while they stood still, Tristan's hand pinning Alexis to his body. He dipped her body downward, and she stiffened when her senses once more took over. What the hell was she doing?

As soon as he returned her to a standing position, she quickly stepped backward, breaking his grasp.

"Thank you, Tristan," she managed as she looked around the dance hall, trying to regain her bearings.

"Sure thing, but don't you want to—" He took a step toward her and held out his arms in hopes of bringing her body against his again.

"I have to go." Alexis turned and hurried back to the table where Janet and Winston sat waiting.

"How was your first time, sweetie?"

Alexis stared at Janet in disbelief. Was it that obvious? Realizing she meant her first time *two-stepping*, Alexis let out a breath and smiled.

"Good, it was real good." She forced a grin then turned her focus back to the dance floor. Tristan was standing at the edge. He ran a hand up to sweep the tuft of hair away from his eyes and looked directly at Alexis.

She straightened in her chair and looked away, desperate for him not to see how he affected her, and contemplated running back to her Jeep.

* * * *

Tristan Burke's ears pricked when he heard Max, the beloved bartender of the Twirling Lasso, yell "Out-of-towners get a free beer!" Technically, yes, all out-of-towners were entitled to a beer

under Max's policy, but he only brought up the policy when an attractive, female out-of-towner stumbled into the Lasso.

Looking around from where he rested his back against the wall, beer in hand, at the edge of the dance floor, he searched for the unfamiliar face. All the regulars seemed to be there, along with a few of the fancier Male Order types. He supposed he should count himself in the latter category, but he forced that thought out of his mind for the moment.

Finally, his gaze landed on a tall blonde making her way to Janet Willis and Winston Fairchild's table. That couple never quite made sense to him. A real life cowgirl with an L.A. entertainment lawyer? To each their own, he guessed.

As he examined the newcomer, his cock strained against the tight denim of his jeans. She was the sexiest woman he had ever seen in real life. She was tall, and most of that height was legs. She wore skin-tight jeans that showed off those damn near perfect walking sticks. Her breasts were round and firm, just the right size for a good handful. And she was heart-stoppingly beautiful to boot. He could see the glow in her light brown eyes from across the room. With her high cheekbones and lightly tanned skin, she could be a model.

The longer he stared, the harder his cock grew, and he had to let his mind dwell on his current legal predicament to get rid of the erection. That was always good for killing his buzz.

He looked around again, making sure Jeremiah wasn't there. He would undoubtedly have some objection to Tristan picking up women in his establishment. Jeremiah be damned, Tristan had to touch this woman or he would explode. The music died down, and he saw her lean over in conversation with Janet and Winston. When she bent over, the waistband of her jeans dipped down, giving him a view of the top of her pretty little ass. Oh, how he wanted to get his hands on her rear end.

As the music started again, Tristan saw his opportunity to attack. She had thankfully accepted his invitation to dance, and they'd had a

few nice turns around the dance floor. His cock kept getting longer and harder as they danced, as if trying to reach out to the prize at the V of her legs. Finally, he couldn't take it any longer and pressed against her. He could have sworn he smelled her pussy getting wet, but she looked so scared when he had tried to go in for the kill. She had run away like a frightened deer, leaving him confused and hard.

Now she sat shyly at the table while Janet and Winston showed off their moves on the floor. They certainly were a pair on the floor. The odd couple had won several national competitions with all their spins and lifts, and watching them was one of the best parts of Thursday nights at the Lasso.

Poor Alexis, though, looked all alone at the table. Tristan was worried about her being too skittish, but he had an idea. After a quick stop at the bar, he headed toward Alexis.

"I think you were promised a beer." He walked up beside her and placed the beer in front of her. She looked a little frightened and turned toward the bar. After a reassuring nod from Max, she turned back to Tristan. "I'm not trying to poison you. I promise." He held up his hand in innocence.

"If you promise," she mumbled.

He watched in admiration as she threw back her head to take a swig from the bottle, revealing a long, graceful neck.

"What brings you to Male Order, sugar?" Tristan pulled up a chair and sat on it backward, crossing his arms over the chair's back.

"I'm on a road trip, actually." She took another swig, as if in need of a quick confidence-booster. "I'm from Kansas, and I'm on my way to California."

"By way of Male Order?" Tristan raised a skeptical brow. "Hate to inform you, but you're taking an awful indirect route."

She blushed, and Tristan admired the way it tinted her skin and flushed her lips. He focused on her lips for a moment, thinking about kissing them and how sweet they might feel wrapped around his—

"I'm going to famous dancing locales." Alexis's words interrupted his fantasy. "I've heard so much about the Lasso, and I just had to see it for myself."

"You actually came to Male Order for the Lasso?" he asked, and Alexis nodded. "Damn, you never hear that from a lady." She looked confused, and Tristan realized something. "Wait, you don't know about Male Order's more, uh, unique features, do you?"

She shook her head. "It's just a small town outside of Dallas, right? I know there's some important art and architecture here." She furrowed her brow, and Tristan's heart clenched at the adorable sight she made. "That can't be what you're talking about."

"Oh, you'll see soon enough, sweetie." Tristan laughed and, without noticing it, rested one of his hands on Alexis's. Her eyes shot up to meet his, and for a moment, she tensed. She appeared to decide something, and she relaxed under his touch. Daringly, he moved his fingers down to wrap around hers, and she slowly smiled at him.

"You know, I'm a bit of an outsider here, too. I'm just in from working on an oil rig out in East Texas. I've got some, uh, friends here in Male Order." She cocked her head to the side, and he decided to go in for the kill before she could ask too many questions. "Hey, what about another turn 'round the dance floor, sugar?"

She rose to her feet and didn't take her hand from his. "That sounds lovely."

He led her to the dance floor, and this time, he held her closer, letting himself feel her delicate body underneath his.

The music started, and Alexis's feet still moved in a stiff, anxious pattern.

"Relax." He lowered his face to whisper in her ear. "It's all about just going with the music, taking whatever the band throws at you."

She looked so delicate in his arms as he led her around the dance floor. This time he tried a few more turns, and each one loosened Alexis's body. When she spun out on his hand, her dance training certainly showed. Every muscle in her body was toned, and every

movement designed for maximum beauty. When her shirt rode up to show her pale midriff, every signal in his body demanded he touch it. Self-control was becoming very difficult around this little lady.

After the song ended, they returned to the table. Janet and Winston were still out thrilling the hall's patrons. Their absence provided an opening for Tristan to make his move.

"Hey, it's loud in here," he said, moving closer to her for effect. His jeans grew tighter at the proximity. "You wanna go outside?"

Once more, Alexis's eyes turned to those of a deer in the headlights, and Tristan felt an unfamiliar urge to comfort her.

"Look, I just wanna talk to you," he said, even though his cock begged for more. "I'm a little bit of an out-of-towner, too. It's nice to meet some folks without a real place in this town."

His frank tone appeared to soothe her, and she nodded and reached down to collect her things. He led her to the exit with a nod toward Janet and Winston on the floor. He chanced to put a hand at the lowest point on her back, just above her ass. The graceful way she moved pressed her ass into his hand with every step, and he knew he couldn't last just talking to her for too long.

Once they were outside, he rested his back against the rusting wall and tried to concentrate on willing his away his arousal. He closed his eyes as Alexis moved to stand in front of him, and neither said a word.

A hand on his chest caused his eyes to snap open. He saw Alexis standing there, her hand resting on his pectoral muscle. She stared at her hand for a moment then curled her fingers in his T-shirt. She raised her eyes to his and looked at him questioningly. He immediately recognized the flush of arousal on her cheeks and lips.

Inhaling her sweet scent and standing so close to her, his cock urged him to do something, anything. He raised one hand to her neck and entwined his fingers in the loose strands of fine blonde hair hanging there. She leaned into his touch, nuzzling her cheek against his hand then looking up at him, her eyes innocent and uncertain.

Gripping her neck firmly, Tristan closed the small distance between them and gently pressed his lips to hers. For a moment, she didn't react, and he worried if he had done something wrong. She'd initiated this, hadn't she? Her hesitation didn't last, though, and her body melded against his in response to his kiss.

He wrapped his arms around her, securing his grip on the writhing creature in his arms. He took her lower lip between his teeth and flicked her lip with his tongue. Alexis moaned softly and opened her mouth, letting Tristan fully explore the hot, sweet depths within.

Tristan's cock begged for attention, and his hips moved involuntarily against Alexis's softness. This time, instead of running away, she matched his gentle thrust and pressed her breasts closer against him. He dared to lower a hand, cupping one ass cheek to drag her closer to his straining cock. She let out a soft moan as she parted her legs and rolled her head backward. Tristan hurried to lave at her neck, his hips bucking toward her with each long, hot lick.

No longer able to restrain himself, Tristan moved a hand over her breast. Without warning, she jumped back, breaking their contact. Both stood in silence, their chests rising and falling in time with each other.

Alexis gulped and shook her head. "Not like this," she whispered, short of breath.

"But, sweetheart, we just—"

"Not like *this*." On the last word, she waved her hand, indicating the porch where they stood.

With that gesture of permission, Tristan stepped toward Alexis again and ran his hand down her back and over the curve of her ass.

"Then right this way, gorgeous."

* * * *

She had to break away from the intoxicating power of that kiss. Never before had Alexis lost herself that fully in another's embrace.

Tristan seemed to have the power to make her do things she never thought possible. Now, as he guided her toward the back of the Twirling Lasso, she wondered why none of her normal alarm bells were sounding.

Before she had time to contemplate the implications of that though, Tristan pushed her against the side of the wall. Every nerve ending fired to life as his mouth claimed her in a flaming hot kiss. One of her legs snaked around his, rubbing her pussy against his thigh through the denim, and thrust her hips against him, desperate for some sort of attention there.

Her thrusts were met with his, and his erection felt much larger and harder than it had before. Unfamiliar images flashed through her head of wrapping her hand around that erection, of holding it against her lips, even of letting it slip through the slippery folds of her pussy. Her heart felt about to beat out of her chest.

He took the hand from her neck and used it to cup one of her breasts. Her pussy clenched at the sensation, and she felt a wave of cream spill onto her panties. Men had touched her breasts before, but she had never had such a reaction, never felt her clit throb from the attention.

Tristan dragged his face up from hers, his hand still cupping her breasts. He looked down at her with a heavy-lidded gaze that assured her he was just as excited as she was. He moved his thumb on her breast, brushing over a nipple through the thin fabric of her shirt and bra. A low chuckle emitted from his chest when she jumped and squealed at the touch.

His hips pressed her pelvis closer to the wall, and he nodded his head to the right. "I'm staying at the apartment behind the Lasso." His voice was husky with arousal.

Even with her inexperience, Alexis knew exactly what that meant, and she wanted it.

“Okay,” she breathed, barely able to contain herself from reaching behind his neck and pulling his face to hers for another of those intoxicating kisses.

The two of them took off at a near run to the door on the north side of the Lasso. Tristan pulled keys out of his pocket and fumbled with them, muttering curses underneath his breath. He finally found the key he needed and kissed Alexis while opening the door. Once inside, he slammed the door behind Alexis and pressed her against it. She wrapped her legs around him and let him support her full weight against the door. This position put her head above his, and she put her hands to his face, enjoying having full control of the kiss.

Tristan backed away from the door, carrying Alexis to a faded brown leather couch in the corner of the room. He dropped her on it and began unbuttoning his shirt. The sight of that chiseled chest and stomach left Alexis breathless. His was a body conditioned by hours of hard, physical labor. Something else hard caught her attention. That bulge in his pants looked about ready to burst through the zipper. Uneasiness flashed through Alexis.

“Stop!” she cried just as Tristan finished unbuttoning his shirt. Her words stilled his movement. He looked confused and started buttoning his shirt again. “You don’t have to stop *that*.” She tried to smile to lighten the situation a little.

“Then what do I have to stop? Is this too much for you?” He sat on the couch across from Alexis and caressed one of her legs.

His touch felt incredible, better than anything she had ever known, but it felt too good. She pulled her legs to her chest and wrapped her arms around her knees.

“It’s just...” She didn’t want to say the words.

“What, beautiful?” he asked, genuine concern in his words.

“I’ve just...never done this before.”

“Well, why didn’t you say so?” Tristan said, relief in his voice. “We can just take this real nice and slow.” He crossed to where she was on the couch and sat next to her. He put an arm around her and

pulled her mouth to his for a slow but smoldering kiss. “There are plenty of things I can do to you.” He pulled his head back, revealing a mischievous grin.

Alexis was about to inquire about these things when Tristan tightened his grip on her and eased her onto her back. He lowered his body on top of her, taking his weight on his arms. They flexed under his bulk, and Alexis ran a hand up to feel the muscle. Tristan lowered his head as if to kiss her, but instead, he planted his lips on her neck and pressed light kisses there. Each one sent an erotic fluttering sensation straight to Alexis’s pussy. He moved down to the base of her neck, and Alexis’s body responded. Her hips bucked up against his stomach, and he raised his head to smile at her.

“Now don’t get too excited right away,” he said. “The best is yet to come.”

His hand found the top button of her blouse and unfastened it. His touch was painfully slow, adding to Alexis’s pleasure with every second that passed. The torturous touches continued down her front, and Alexis swore he avoided her breasts on purpose. By the time he had freed her from the shirt, her soft whimpering had turned to full-blown moans. He pushed it off her shoulders, and Alexis began undressing him as well. A hand around her wrist stopped her exploration.

“No, you’re getting it real slow tonight, gorgeous.”

His hands returned to her body, this time brushing all over her stomach. His mouth followed the trail of his hands, causing a furious tingling in her thighs. Finally, his fingers found their way to Alexis’s black satin bra. One finger traced down her cleavage then pressed underneath one breast, following its curve up to her nipple. He took the hardened nub in between two fingers, and Alexis let out an involuntary squeal.

“Hmm, so you like that?”

“I guess so.” Alexis’s words were uttered between pants as she raced to catch up with the beating of her own heart.

Tristan's eyes found hers, and another set of fingers pinched her other nipple, this time harder. Alexis writhed at the erotic pressure and pressed her breasts against Tristan's hands. He understood her silent plea and massaged them slowly, causing groans to rumble from her chest. One hand abandoned a breast and wrapped around Alexis to unclasp her bra and toss it aside.

Alexis had never been topless in front of a man before. Well, at least not in front of a man who was sexually attracted to women. Self-consciousness caused her skin to heat, and she instinctively twisted to cover her breasts.

"Don't do that." Tristan's voice was strained. "I wanna see every inch of you."

He returned his mouth to hers, stoking the embers of her desire with his talented tongue. His hands ventured downward to the button of her jeans. Her inner muscles clenched in anticipation of what was to come. Even though she knew this would happen eventually, Alexis had never really visualized herself under such a handsome stranger, and all of it was overwhelming her senses. She reluctantly broke their kiss.

"Tristan, Tristan, please."

"What, baby?"

Alexis looked up into his blue eyes and saw her own desire reflected there. "I need more, and I need it now."

Tristan started to move his hand then stopped it, the effort plain on his face. "You sure about this?"

In a move that startled her, her hand went to his and pushed it against the crotch of her pants. Her hips bucked at the sensation, her desire ripping all voluntary control away from her. Alexis's bodily assent appeared to wipe away any fear from Tristan's mind. His movements became more forceful as he rubbed between Alexis's legs. She humped his hand, thankful for the sensation against her attention-starved clit.

He stood up, and Alexis heard the sound of fabric ripping as he tore off his T-shirt. His massive body was suddenly on top of hers, and his erection pressed against her throbbing clit, the core of her desire. His kisses were desperate, a passionate mess of teeth and tongue. Alexis moaned as he forced a hand down the front of her jeans and pushed a finger against the wet folds of her pussy.

“You like that, baby? Because there’s much more where that came from.” She could only whimper in response, rational thought slipping away. He continued rubbing her, his finger occasionally rubbing over her clit and eliciting strangled cries, as he removed his own pants. He pushed himself onto his knees, revealing his cock to Alexis for the first time.

She couldn’t tear her focus from the impressive sight of his thick, hard cock. It twitched under her sight, and she thought she had never seen anything more erotic in her life. It was thick, and just the idea of wrapping her hand around it sent shivers racing over Alexis’s body. Even with her long fingers, she doubted she could fully encompass his girth.

Her study was interrupted by Tristan’s hands at the waistband of her jeans. She saw him focusing on the spot between her legs like a predator about to taste his sweetest prey. In an instant, her jeans and panties were off, leaving her entirely naked to Tristan. He stood, quickly shucking his pants, then returned to his position hovering over Alexis.

His cock bumped against the slick opening between her legs, and she flinched at the impact. While kissing her neck, Tristan returned his hand to her soaked pussy. He pushed his middle finger through her folds and teased her entrance. She thrust her hips forward, taking his finger into her virgin cunt.

She gasped as the first thing besides her own fingers penetrated her. The sensation was more than she could handle, and with only a few more thrusts of her hips, a blissful oblivion opened and

swallowed Alexis. She moaned loudly, pushing against Tristan, riding out her orgasm as he finger-fucked her.

“I’m gonna have to see you come again,” he whispered in her ear as she slowly recovered from her flight of ecstasy. She twisted underneath his hand, suddenly overly sensitive, and gasped when he withdrew his hand and grazed her clit on his way out.

“You’re gonna need a moment, aren’t you, honey?”

Alexis could only nod, completely breathless from what she had just experienced. Suddenly, she saw what all the fuss about this “sex” thing was, and she hadn’t even really had sex. Looking up at Tristan lying naked on top of her, her pussy squeezed, coming back to life after his blissful assault.

If this was a night of firsts, Alexis decided she might as well try something else. One of her hands wiggled down her body to where Tristan’s cock still bumped against her wet opening. Carefully, she moved her fingers to hold Tristan’s cockhead gently in a circle. His breath hitched, and Alexis decided to continue. Her hand closed around the head and pumped lightly. He thrust into her hand, giving her encouragement to continue. She slid her fist down his shaft, and its hardness sent a shiver racing through her body. It felt like satin wrapped around a hot steel rod. She squeezed a little harder and pulled her fist back. Tristan let out a deep-throated moan, emboldening Alexis for her next move.

She released his cock and put one hand on his chest, pushing him backward into a sitting position. Although he looked confused, he followed her lead. After holding his gaze for a long moment, Alexis repositioned herself over Tristan’s cock, which stood at full attention. Her mouth opened, and her tongue darted out, eager to taste cock for the first time. She brushed her lips against the head then took it into her mouth. The taste surprised her, a slight salty flavor with a slightly sweet aftertaste. His cock was so wide, and she worried about whether or not she could fit all of it inside her mouth. She decided to try,

opening as wide as she could and lowering her mouth over his throbbing erection.

“Hey.” The word from Tristan halted her, and he touched her shoulder and pulled her off his cock. “You do that, and I’ll be done in a few minutes.” His body pressed forward, returning Alexis to her back. “Tonight is about you, gorgeous. I want this to be good for you.”

A kiss sealed his words, and his hands returned to her breasts, squeezing and tweaking her nipples into little pebbles. He broke the kiss to move his mouth downward and close around one of the sensitive peaks. The wet heat of his mouth on her breast made Alexis’s hips fly upward, startled by the jolt of excitement straight to her pussy.

“What...was that?” she said between breaths.

Tristan responded by sucking the little bud into his mouth and running his tongue over it. The sharpness of the sensation caused Alexis to let out a small scream before she stopped herself. Tristan lifted her head and smiled at her.

“Don’t you worry. Nobody in the Lasso can hear.” He moved his mouth to her other breast and suckled at the nipple. His piercing blue gaze found Alexis’s eyes again. “And I want to hear you scream how much you like this.” His teeth closed over a nipple and pressed, causing Alexis to shriek in shocked pleasure. “Apparently, quite a bit.”

“I do enjoy it.” Her voice was only a breathy whisper. No woman could manage coherent speech under this man’s ministrations, Alexis decided.

His mouth ventured downward, and Alexis’s whole lower body tensed, completely prepared for another voyage into the land of supreme pleasure that Tristan had taken her to only moments earlier. He made his descent slowly, stopping to kiss, bite, and lick small areas of her flesh. His excruciating pace only made Alexis want him all the more. His tongue dragged over her belly button, and a sharp

zing went straight to her clit. A whimper escaped from her lips, an attempt to coax him into hurrying up.

He lifted his mouth from her flesh, and two hands settled on either thigh and pushed them apart. The air against her pussy and the feeling of being totally exposed had Alexis's pussy convulsing and sending out a fresh wave of cream. She looked into his face and saw open admiration there.

"You're beautiful." He massaged her thighs as he gazed at her open pussy. Slowly, he moved forward, and his tongue darted out to lick along the seam of her wet outer lips. It sent a cold chill through Alexis as the air-conditioning blew across her now completely drenched pussy. He parted the lips with two fingers and returned his face to her wet entrance. He flicked out and tapped against her engorged clit, drawing another scream out of her. He began licking and sucking her in earnest, his mouth devouring her cunt as if it were a delicious, decadent dessert. Alexis had no idea that this sensation was even possible, and she pushed her pelvis closer to his face, never wanting this moment to end but needing a release for her tension at the same time.

His tongue darted into her, and Tristan lapped the fresh cream she spilled. She felt her climax building inside of her and began rhythmically thrusting her hips against his face. He removed his hands, replacing them with two fingers. The pressure inside was just what Alexis needed. She felt her hips take on a life of their own, gyrating against Tristan furiously. He pumped his fingers in and out of her and bowed his head to tongue at her clit.

The wet heat of his mouth on her clit was all it took to propel Alexis into a frenzied joyride of ecstasy that had her moaning and writhing under Tristan's hands and mouth. Finally, she came down, only to find Tristan pumping his erection with one of his callused hands. The head was purple and swollen, and droplets of pre-cum rolled down its surface. He shifted his weight so that he hovered over Alexis and looked at her, pinning her with the intensity of his stare.

His eyes snapped shut, and steamy jets of liquid landed on her stomach and breasts, searing her skin where they landed.

Tristan collapsed at her side and pulled her to his muscular chest. The warmth of his body added to her feeling of contentment. He had just changed her. She was still a virgin, true, but now she had felt a cock in her hand and a mouth on her pussy. That had to count for something.

Tristan pulled himself to his feet. He grabbed his T-shirt then returned to Alexis. He ran it gently over her stomach, collecting the evidence of their romp. As he soaked up his cum in the shirt, he looked down at Alexis and bent to kiss her gently on the lips.

He finished his task and rose. Much to Alexis's disappointment, he flung her clothes to her in a wrinkled pile. Part of her had wanted to stay the night, to see what else he could offer. The rational part of her brain chimed in and reminded her that this was just a guy she'd met in a bar on a road trip. Certainly a story she would tell many times to her girlfriends, but not a great romance. She dressed quickly and made her way toward the door, hoping to slip out in time to make some time on the road and maybe make it to the New Mexico border by sunrise.

"And where do you think you're going?"

She turned to see Tristan standing with his shoulder against the doorjamb leading to a small kitchen, attired only in an unbuttoned pair of jeans. He moved toward her and drew her into his arm. For a moment they didn't move. Tristan just gazed down at her, allowing her ample time to take in the beauty of his face before he brushed a soft kiss across her lips. He landed a kiss on her neck, and Alexis felt herself melt against him. Who was she kidding? She didn't want to leave.

"So how long did you say you're staying in Male Order?"

"I didn't. I'm not sure if..."

Tristan released her and grabbed a piece of paper and a pen from the coffee table. He scrawled an address on it and handed it to Alexis.

“Go here. Tell ’em Tristan sent you, and I promise you’ll get at least one free night.” She looked warily at the piece of paper, wondering if this was one of those scenarios women’s defense courses warned about. “They rent out rooms in downtown Male Order,” Tristan said, as if sensing her unease. “I promise they’re legit.” His smile blinded her, and she made up her mind. She’d already screwed all the rules tonight by going home with a rough-looking cowboy she didn’t know. She might as well go check out his reference. It’s probably some sketchy motel, she thought grimly to herself.

“Okay, I’ll check it out. But if I get killed—”

Tristan’s hearty laugh cut her off. “I promise you, gorgeous. You ain’t gettin’ killed in this place.”

She eyed him suspiciously then deposited the paper in her back pocket.

“Well, then, I guess this is—”

“You’ll be back at the Lasso tomorrow night, yes?” Alexis hesitated before answering, and Tristan continued his pitch. “It’s Friday night, and everyone in town will be there. I promise I’ll introduce you to some characters that’ll blow your mind.”

He wanted to see her again! Alexis’s heart started racing, and she knew a stupid, giddy look must have been plastered across her face. “I’ll be there.”

Tristan pulled her into his embrace for another kiss, this one deliberate and concise. “I can’t hardly wait to see you again, Alexis.”

“You, too.”

She turned and walked straight into the closed door. Keeping her head down in embarrassment, she turned the knob and let herself out. Cars still occupied the dusty parking lot, including Alexis’s Jeep. She danced gleefully toward it, pulling a few chaînés turns as she neared her car. She opened the door and fell backward onto the driver’s side seat, heaving a deep sigh of contentment at the preceding events.

Now, to that sketchy locale. She started the car and continued her adventure, uncertain of what lay ahead, but bursting with excitement and anticipation anyway.

Chapter 2

Jeremiah strode into his office, slamming his briefcase on the desk. It flew open, and papers scattered across the cool marble floor. Jeremiah stooped to the ground to retrieve the documents but stopped to rub his temple. Ever since this whole business with the lawsuit began, he'd had an excruciating headache. Burke Pierce was infamous for their safety checks to the point where the triple and quadruple checks would lead to a profit loss. Jeremiah and Tristan's parents firmly believed in keeping their employees happy, healthy, and safe. That's why Jeremiah was still so perplexed over how the blast preventer blew on the rig and nearly killed one of his men. It just didn't add up.

"Nice, real professional. That's certainly the kind of thing that's going to win us the case."

Tristan. Of course.

"Yes, come on in, Burke. I'm not busy at all."

"Aw, come on. Is that any way to greet your best buddy?"

Feigning exasperation, Jeremiah rose to his full height, slightly taller than Tristan, and sighed. When he thought he had caught Tristan off guard, he punched him in the shoulder with a bit more force than would be comfortable.

"You fucker, that hurt!" Tristan came back with a playful left hook aimed at his face, but Jeremiah ducked and missed the blow.

"Reflexes, man, reflexes." He smirked as he grabbed one of Tristan's hands and pulled him into a quick brotherly hug. "Thanks for coming out. You're our only hope in the testimony."

Jeremiah nodded toward a pair of modernist leather armchairs facing the floor-to-ceiling window overlooking Male Order and finished picking up the papers.

He pulled a bottle of Dalmore 62 Scotch and two tumblers from his desk and joined Tristan in the armchairs.

They discussed the details of the case as they had many times before, coming to no new conclusion about the cause of the accident. Both were entirely frustrated with the whole situation.

“You coming back to the Lasso anytime soon?” Tristan asked as he poured himself a second Scotch. “Don’t worry. I left Jan and Win in charge for the day. We’re running a tight ship, but people are starting to ask questions.” Jeremiah looked out the window, not wanting to look Tristan in the eye. “This double life act that you put on with everyone else is getting old, not to mention it’s stupid in the first place. Why are you so invested in keeping it up?”

“It’s so refreshing to be known away from my family for once, to be my own man.”

“You’re the one who keeps telling me that the billionaires in Male Order aren’t like all the others, yet you still play-act like a two-year-old. It doesn’t make sense, Jer.”

Jeremiah knew there was at least a grain of truth in Tristan’s words, but now was not the time for self-exploration. That could come later.

“I’m not the only one with a double life.”

“I don’t have a double life. I just chose to stay out on the rig. I love it there, and I always have. I’m still honest about where I come from.”

“Oh, so you think I should leave Male Order and play roughneck on the rig while I wine and dine on the family money? That working out real well for you, Tristan?”

He grinned back at Jeremiah. “Hell yeah, it is. Well, except for the whole no-pussy thing. God, it’s rough out there...” Tristan trailed off,

and Jeremiah studied his expression. He seemed to be holding something back.

“What aren’t you telling me? You hiding a sweet pussy in Houston out by the rigs?”

“No, man. But I gotta tell you, there’s some sweet tail hanging ’round the Lasso right now.”

“No.” Jeremiah was firm. His was not that sort of establishment. He wouldn’t have the stereotypical Male Order gold diggers infiltrating his dance hall, not to mention types like Tristan hanging around looking for girls to corrupt. There were plenty of establishments in SoMale, the younger section of Male Order filled with hopeful young women from Dallas with ulterior motives, that catered to such a clientele. He operated a friendly, down-home sort of operation. That’s why he wanted it completely separate from his professional life.

“But this girl’s not on the prowl, man, I swear.”

“That’s what they all say.”

“Not her. She’s a sweet country girl from Kansas. She didn’t know a lick about what goes on in Male Order.”

Jeremiah stopped to think a moment. Several women would stoop to putting on an act of corn-fed innocence, but Tristan was no fool. He had a very low tolerance for bullshit.

“Fine.” Jeremiah sighed in defeat, hoping he wasn’t making a mistake he would regret for a very long time. Tristan was unbearable when he had a broken heart.

“Really? You mean it?” Tristan brightened instantly at Jeremiah’s response. “Thanks, man. I knew you’d have my ass if I picked up women at the Lasso without asking you.” Tristan paused, clearly in contemplation again. “But Jer?”

“Just spit it out.”

“This isn’t just some girl I picked up in a bar.”

“Yes, very good. You sounded actually sincere there,” Jeremiah mocked. “I think she’ll actually believe you.”

“No, man, I mean it.” The intensity in Tristan’s expression meant business. “She’s something special.” He paused and took a deep breath before continuing. “You know what we talked about last year when you were out visiting on the rig?”

Tristan’s words hung in the air between them. Jeremiah certainly did remember. He had told Tristan that he wanted to try a ménage relationship after seeing how well they worked in Male Order, and he wanted Tristan in on it, too.

“I remember. You think this is the one?”

“We’ll never know if we never try.”

Jeremiah finished his Scotch and looked out the window in the direction of the Lasso. It had been a while since he’d been out there. He could take off early today and run home to change. These wool suits were getting on his nerves, anyway. The idea of throwing on a T-shirt and jeans and letting his wavy brown hair do whatever it pleased sounded quite appealing.

“Okay, man. I’m in. I’ll make it out tonight, but you gotta get the fuck away from me so I can get some work done.”

* * * *

Alexis stretched out in the soft cotton sheets of the king-sized bed. She rolled her head against the down pillow and inhaled the sweet scent of chamomile. Her worries about Tristan sending her to a sketchy sex hotel proved totally unfounded. The address had directed her to a tall building in downtown Male Order filled with luxury apartments. When she informed the desk clerk that she was a friend of Tristan’s, he had directed her to a commodious apartment furnished to the nines. It had a flat screen TV, a large kitchen with new appliances and granite countertops, and a gigantic bed piled high with down pillows and duvets.

Now, she rolled around in that bed, reluctant to leave but excited about the new day. Tristan wanted to see her! Tonight! Even though

she had no idea what she could do in Male Order, the prospect of seeing Tristan again made a long stay in this town seem very necessary. After discovering a basket of breakfast foods waiting for her in the kitchen and devouring a bowl of cereal, Alexis dressed and headed out. Downtown Male Order seemed walkable, so she decided to stroll the streets and see what she could find. The town was beautiful, with old buildings lining the streets and large trees providing periodic respites of shade and greenery.

Something about Male Order struck Alexis as a little off. She saw very few women as she walked the blocks of downtown, and the women she saw were usually surrounded by flocks of men. Alexis wanted to know what was in the water here. All the men were strikingly handsome, the picture of sophistication and delightful Southern grace. While staring at some particularly attractive twins walking into an office building, she ran smack into someone.

“Well, if it isn’t Male Order’s newest arrival!” Janet Willis offered her arm to help Alexis regain her balance. Her spirits lifted as the older woman gave her a tight hug. This was what Alexis had missed about small towns, the ability to see a friend no matter where she went. “You enjoy your first night here, sweetie?”

Alexis felt the heat of a blush staining her cheeks.

“Very much so.”

“Well, I’d imagine. You and Tristan sure looked eager to get outta there.”

She felt even more heat run to her cheeks and face.

“Oh, honey, you have to give me all the details.” Janet gestured toward the building a few doors down from where they stood. Alexis had been so busy appreciating the male beauty on display she had missed the elegant storefront. “I’m just about to go grab a coffee and do some shopping at Jacqueline’s. How about you come with?”

Alexis enthusiastically agreed, and the two women headed toward the store. Alexis’s jaw dropped as they entered a cavernous space, every surface covered in black marble. Elegant women dressed in

black crisscrossed in front of her, offering makeup and perfume samples and carrying black garment bags.

“Male Order ain’t what you expected from a small town.”

“No.” Alexis shook her head in amazement. “Not at all.”

“Wait until you see the cafe.” Janet headed to the left and indicated for Alexis to follow. They rushed down a half-flight of marble stairs into a small alcove warmly lit with leather wing-backed chairs arranged in several groups of three or four. A casually but richly dressed man hurried up to them, and Janet ordered two lattes. As the waiter scurried off to some hidden espresso machine, Janet motioned toward a group of three chairs. Alexis took a seat, curling her legs beneath her and reveling in the comfort of the soft leather chair.

“I have to ask. What is it with this place?”

“You mean you don’t know?” Apparently, everyone in this town expected its reputation to have preceded it.

“I really don’t.”

Janet shook her head and laughed. “Well, it’s a little much to explain to you so quickly after arriving in town, but I will tell you a few things.”

Alexis inclined toward Janet, instantly eager to hear about the mystery of this town.

“The whole place was founded by five very wealthy families, the heirs of which are still kicking around these parts. Their rich buddies attracted more rich buddies, and soon the town was booming with millionaires and billionaires. They built this whole crazy town, and people like you and me can live pretty well off their riches.”

The waiter interrupted Janet’s tale and delivered their coffees. She thanked him with a soft smile and instructed him to put it on the Fairchild tab.

“I don’t want to live off anyone else’s wealth.” Alexis was suddenly slightly offended by this woman.

“Oh, honey, no, that’s not what I mean. What I mean is that Male Order is a great town that cares about its residents, wealthy or not. And I must admit, some of us get lucky and find a billionaire we can fall in love with.” Janet narrowed her focus on Alexis. “You and Tristan seemed to be getting along pretty well last night.”

Alexis furrowed her brow in confusion. “Well, Tristan’s hardly a billionaire. He works on an oil rig.”

“You mean you...”

“What?”

“Oh, nothing.” Janet quickly changed the subject.

“Anyway, it’s a pretty strange lifestyle living here, and if you stick around for more than a day or so, you’ll see exactly how strange.”

“Strange?”

“Don’t you worry your pretty little head ’bout that, Miss Alexis. You just keep on keepin’ on. Are you coming to the Lasso tonight? Friday nights are always a hoot. And you know, Tristan might be there.”

She couldn’t help but smile at the mention of his name. “Yeah, he told me.”

“Well, I’ll be damned. That must be a first.” Janet gulped the rest of her coffee and rose to her feet. “I gotta get myself a fancy dress for a charity gala, but you just stay here and feel free to order anything on my tab. I’ll see you tonight?”

“Definitely.”

Janet paused and cocked her head at Alexis. “I think Male Order suits you.”

With that, she took her leave and disappeared into the expanse of Jacqueline’s.

Alexis snuggled into the chair and inhaled the sweet aroma of her coffee, and then panic suddenly clenched in her chest.

What exactly did Janet mean by “that must be a first”? First what?

Chapter 3

This time, when Alexis entered the Twirling Lasso, she wasn't quite so scared. She waved to Janet and Winston, who were chatting with Max at the bar. Even though it was only eight o' clock, the dance hall was already packed, and Alexis didn't think finding a table was possible. That didn't matter, though, she decided. She'd rather dance than sit down any day of the week. When she positioned herself strategically between the bar and the dance floor, she allowed herself to dwell on her real purpose here.

Tristan was staying in the apartment attached to this very building, and her heart did a little back flip at his probable proximity. He had to come into the dance hall on a Friday night, right? Her confidence level dropped a little at the thought that she might have gotten a room in Male Order in vain. Tristan was not only better looking than any man she had ever met, he had a rugged charm. It was a combination deadly to the world's female population.

Alexis looked down and contemplated her newly purchased boots. Stupid, she thought. What a stupid, girly move. She'd gone back to a guy's house and what? She expected him to be her boyfriend? She didn't even live here, and she'd already gotten carried away.

"Fancy meeting you here."

Alexis's head shot up, and she felt a silly grin spread across her face at the sight of the object of her affections. Tristan placed one hand on the wall behind Alexis and leaned toward her.

"I just had to come back for some more two-step. You have a quite a nice little place here in Male Order."

Tristan chuckled at her comment. “You don’t know the half of it.” He placed his hand on her elbow and began to wrap her arm around his. “Give me another dance, little lady?”

Alexis wiggled toward Tristan, giving him an unspoken signal that she was ready for another dance and a lot more.

When he took her in his arms, he left no space between them, and Alexis felt the denim-clad bulge that meant he, too, remembered their little dalliance the night before. He moved her around the dance floor to a slow song, and his hand occasionally slipped a little lower than was necessary for a dance hold.

Alexis’s limbs still wouldn’t obey, making her feel like a stiff doll being carried through a sea of people. Tristan didn’t seem to mind, though, coaching her through the dance and even letting her lead a little.

After their dance, Tristan led Alexis to a table of his friends from the drilling site he worked on in East Texas. All the men paid Alexis compliments, but she noticed that Tristan sent glares to the men and the extent of their praise suddenly lessened.

The men swapped stories about life on the job, and Alexis felt an odd sort of arousal overtake her when she heard of Tristan’s sometimes harrowing deeds.

“What do you expect from our little snot-nosed foreman, though?” one of the men teased after Tristan bashfully waved away another story of his work on the rig.

The other men took no time in joining in.

“Yeah, he only does these things between tea parties and his ladies’ luncheons.”

“Or shopping. You know he needs his *pants* fitted.” The table erupted in laughter, but Alexis only looked up at Tristan in confusion. His face was set in an angry stare that quickly silenced the other men’s laughter.

“You keep this shit up and I’ll have your asses out on the Gulf for a year.” Tristan’s tone suggested he was not joking. He put an arm

around Alexis and pulled her close to whisper in her ear. “You wanna get out of here? Because I don’t want anything more than you on my bed with your legs wide open, letting me taste that sweet cunt of yours again.”

Wet juices spilled into Alexis’s jeans at the illicit words he whispered in her ears. She tentatively moved a hand onto his thigh, and he took her hand in his, jerking her to her feet as he stood up.

“Okay, guys, I gotta take care of some business for Jeremiah. Don’t burn the place down, got it?” There was a soft laugh at his comment that died out quickly. Tristan pulled Alexis toward the exit, and she barely got in a nod toward Max before he had her out the door.

Tristan didn’t stop to kiss her passionately against the side of the bar this time, just hurried to the entrance to the apartment, dragging Alexis behind him. He fumbled with the keys, muttering curses under his breath as he searched for the right one. Once he found it, he forced the door open, putting an arm around Alexis’s waist and pulling her in after him. Dizzy from the suddenness of the action, she didn’t know what was going on as the ground slipped from under her feet. Tristan held her over one shoulder as he stormed across the apartment. His rough handling of her made her pussy convulse in excitement, more than ready for another round of what she had last night. Another door slammed open behind Alexis, and she glanced over her shoulder to see a sparsely decorated bedroom.

The mattress was hard as she landed on it, knocking her breath out of her lungs. There was no time to recover, though, because Tristan’s hands were already on the waistband of her pants, jerking them off with her panties in one smooth motion. He plunged two fingers into her cunt, and Alexis felt an orgasm already building inside of her. She pumped against his hand in earnest, hoping for that release sooner rather than later. Tristan busied one of his hands with removing Alexis’s shirt and bra while the other kept up the furious rhythm of his finger-fucking. His mouth clamped on her breast, and Alexis

couldn't stand it a second more. She screamed as the release broke over her, her pussy convulsing in excitement and spilling her juices onto Tristan's hand.

Before she could fully come down from her orgasm, Tristan had stripped himself and straddled her stomach. His erect cock bobbed in front of her, the purple head looking just as delicious as it had the night before. He inched closer to her, grasped his cock in his hand, and moved it toward her mouth.

"You wanna suck me tonight?" His voice was husky as he uttered his request.

Alexis didn't bother to respond verbally, instead lifting her head to dart her tongue out over the tip of his head. Tristan caught the back of her head and pressed her further down on his cock. She widened her mouth, but his impressive girth still stretched her mouth. The stretching was an erotic sort of pain, and she felt her arousal reigniting as the head of his cock hit the back of her throat. She sucked hard, and he groaned as he pushed against her mouth.

"Baby, you keep doing that and I'm gonna come down your throat."

The notion sounded delicious to Alexis, and she sucked harder and increased her pace, moving her head up and down so her lips glided smoothly over his shaft. More low sounds of pleasure emanated from Tristan's chest and encouraged Alexis to continue. She couldn't believe how wet sucking Tristan's cock was getting her. She would definitely need some attention pretty soon. Alexis daringly reached to cup his balls.

"Holy shit!" Tristan cried and thrust harder into Alexis's mouth. After a few more thrusts, a hot stream of liquid poured down the back of Alexis's throat. It tasted like hot salt water, and she swallowed it eagerly, milking every drop of his explosion.

Alexis released her hold on Tristan, and he collapsed on the bed next to her.

"You've done that before, right?"

“Never.”

“Hot damn.” Tristan reached over Alexis and played with a nipple. “You have some serious natural talent then.” He twisted her nipple, and a soft whimper escaped from Alexis’s lips. “You do like when I play with your nipples.”

Tristan rolled to hold himself on top of her and brushed a kiss over her lips before moving lower. He captured a nipple in his mouth and nibbled softly on it, and his teeth sent sharp bolts of pain to her pussy. The pain melted into pleasure, and Alexis was amazed how much more of that she wanted.

“Harder.”

“What’s that, baby?” Tristan spoke with lips still around a nipple.

“Harder. Bite harder.”

He eagerly obliged, and the pain made Alexis’s pussy cream. Her hips shot upward, humping against Tristan’s chest. He switched nipples and landed a sharp bite on the other. Alexis screamed at the sudden pain, but her shriek turned to a moan as he dragged his tongue over her nipple, soothing the pain into a pulsing bliss that went coursing through her blood.

Tristan continued his downward descent, much to Alexis’s pleasure. His hand feathered over her mound, and the light touch sent shivers all over her body. He pressed against her thrumming clit, causing Alexis to push back against his hand.

“Do you want me to taste you?”

“Yes.”

“I can’t hear you.”

“Yes!” Alexis shouted at the top of her lungs, so tormented was her body by his seduction. “Please, Tristan, *please*.”

He licked along the seam of her pussy then delved in, darting into her entrance. He grazed his teeth against her clit, and he pushed a finger into her. That was all it took for Alexis to find the freedom of release. He kept pumping into her as she rode out the last of her orgasm with a few more thrusts of her hips.

When her breathing finally returned to a semblance of normality, Tristan pulled himself up to lie next to her.

“You’re really incredible, you know.”

“So are you.” Her words were barely a whisper.

“You just appear out of thin air and change everything. Somebody back in Kansas must be missing you something fierce.”

Her eyes darted downward as she tried to avoid reliving the trauma of being stalked. “No one. No one is missing me.” A tear formed at the corner of her eye as the memories came flooding back to her.

Tristan wrapped his arms around her and held her against his chest. “Cry, baby. Just cry it out. I’m here for you.”

She was so embarrassed at her sobbing, but she had not yet given herself the privilege of talking about it since she’d left Kansas City. Convulsions racked her chest as her tears dampened Tristan’s chest. He ran a hand through her hair, a gesture Alexis appreciated.

She still cried but finally found the air to speak. “I kind of lied, Tristan. I didn’t leave Kansas City just because I wanted to start a new life. I mean, that was part of it, but...”

“What is it?”

“Well, you see...” She took a deep breath. Time to confess. “I told you about being a principal in the Kansas City Ballet.” Tristan nodded, indicating his recollection. “It was huge for me. I’ve worked my whole life to dance like that on such a large stage. It’s all I’ve ever wanted. It was like a dream at first, everyone fussing over me, photo shoots for the production program, dancing day in and day out. I danced two ballets in that dreamlike state.

“Then there was the third ballet. It was *Romeo and Juliet*, my favorite. I was dancing Juliet. The production got incredible reviews and was the biggest hit they’d had in years. But after the first week, I started getting strange phone calls and text messages, asking where I was, what I was doing, what I was wearing. At first, I thought it was

nothing, but they got more frequent and more insistent. Then, one night..." Her convulsions forced her to stop speaking for a moment.

"Shh, you don't have to talk about anything you don't want to."

"But I want to." She closed her eyes and strengthened her resolve. "One night, a man appeared at the stage door before the ballet asking for me. I went out, but I didn't recognize him, and he seemed a little sketchy. Then during the second act, he broke in. He had a gun, and he pushed past all the security. He ran out on the stage while I was dancing and grabbed me." The sobs returned for a moment, but Alexis went on.

"Luckily, they were able to tackle him before he could shoot anyone. The company hired a bodyguard for me, but I was so freaked out. I fell on stage, something I'd never done before, and I couldn't concentrate on dancing. I fell apart, and my understudy had to go on. It destroyed me, ruining Juliet like that. My stalker was arrested and put in jail, but nothing was the same after that. And that's when I planned my road trip."

Tristan was silent for a moment and slowly raised his hand to wipe a tear from her eye. "You are so brave."

"I'm a coward."

"No. You're not. You kept dancing when most people would have freaked and fled. You tried. What happened was not your fault." He paused and turned the full force of his arresting blue stare on Alexis. "You are such a special woman, and if it's okay with you, I don't want you going anywhere anytime soon."

Her heart thudded in her chest at his request. She wanted nothing more than to stay in Male Order for at least a few more days and get to know this handsome cowboy a little bit better. Hell, she wanted to get to know him a lot better.

"That's perfectly fine with me."

Tristan lowered his mouth to her and kissed her gently but thoroughly. His tongue brushed against her lower lip in a polite request. She opened her mouth and reveled in the soft dance of their

tongues that stoked the flames inside of her. Tristan pulled away again and looked at her from under the lock of hair that had fallen across his face.

“You can stay at the apartment as long as you’d like. I’ve got connections.”

Alexis could only respond by pressing her lips back to his. She lowered her head and snuggled against his chest.

“I’ve never been this happy with someone.”

“Good.” He stayed holding her, stroking her back and upper arms as the rhythm of their breaths fell into perfect unison. “Stay the night. I don’t have anywhere to be in the morning.”

Alexis considered the notion for a moment and decided it sounded like a splendid idea.

“Okay, but on one condition.”

“Anything, baby.”

“You’re going down on me again, cowboy.”

Chapter 4

“Mr. Pierce. Mr. Pierce?”

Jeremiah faintly heard someone calling his name as he studied the crowded Dallas buildings that made up its skyline from the conference room of one of its iconic skyscrapers.

“Jeremiah.”

The more blunt tone finally returned his focus to the scene in the room. His lawyers sat on the other side of the conference table. Their briefcases lay open on the table, and papers covered nearly every square inch of its surface.

“Can’t we just settle already? I’d be more than happy to pay for all medical expenses as well as a very generous stipend for pain and suffering.”

One lawyer grabbed a few papers and studied them then shook his head at Jeremiah. “That *is* the solution that makes the most sense, but his insurance company is insisting we go to court.”

“And as chief executive officer of Burke Pierce Energy, you’re a key witness.” The other lawyer gave Jeremiah a look that betrayed his frustration with the case and Jeremiah’s attitude.

“Speaking of witnesses”—the first lawyer slid his glasses down his long nose and peered at Jeremiah over their rim—“is this mysterious Tristan Burke ever going to grace us with his presence?”

Jeremiah laughed at the lawyer’s assumption that he had anything to do with Tristan’s whereabouts. “Your guess is as good as mine.”

The lawyers did not look amused.

“He’s in Male Order, back at my place. I’ll see if I can convince him to come in. You already have his deposition, though.”

“Never enough, Mr. Pierce. Never enough.”

Jeremiah gathered his things and politely excused himself from the meeting. After he had descended from the twenty-ninth floor and retrieved his Lamborghini, he headed east toward his home at the outskirts of Male Order, Texas. Driving against the morning rush, he sped down the interstate to the little haven. He looked at the speedometer and contemplated pushing his Reventón above one hundred miles per hour but thought the better of it. Even if he rushed, he wouldn't have time to stop at his apartment in downtown Male Order and change in time to make his mid-morning meeting with Dalton and Garrett Ellis.

He exited onto the farm-to-market that looped around Male Order to where the Twirling Lasso was located east of town. His visit needed to be quick. He didn't need to be seen in his three-piece Dolce & Gabbana suit and his Lamborghini. But it was still before ten in the morning, and most of the residents of the more rural reaches of Male Order would be at work or asleep still. If only Tristan would wake his own ass up and get into town, Jeremiah's day would be much easier.

He pulled into the dirt parking lot, wincing at the damage to his car and wishing he hadn't loaned his truck to Tristan for the week. A quick glance around the parking lot showed that he hadn't been found out. He fumbled in his briefcase for the keys to his apartment behind the Twirling Lasso.

Much to Jeremiah's chagrin, the door was unlocked when he opened it. He looked around at the sparsely furnished but comfortable apartment. The bedroom door had been left open, and Jeremiah spied Tristan on the bed facedown with an arm slung over the side, emitting snores from his open mouth.

A noise startled Jeremiah. It came from the kitchen. *Damn it, Tristan*, he thought. This is what happens when you leave the fucking door unlocked. He padded softly toward the kitchen, ready to assess this home invader. He peeked around the doorjamb and was shocked at the sight.

Instead of the mischievous kids he expected, there stood a magnificent beauty, turned slightly toward Jeremiah and clothed only in one of Tristan's old T-shirts and a pair of floral hipster-cut panties that showed off the curves of her toned ass. Her blonde hair was pulled into a messy bun, and even though she wore smudged makeup, doubtless from the night before, her face looked flawless, her almond-shaped eyes focused on whatever she was cooking and her luscious lips pressed together as she hummed a country tune.

She rose onto her tiptoes and did a little balletic turn before she saw Jeremiah. A flush lit her lightly tanned skin, casting an innocent air over her debauched appearance, and she dropped a pan of scrambled eggs, letting out a small scream.

"Who are you?" Her voice was only a squeak as she hurried to back into a corner and made a futile attempt at covering herself with her hands.

"So sorry, really, to disturb you." Jeremiah rushed into the kitchen and began cleaning the eggs. He looked up at her, and he couldn't help but stare in admiration at her long, shapely legs, made more appealing by the fact that she still stood on her toes. Finally, his eyes met hers, and he stood and deposited the ruined eggs in the sink.

Words became difficult when he looked into those light brown eyes, wide and sweet as she looked at him with a mixture of fear and confusion. He felt an unfamiliar urge to rush forward and comfort her, to take her in his arms and run his hands all over her.

"I'm Jeremiah. I own the Lasso, and this apartment." His last words were directed at Tristan, who appeared at the door, rubbing sleep from his eyes and yawning.

"Jer! So good of you to pay us a visit." Tristan's words dripped sarcasm.

"Hold on, Tristan," Jeremiah said, remembering that they had a guest and turning up his Texan drawl in an effort to distract from his well-tailored suit. "Your guest has yet to introduce herself."

The girl darted her eyes to Tristan, and he gave her a nod.

“Alexis.” Her voice was as sweet as the expression that she wore. Involuntarily, Jeremiah wondered what it would sound like to hear that sweet little voice mutter something much, much dirtier. His cock had begun stirring when he saw her in the kitchen, and that thought brought it to full attention.

“Well, Alexis, it’s very nice to meet such a lovely young woman such as yourself.” He stepped forward, took her hand in his, and kissed her knuckles gently. The flush returned to her face, and a smile tugged at the corners of her lips.

“Nice to meet you, too,” she said, her voice barely a whisper.

God, the girl was a feast of decadent naiveté. She couldn’t be older than what, twenty-five?

“I was just telling you about Alexis, remember, Jer?” Tristan’s words made Jeremiah’s heart stop beating for an instant. He had assumed that Tristan would have forgotten about their conversation yesterday and moved on to another Male Order floozy. He turned Alexis’s hand in his, studying it for a moment. It was so delicate in his large, callused hands, still work-roughened from his summers on the rig. He moved his thumb over her wrist and felt her pulse racing.

He finally released her hand and took a step back. “Ah, yes. I do remember now.” Her eyes still contained that innocent glow, and Jeremiah knew he needed to get away soon, before this situation got out of hand. “Tristan, a word, please?”

Tristan crossed to Alexis, tipped her chin upward in his hand, and kissed her. “Just a second, gorgeous.”

Jeremiah’s heart twisted at the sight. Never had he seen such sensitivity on Tristan’s face. He had certainly never seen him handle a woman so delicately. Maybe this really was something to consider... No. He had to resolve the case first. No time for romance right now.

He started toward the apartment’s exit and gestured for Tristan to follow. Once they were outside, Tristan’s face broke out in a grin.

“That’s her. She’s great, Jer. I really want you to get to know her. And holy shit, man, last night we had the most amazing—”

"I don't want to talk about that." Jeremiah forced himself to return from his emotional and aroused state to his typical businesslike manner. "You need to go talk to the lawyers one more time, Tristan. I know you're still upset about what happened, but they really need you to—"

"Not yet." There was no sign of Tristan's earlier good humor. "I'm not saying no. I'm just saying that I can't do it right now." He averted his gaze and leaned against the wall of the building.

Jeremiah studied him for a moment. He knew how much the accident had upset him. George had been one of his best workers and closest friends on the rig. When he got injured, Tristan had withdrawn completely and was only now coming out of his shell again.

"Just make sure that you see them before the trial date, okay?" He looked at his watch. "Shit, I've got that meeting." He turned toward his car then stopped and looked at Tristan. "Don't blow my cover with Alexis?"

The smile returned to Tristan's face. "Sure thing, man."

It was amazing how happy that woman seemed to make him.

* * * *

Alexis laid out her entire wardrobe on the soft bed at the apartment where Tristan was letting her stay. She frowned at the results. Her wardrobe comprised of a few ragged pairs of cut-offs, some shirts, two pairs of jeans, a flimsy cotton dress, and about a hundred leotards and pairs of tights. It wasn't much, especially here in this bastion of wealth.

Lucky for her, none of the pretentious billionaire types had gotten her in their sights. Instead, she was going out with that sweet roughneck, Tristan. The idea of a man not even thirty so hardened by years on the field made her insides stir. He could be so gentle with her, but then he could attack her and send her to deliciously illicit destinations.

The cotton dress would have been her immediate choice, but he was taking her out on his motorcycle. That wouldn't be enough to protect her from the roaring engine of the beastly machine, would it? She grabbed the dress and crossed to the mirror. She held it against herself, loving the way it contrasted with her naturally tanned skin, and used her hands to experiment with whether it would look best with her hair up or down.

Her cell phone buzzed with a text message, and she dropped the dress on the floor and ran to see who it was from. Tristan! Her heart skipped a beat when she read his name. Eagerly she opened the phone to read his message.

I'm so sorry, baby, but I can't make it tonight. :(I'm not blowing you off, but I have to go over a deposition...It's a long story. Stay in Male Order long enough for a rain check?

Disappointment and sadness gripped briefly at her heart but were quickly replaced by an all-consuming anger. How dare he? She had trusted him, had cooked him breakfast, and now he was just blowing her off? Of course he didn't say so, but that's what Alexis's limited experience told her was the norm. Guys are always too cowardly to admit they're over a girl.

Why was she even staying in Male Order? She'd been to the Lasso twice—her only reason for being there—and she really didn't like the idea of hobnobbing with the types she had seen hanging around this town. She collapsed on the floor in frustration. The idea of leaving held some pretty strong appeal, but so did spending at least one more night at the Lasso. She was already addicted to the Texas Two-Step.

Another idea crossed her mind. Why did she have to wait around for Tristan to take an interest? Judging by his reaction, she was at least kind of hot, and the streets of Male Order seemed to produce a

never-ending supply of handsome bachelors. Why not see what the rest of them had to offer?

Jumping to her feet, Alexis stomped across the room and grabbed her white cotton dress off the floor. She was going out, and damn it, she was gonna look hot.

* * * *

Defeated, Alexis slumped deeper into the rickety chair facing the dance floor. Her good mood had disappeared, and thoughts of Tristan once more crowded her mind. Even dancing couldn't help her tonight. She'd tried with several of the sexy cowboys here tonight, but all her limbs felt stiff and robotic in their arms and none of them seemed interested in anything more than a dance. After what Tristan had done to her the night before, she longed for more touching, more tasting, and part of her didn't care who gave it to her. Unfortunately, that wasn't the part that won out in her mind.

A deposition? What sort of an excuse was that? It wasn't like Tristan was one of the wealthy heirs floating about Male Order. A regular, working-class guy like him would have no reason to get so involved in such legal affairs that he would be deposed on a weekend. She recognized it for what it was, a blow-off. Not a very believable or creative one, but it was his attempt to get rid of her, nonetheless.

"Aren't you a dancer?" The smooth, deep voice with a soft Texas drawl made Alexis perk up and turn to see its owner.

Standing in front of her was the man she had seen this morning, and her body reacted to him in exactly the same way. He looked down at her with warm blue eyes and an open, friendly smile. His hair was loose in dark brown waves that framed his classically handsome, chiseled features. This morning he had been dressed to the nines, but now he wore a tight-fitting T-shirt advertising the Lasso and jeans that hugged his muscular figure. While Tristan had the wide frame of a man who had earned his muscles in the field, Jeremiah had the

perfectly toned look of someone who spent a good amount of time in the gym. Her eyes lingered on his stomach, thinking she spied six-pack abs under the thin fabric of his T-shirt.

"I am," she responded once she found her voice again. "But I'm afraid that I'm a hopeless two-stepper."

"No one is a hopeless two-stepper." He sat in a chair next to her, inclined toward her, and smiled. The look in his eyes made her want to trust him with anything, despite the trauma in her past. No wonder he was the proprietor of this place. He had the ideal disposition for greeting the wide spectrum of guests at the Lasso.

"So, Tristan tells me you're a ballet dancer."

Tristan. Her heart clenched at the mention of his name.

"Yes indeed. Before I left, I was a principal in the Kansas City Ballet. But that's about as far from the Twirling Lasso as you can get."

"Oh, come on, now. The Twirling Lasso is for everyone." He leaned in conspiratorially and gestured to a man sitting a few tables away. "See that guy? That's Alexander Abrams."

"*The* Alexander Abrams?" She could hear the incredulity in her own voice.

"In the flesh. He's been coming here since before you were born."

"Hey! I'm twenty-five! I'm not that young."

Jeremiah laughed a deep, rolling laugh that shocked Alexis's body to life. "Of course you aren't." He gave her a smug smile, and without thinking, she landed a soft punch on his shoulder. She withdrew her hands quickly, shocked at her presumptuousness.

Jeremiah didn't seem offended, though. He only laughed again, that deep, drugging sound, and moved closer to Alexis. The heat of his body next to hers caused her pussy to clench, and she was amazed at her newly accelerated sex drive.

"Dance with me." His tone was frank and serious, even though he still wore that charming and open expression.

Alexis nodded, and Jeremiah took her hand and led her to the edge of the dance floor.

“You say you’re hopeless at this, which I don’t buy, so we’re gonna take this real slow.” He gathered her into his arms, and his warmth immediately relaxed her tense muscles. Where his fingers touched her bare skin, little electric sparks went flying. She looked up into his eyes as he counted them in to the beat of the song.

Dancing with Jeremiah came effortlessly. He whispered reassuring words in her ear while they danced, and she finally felt the relaxation she had seen in the other dancers. When he twirled her out, she flew across the floor without a thought to her technique or her feet and let Jeremiah guide her back into his arms.

She looked up into his eyes and saw that his expression had turned from friendly to passionate. He pulled her body into his, pressing her hips and her breasts against him. She let her hand wind around his shoulders, her fingers gliding over the rippling muscles of his back.

When the song ended, Alexis relaxed Jeremiah, hoping for another dance and another opportunity to feel the freedom and ease she had just felt. He pulled away from her, though, and took her hand in his. He started in the direction of her table.

Her head hung as they walked, and she cursed her bad luck at being rejected twice in one night. Maybe it was time to continue on her road trip. They arrived at her table, still hand in hand, and he pulled out a chair for her. She sat down reluctantly, and much to her surprise, Jeremiah sat down next to her but did not release her hand.

He stayed close to her and used her hand in his to pull her even closer. Alexis’s spirits lifted when she realized only a few inches separated their faces. “Thank you for the dance,” he said, his gaze locked with hers.

Jeremiah parted his lips slightly, and Alexis eagerly rushed to return his kiss. Whereas Tristan’s kisses had been hot and demanding, Jeremiah kisses were gentle and romantic but deliberate. He placed one hand underneath her chin as he captured her lips with his.

They kissed several times, lips brushing against each other with a soft sensuality. Jeremiah finally leaned back, and Alexis saw him blushing for once. The color against his ivory skin gave him a decadent glow.

“Look at me.” He blinked, and his long eyelashes flicked over his alluring blue eyes. “I can’t go around kissing every pretty girl that walks into my bar.” Alexis turned away, slightly hurt by the comment, and a gentle hand on her cheek turned her back to face him. “Then again, you’re not just any old pretty girl...” He trailed off as he inclined his torso toward and Alexis lifted her face to meet him.

“Jeremiah, you dog.” Alexis turned to see the very tall and very handsome Alexander Abrams towering over their table. “You know that’s the sort of behavior that gives this dive such a dreadful reputation.”

“Oh, and you’re one to talk. What did *Us* magazine call you? Most prolific playboy of the twenty-first century?” Jeremiah delivered his insult in a steady deadpan, only his lip curling at the end of the phrase hinting at his amusement.

“You know those days are over,” Alexander said, and a short woman with dark brown hair came up and wrapped her hand around his waist. They made quite a pair with what looked like a foot difference in their height.

Jeremiah introduced Alexis to Alexander and his wife Robin and explained that she was stopping in Male Order on her road trip to famous dance locales. They excused themselves quickly, leaving just Alexis and Jeremiah alone again.

“I can’t believe that’s Alexander Abrams. He looks nothing like all the pictures.”

“That’s just how the Lasso works,” Jeremiah explained. “It doesn’t matter how much money you have, how old you are, how many husbands you have—”

“Wait.” What Jeremiah had just said had Alexis’s head spinning. “How many husbands? You mean people have more than one?”

Jeremiah laughed, and this time Alexis felt a bit chagrined at his amusement. “What? That’s not normal, is it?”

“Tristan wasn’t lying, you really don’t know, do you?” He shook his head as if in disbelief. “Male Order is known for its ménage relationships. Two or even three husbands loving one spectacular woman. It really does work quite well.”

“You’re crazy,” was all Alexis could manage.

“No, I’m not. Alexander and Robin? They looked quite in love, right? Well, Robin has another husband, and he’s crazy about her, too.”

Alexis sat there in total awe. Two men? Her insides began to stir at the suggestion. After feeling the incredible sensations one man could give her, she couldn’t begin to imagine what having two men at once would feel like. Between kissing Jeremiah and fantasizing about two men pleasuring her at once, the crotch of her panties was rapidly dampening.

“It’s a lot to process, I know,” Jeremiah said. “But right now I just want to talk about you.” He ran a finger across her jawline, and she shuddered at the soft caress. The heat in his eyes warmed her from the inside out and gave her all sorts of ideas of what he could do to her. After he had been so open about the sharing apparently rampant in Male Order, Alexis figured she could make her move.

“We could talk about me more,” she said, running her fingernails lightly across the skin of his arm. He shuddered a little at the touch, further strengthening Alexis’s resolve. “But I’d rather talk somewhere more private. I’m staying downtown.”

Several emotions flicked across Jeremiah’s face, finally landing on a look of cool civility. “Alexis, that would be nice.” He cleared his throat. “But I have responsibilities here. I’m afraid I’ll have to tend to those.”

She sank in her chair again, the weight of disappointment and abandonment weighing on her shoulders again. “That’s okay,” she said.

Jeremiah stood and placed a hand on Alexis's shoulder. "But another time, okay?" She looked up and saw something genuine in his expression. Against her better judgment, she nodded her agreement.

Watching people on the dance floor only made Alexis feel worse, and despite the fact that the Lasso was open another hour and the floor was still packed, she decided to head back into Male Order. Today had started out with such promise. Tristan was unlike anyone she'd ever known, and so was Jeremiah.

Oh well. At least it's a chance to stay in and think about what Jeremiah said some more. The idea of having two men at the same time had her pussy demanding she leave the hall and get somewhere where she could find someone to relieve her arousal. And soon.

Chapter 5

It was midnight by the time Tristan escaped the confines of the Dallas skyscraper and made it back to Male Order's finest luxury bar, The Boom Boom Room. He waved to a couple of friends as he strolled in, even though he was in no mood to be friendly. After ditching Alexis today, nothing had been able to cheer him.

He leaned against the wooden bar at the right of the entrance and nodded at the bartender. He stayed that way while he drank his beer and refused the bartender's attempts at consolation in favor of his solitude. When he did lift his head to order another beer, the sight of the high-class bar and its similarly high-class clientele made him feel uncomfortable and completely out of place.

He took his drink and sauntered to an empty table in the corner. Everyone in the place was decked out in designer suits and drinking the fanciest wines and spirits money could buy. And while Tristan certainly liked to indulge his palate for fine Scotch every now and then, he was perfectly happy with whatever beer was on tap.

A commotion in the bar caused him to stop his investigation of the little bubbles in his beer and look up out of curiosity. Several young men in the bar shuffled toward the entrance, and Tristan soon saw why. A long-legged blonde beauty entered the bar, wearing only a very short and very flimsy white cotton sundress. The neckline dipped quite low, giving every man in the bar a good view of her round bosom.

Damn it, that was *his* round bosom. He shot up from his chair and crossed the room toward where Alexis stood by the bar, surrounded by a gaggle of men eager to ply her with alcohol.

“Oh, yes, I’m from Kansas and just on a road trip, you see,” she said to one man who threw an arm around her. She batted her eyelashes as she gracefully accepted his offer to buy her a drink.

“Oh no you don’t, buddy.” Tristan moved to block the man from approaching the bar to order for Alexis.

“I don’t think it’s any of your business who buys that lovely lady a drink.” He eyed Tristan up and down, taking in his muddy cowboy boots and stained T-shirt. “Fucking roughnecks,” he muttered under his breath.

“What did you call me?” This guy was horning in on his woman, and now he was insulting him. He had no idea how much trouble he was in for.

“A roughneck. Do you need me to define that for you? It’s a type of guy that can’t afford a drink in a bar like this.” The guy smirked as he tried to step around Tristan.

“You have no idea how much trouble you’re in, boy.”

“Stop it!” Soft fingers wrapped around his arm and jerked him away. He turned to see Alexis looking infuriated. He allowed her to pull him away from the other man, although he did give a smug smile of victory to his challenger as Alexis led him by the arm.

“What kind of macho display was that?” Her eyes glinted with an anger Tristan hadn’t thought her capable of.

“What kind of display do you think you’re pulling, Alexis?” he countered. “Showing up to a bar after midnight dressed like that. You think that guy just wanted to chat with you?”

“Maybe I wanted to do more than chat with him.” Alexis crossed her arms over her chest.

“Look, you’re a nice girl from Kansas. Do you know what kind of bait that is to a man?”

“Apparently not bait enough for you to be interested in seeing me for more than one night.”

Wait, what? Tristan had thought about nothing but Alexis all day and all evening. Did she think that he had blown her off? It dawned

on him that it *would* seem a little odd that a foreman would be so involved in a lawsuit that he would be deposed on a weekend. Shit, his act had worked a little too well this time.

“Alexis, I wanted to see you tonight. I really did need to go to that deposition.” He timidly started to play with the hair at the back of her neck. When she didn’t object, he took a step closer. “I want to see you all the time. I want to know everything about you.”

“I wouldn’t mind getting to know you better, too.”

She blushed, and all Tristan wanted was to see her blush more when he made her come again. He used his hand on her neck to drag her face toward his. She stepped closer, and he was preparing to kiss her when she suddenly twisted away and held up her hands.

“Stop.” She closed her eyes and took a deep breath. “I can’t do this without telling you something.”

Damn, this girl was full of dramatic revelations. “What, gorgeous?”

“I kissed Jeremiah tonight.” She said it matter-of-factly, looking Tristan square in the eyes, daring him to object to her behavior.

He did anything but object. He rejoiced inside, elated that Jeremiah had gotten over his “no romance until the case is closed” attitude and seen what an incredible woman Tristan had happened upon.

“Oh, baby,” he said, a smile spreading across his face. “That is just fine. Jeremiah’s like a brother to me. We share *everything*.”

She started to say something but stopped, her mouth hanging open at Tristan’s words. Nothing like bringing up a ménage à trois to get a lady all riled up. She shook her head and smiled at Tristan.

“So.” She bit her lip and looked down coyly. Her innocence just made his cock grow harder. “You still wanna kiss me then?”

Tristan wasted no time obliging her flirtatious suggestion, taking her in both of his arms and capturing her soft lips in his. This time, there was no hesitation in her response. She moved against him, rubbing her breasts against his chest, and didn’t object when he

reached a hand down to cup her ass. She even let out a soft moan, doubtless lost in the Saturday night clamor, when he moved his lips to her neck and took her soft skin between his teeth.

Tristan lifted his head to take a quick glance around the bar. He pushed Alexis backward toward a shadowed dip in the wall, safe from the direct view of any patrons, for the moment at least. Alexis moved backward compliantly, never releasing her grip on him or taking his lips away from some part of his skin.

Alexis pushed her hips into his, and his erection grew even harder. He pushed back into her, desperate for any sort of friction or pressure on his straining cock. When she moaned into his mouth, she gave him the courage to snake a hand between them. He first massaged her breast, reveling in the warmth, and she reacted by wrapping one leg around his and pushing her barely covered pussy against his leg. He slipped his hand beneath her neckline and pinched her nipple, eliciting a soft but choked sigh. His hand ventured farther south, over the round curve of her ass and down to the hemline of her dress. Tristan reached toward the pussy he could smell dampening and pressed it through the cotton of her dress. Alexis released a sharp breath, and Tristan knew it was time for them to get out of there.

Reluctantly, he took his hand from the damp heat waiting for him between her legs and stepped backward. "You still want that ride?"

Alexis nodded enthusiastically and shoved her hand in his. With only a brief stop at the coat rack to grab his jacket and a nod to the bartender, they took off at a near run out of the Boom Boom Room toward where Tristan's bike waited for them on the street.

* * * *

The motorcycle slowed, and Tristan flicked off the headlights, leaving the two of them drenched in darkness. The rumbling motor was the only sound in the deserted countryside. He weaved the bike around hay bales only visible as round outlines against the pale glow

of the moonlight. Alexis fingered Tristan's leather jacket as she pressed herself closer to him. Their ride had exhilarated her, the adrenaline heightening every sense. The world seemed sharper, even in the darkness, and Tristan somehow even more masculine and alluring.

The bike came to an abrupt halt, and Tristan killed the motor. Alexis looked around and determined that they were in the middle of an empty hay field, nothing around them for miles. She knew that should set off so many warning bells inside of her, but being with Tristan felt so right, so natural.

He twisted out of her embrace, leaving her feeling bereft of his warmth and his spicy scent. She opened her arms, bodily pleading for him to return to her. He responded to her signal, wrapping both his arms around her waist and lifting her from the seat. He carried her a short distance and set her down on a soft pile of loose hay. She watched his outline against the darkness as he removed his leather jacket and tossed it on the seat of the bike. His impressive figure sauntered toward her. He came to a stop at the edge of the hay pile and stooped down to where Alexis sat. The moon shone just bright enough to give Alexis a glimpse at Tristan's piercing blue stare.

Tristan ran his hand down Alexis's arm, coming to rest on her hand. He grasped it and pulled her toward him. Alexis eagerly reciprocated and met his mouth halfway. His kiss was deliberate and caring, his teeth capturing her lower lip before his tongue reached out to soothe the slight pulsing of pain.

He broke the kiss far too soon for Alexis's liking and pressed his forehead against her. He squeezed her hand tighter, and she tried to find some sort of meaning in what she could see of his gaze.

"I want to make love to you, Alexis."

Oh god. This was it. This was the moment. Her pussy clenched at the idea of the foreign sensation of being filled with cock. She bit her lip as she remembered how thick he was and how hard she had to work to stretch her mouth around his girth. Even though it caused her

a bit of unease, the thought mostly caused slick juices to flow from her cunt, signaling exactly how ready she was to take all of Tristan's cock inside of her.

"I want to make love to you, too." Alexis had never heard her voice so breathless or so shaky.

"You sure, baby?" Tristan rubbed her back while he waited for her answer. The feeling of being in his arms with his plump, kissable lips only centimeters from her abolished any trace of uncertainty.

"I've never been more sure of anything."

Her words must have proven her resolve to Tristan. He closed the gap between their lips, his kiss more passionate than it had been before. Alexis's excitement began ripping away her inhibitions. She reveled in the hot wetness of Tristan's tongue and mouth, pushing every part of herself closer to him, wanting him to drive her to the utter apex of pleasure. She ran her hands over his hard, muscular chest down to where the hem of his T-shirt met the waistband of his jeans. She pushed a hand against his stomach in an attempt to remove his shirt and gasped into Tristan's mouth when she felt his erection brush against the back of her hand. She lowered her hand to the bulge and began to rub, but Tristan broke their kiss and stilled her hand.

"No, don't try to control it." He wrapped his hands around both her wrists and lowered her back onto the hay. "Just sit back and enjoy the ride."

She shivered, suddenly cold at the absence of his heat. He stood and crossed to his bike. Alexis stayed on the hay bale but watched carefully as he fished keys out of his pocket. A moment later, the headlight flicked on, bathing them both in its peripheral glow.

"You're too beautiful not to watch while I make love to you." Tristan turned toward her, and her heart began its frantic dance yet again at the sight of him. As he returned to her, his expression turned into an alluring mixture of predatory lust and tender affection. He knelt in front of her, and the shaking in his limbs betrayed how much he was holding back.

He removed his T-shirt, the light casting angular shadows over the sinewy muscles in his stomach, and reached for Alexis's dress. Her breath caught in her throat, a mixture of burning desire and anxiety arresting her lungs. Tristan brushed his lips against hers and nuzzled the rough stubble of his five o'clock shadow against her cheek.

His hands began their descent down her body, and Tristan danced his fingers lightly over her curves and stopped to brush against her pebbled nipples. Alexis panted in anticipation, her excitement mounting with every gentle caress. He traced his hands down her sides and finally they came to rest on the hem of her short, lacy white dress. His hands continued their descent, and he massaged her upper thighs.

Alexis couldn't take this slow teasing anymore. Her body's demands broke through her anxiety, turning her into a whimpering creature begging for another touch, another lick, another orgasm.

Finally, Tristan dragged his hands upward, moving up her inner thighs, each movement bringing him closer to the center of her need. She moved her hips, urging Tristan to move faster and bring some sort of relief to her weeping pussy. Just when it seemed he was about to succumb to her need, he sat back on his knees and grasped the hem of her dress. He pulled it up and over her head in one smooth motion. Her white cotton bra and thong didn't allow her to hide anything, but Alexis loved being this bare in front of Tristan.

She watched as his gaze raked up and down her body, lingering over the place where her throbbing pussy leaked out cream that was beginning to seep down the inside of her thigh.

He collected a droplet of the liquid dripping from inside her on his finger. The faint light of the headlight illuminated his smirk.

"You ready to come again?"

Alexis nodded enthusiastically as he started unbuttoning his jeans. She watched hungrily as he pushed them down to his knees, once more treated to the sight of his erect cock, the purple head throbbing

and already moist from his pre-cum. She reached out, wanting to feel the hot steel of his shaft in her hands again.

He sat back and shook his head, laughing softly. "Not until I say so. Anyway, I want to see your face when you come first."

With that, he hooked one finger underneath the front of her thong, pulled off the garment, and disposed of it by tossing it over his shoulder. One hand went behind her back and began working on undoing the clasp of her bra.

Without warning, one thick digit pressed through the wet folds of her pussy, and Alexis screamed at the welcome invasion.

"That's right, scream as loud as you want," Tristan said as he began pushing the finger in and out of her clenched pussy.

Even though she had only felt a man's fingers penetrate her a few times, Alexis had grown addicted to the sensation. She humped his hand in earnest, trying to draw his digits further into her. He wiggled his finger inside her and set sparks erupting in her.

"What was that?" she said, her eyes flipping open at the wave of excitement that hit her.

"That?" Tristan wiggled his finger again, and once more the small shocks of pleasure rolled over her, making her realize Tristan had found her elusive G-spot. She pumped harder against him, wanting to be filled even more.

Tristan responded to her bodily request by thrusting a second finger into her and pumping against her G-spot again. With each thrust, she found herself propelled higher and higher. She knew only the slightest stimulation would send her soaring into the stratosphere of satisfaction.

Tristan pinched one of her nipples and twisted it, and Alexis found herself suddenly thrust into her climax. She screamed Tristan's name as she pumped against his fingers, drenching them with the liquid proof of her pleasure. Slowly she descended back to earth, her head spinning from the power of her release.

“You still sure you’re ready for sex?” Tristan asked, and Alexis saw that he had moved himself to sit between her legs.

“Yes,” she whispered, still trying to catch her breath.

“Good, because I can’t wait another second to bury myself in you.” His voice was nearly a growl, and Alexis could see the hunger plain on his face.

He kneeled over her, supporting his weight on one arm and holding his cock against her entrance with his other hand. He moved it up and down her dripping seam, and Alexis felt her pussy fire back to life. She whimpered a plea for him to hurry up, and he obliged.

Slowly, Tristan pressed the head of his cock into her entrance. She felt herself stretching, a sharp pain zinging through her. Almost instantly after it began, though, it turned into a searing pleasure more exciting than Alexis had anticipated. Tristan pressed himself farther into her with small strokes, sheathing himself in her warmth slowly.

This pace would not suffice to fulfill the newborn craving inside of Alexis. She moved against him and, with one jerk of her hips, pushed him fully into her. The sensation was more than she could imagine. She felt so impossibly full, and it took a moment for her to adjust to the way her pussy stretched to accommodate Tristan’s thick cock.

He looked into her eyes and placed a soft kiss on her lips before withdrawing and pushing softly into her again. He lifted his head, and Alexis could see the slightly pained look on his face.

“Just fuck me, Tristan.”

It took no more prodding for Tristan to withdraw fully from her and push himself back in again, instantly filling her to the brim again. Over and over again, he repeated the action, pulling both of them into a rhythm of furious thrusting. Each thrust stoked the fire inside of Alexis, and unable to help herself, she moaned her pleasure, knowing there was no one around to hear her scream in ecstasy.

The speed of Tristan’s thrusts increased, and each one sent Alexis closer and closer to the point of explosion. Tristan lowered his mouth

to Alexis's and kissed her passionately before rearing his head back and groaning as he orgasmed and shot his hot liquid into Alexis. The power of his climactic thrusts pushed Alexis to the point of total release. She pushed her hips against him, grazing her clit against the hard plane of his pelvic bone, and little explosions set off all over her body. She didn't know how one man could make her come so many times, and she didn't care. All she knew was that he was there right now, taking her virginity and teaching her more about her body than she had learned in a quarter of a century.

Tristan collapsed on top of Alexis, his heart racing in perfect tempo with Alexis's. Slowly he withdrew his softening cock and placed a soft kiss on her neck. He laid his head on her chest and looked up into her eyes.

"You're not a virgin anymore."

"No, I'm not," she whispered, the realization only then breaking over her. This man had deliciously corrupted her in the most carnal way possible, and she had wanted it with every cell of her being. One look at the sweet smile he beamed up at her told her she had made the right decision.

* * * *

Tristan didn't want to interrupt the post-coital bliss. Underneath him was a beautiful, delicate creature, and he had just made her a woman. The feeling was heady. Tristan didn't doubt he had been someone's first at some point, but they hadn't let him know, and no one had mattered as much to him as Alexis.

That's why he knew he had to tell her.

With an extremely reluctant sigh, he pulled himself out of her and moved to lie next to her. The grass cushioned his head as he looked up at the starry sky.

"Alexis. I have to tell you something."

Her breathing was the only sound Tristan could hear, and his heart skipped a beat when he heard it hitch.

“I wasn’t bad, was I? Oh my god, you’ve probably been with so many women that really knew how to—”

“Shh. Don’t worry. You’re pretty damn good in bed, sweetheart.” He turned his head to see her grinning at him. She was so cute when she was excited, and Tristan couldn’t help but place a soft kiss on her lips.

“Then what is it?”

Moment of truth. Tristan knew he had to tell her what he and Jeremiah wanted right then. If Jer was kissing her in the middle of the Lasso, then he was smitten. He hadn’t consulted with Jeremiah yet, but Tristan knew it was time to let her in on exactly what he wanted before he did irreversible damage to the angel next to him.

“I reckon someone’s let you in on Male Order’s, uh, quirks by now.”

“Like all the billionaires running around? That’s not really a quirk.”

Fuck. Did she not know?

“It’s certainly unusual, Alexis. But that’s not what I’m talking about.”

“Oh.” Her voice was dark and husky and beckoned to Tristan. He looked back over at her and saw lust burning in her eyes. She knew. And from the looks of things, she wanted it. His dick began stirring again at the thought. “So you’re talking about the whole two-men-one-woman thing?” She paused and let out a small giggle. “Because that’s a quirk I’d like to see more towns have.”

The damn succubus had wrapped her arms around his as she spoke and rubbed herself against him, artfully landing his hand right on top of her mound. He reached out a finger to brush against her there. She shuddered and pushed her hips against his hand. It took everything in Tristan not to flip her on her back and finger-fuck her while she sucked on his cock.

“Yes. They’re called ménage relationships, and from what Jer tells me, they have a tendency to work out better than the more traditional ones.” Deep breath. “Alexis, Jeremiah and I have talked and—”

His words were cut off by Alexis’s mouth claiming his. Her kiss was eager, hungry, her tongue laving against his. Well, this certainly made things easier.

“Yes. Yes, yes, yes, Tristan.”

“You’re sure? There’s a lot of societal pressure against this, and your family’s probably gonna say it’s damn weird.”

“Let’s not talk about family now.”

“Okay, but—”

“Does it mean I get you and Jeremiah all to myself?”

“That’s exactly what it means, darlin’.”

“Then count me in.”

Tristan rolled over and delivered a kiss even more passionate than what she had just planted on him.

Damn, Tristan thought. Looks like I’m fixin’ to have quite a ride.

Chapter 6

It's Sunday, Jeremiah thought to himself as he stepped into the lobby of the empty building in downtown Male Order. No one went to work on a Sunday, especially not here in the laid-back oasis of Male Order. Unfortunately, this case didn't care what day of the week it was.

Jeremiah stepped out of the elevator and into the lobby of Burke Pierce Energy. The receptionist's desk was empty, but the soft sounds of conversation emanated from within the office. He headed past the reception area to the black and grey marble interior of the Burke Pierce offices. No cubicles divided the space—part of the company's devotion to open business practices—and all offices were only walled off with glass and steel.

Men in suits filled the conference room at the far end of the floor. As Jeremiah approached, their voices grew louder. He saw they were gathered around an open laptop with footage of a cable news channel playing filling the screen.

"Mr. Burke, other Mr. Burke, Dad." Jeremiah nodded to Tristan's father, Tristan, and his own father respectively. Along with Jeremiah, they were the heads of the Burke Pierce empire. Tristan and Jeremiah's fathers, Harrison Burke and Isaac Pierce, were only figureheads now, but they still took an active interest in the company and advised their sons on a regular basis.

"You have to see this," Isaac said to his son. He took off his wire-rimmed glasses and pinched the bridge of his nose, clearly frustrated.

Tristan, uncharacteristically dressed in a designer suit, pushed a key on the computer and the news channel popped back up.

“With us today is Texas candidate for Lieutenant Governor, Representative Joey Johnston, to discuss the recent accident on the Burke Pierce Energy drilling site in East Texas,” the reporter said on the news channel as a satellite image of Joey Johnston flashed on the screen. The bushy-haired man gave the camera a toothy grin and pointed to his “Joey’s Just Jolly for Texas” campaign button.

“Great to be here, Leslie, real great.”

“Representative, one of the key promises in your campaign is that you will create new jobs for Texans, and you have cited Burke Pierce as one of the worst offenders in Texas job loss.”

“Yes, Leslie. They don’t care one bit about Texans, and that’s obvious from that accident.”

“But how does this play into—”

“You know what shot off? Do you know what? Their blast preventer, one of the most important safety elements on a drilling rig. George Herndon, the man who nearly lost his life, God bless him, has just been neglected by the company.”

“How so?”

“You know they’re taking this to court? Forcing that poor, hard-working Texan to pay those lawyers. They’re trying to suck every penny out of him, and meanwhile, he can’t work. He can’t support himself, he can’t—”

“Representative, I understand your anger, but the company has issued several statements declaring that—”

“You trust them?” Representative Johnston’s eyes widened, showing the whites around them, and he began wildly gesticulating. “Those bunch of lying, yellow-belly tea-sippers are just lying to you all. They’re shutting down all, and I do mean *all*, of their drilling sites in Texas, and you know what that does? Takes jobs away from Texans! How can they—”

Jeremiah slammed the laptop closed.

“You do see our problem, don’t you?” Tristan drawled.

Jeremiah shook his head, infuriated by what he had just witnessed. He paced up and down the length of the conference room, fuming.

“Lies! Those are all outright lies. We’re paying all of George’s legal fees, and we never wanted to go to trial. We would have gladly settled for far more than a jury will grant him, but his insurance company is insisting on this trial.”

“Preaching to the choir.” Tristan sank into a chair and dropped his head to his hands.

“It’s a public relations shitstorm.” Harrison Burke crossed to Jeremiah and put an arm around him. “And, boy, as CEO, you know who has to deal with this.”

The true implications of the scandal dawned on Jeremiah.

“I can’t do it. I can’t go on TV. I’ll blow my cover.” He looked toward his father, hoping for some sort of advice.

“Son, you can be the proprietor of the Lasso and the CEO of Burke Pierce. How long are you going to hide behind that dance hall before you step up and publicly take responsibility for the company?”

“A very long time,” Jeremiah muttered.

“It’s what I’ve been saying all along,” Tristan chimed in. “This act is getting old and keeping it up for the sake of a few friends at the Lasso is hardly worth it. You can’t hide from who you from everyone. This ridiculousness has to end.”

Jeremiah was quiet for a moment. “What about...” He looked Tristan straight in the eye as he trailed off. “You know?”

“What?” Tristan shot Jeremiah a look of total annoyance, and then realization dawned on him as well. “Right, right. Does this have to do with your blonde-hair-and-legs-for-days friend?”

“Well, well, what have you boys been hiding from us?” Harrison asked, humor in his voice.

“My office, Tristan.”

“Ooh, Mr. Scary CEO, calling the poor little foreman into his office.”

“Shut it, Burke, and get the fuck into my office.”

Tristan held up his hands in defeat and exited the conference room.

Jeremiah turned to his father and Tristan's father. "I'll handle it." They looked unconvinced. "I promise. Just give me a couple of days, okay?"

"Jeremiah, we don't have a couple of days," Isaac said softly. "This is about to explode."

"Just..." Jeremiah started toward the door then turned back. "Twenty-four hours. Okay?"

Harrison and Isaac exchanged a look then nodded at Jeremiah.

"Twenty-four hours or your ass is toast," Harrison said, no hint of a joke in his voice.

* * * *

"Convinced I'm right yet?"

Tristan watched as Jeremiah stormed into his office and collapsed into his Italian leather desk chair. He spun in a circle, his hands on his head as if caught in a maelstrom of frustration.

"Because you know I am," Tristan continued from his seat on one of the modernist armchairs in the corner of the expansive office.

"You're a hypocrite." Jeremiah got up and looked out the large windows.

"I know, but at least I don't actively hide where I come from. Jer, splitting your life in two won't help anything. Everyone has different dimensions. All you have to do is figure out what makes you comfortable."

"What gives you any right to give me advice on how to live my life?" Jeremiah didn't raise his voice or tear his gaze from the cloudy Sunday afternoon outside. "Day in and day out, I have to be the CEO. I'm the face of Burke Pierce, and I'm personally responsible for everything we do. Now I have a public figure attacking what I've spent the last ten years of my life working on. I can't just relax on the

Board of Directors like you do.” Jeremiah turned to face Tristan. “Comfort, as you call it, is no part of my life.”

“That’s bullshit.” Tristan rose from his chair and crossed to Jeremiah. He put one finger against his chest. “You make that shit up. The CEO act is a defense you put up to keep anything good from coming into your life. Now you accidentally found something, and you won’t take it because you think Lasso-Jer and Burke Pierce-Jer are two different people.” Tristan lowered his finger. “I know they’re not.”

The room was silent as the two men stared each other down.

“Alexis,” was all Jeremiah could say.

“She won’t care half a damn about your double life. She will care about the fact that you’re lying out your ass.” Tristan couldn’t help but allow a sloppy grin to crawl across his face. “Anyway, I’m pretty sure she’s in.”

Jeremiah gave Tristan a light shove.

“You dog. You fucked her, didn’t you?”

Tristan’s smile widened.

“Well, I’ll be.” Jeremiah walked to the armchairs in the corner of his office and reached for a decanter of Delamain Le Voyage on the side table. “Cognac?”

“I believe I will,” Tristan said as he joined Jeremiah. “Look, I think I’m joining in with your dad.”

“What do you mean?”

“I’m giving you an ultimatum, Jer.” Tristan stepped closer as he made his point. “Tonight I’m gonna see Alexis again, and either you show up ready to tell her the truth, or you leave us the fuck alone.”

Jeremiah was silent as he handed Tristan the drink. Tristan unceremoniously downed the cognac, and Jeremiah huffed at his behavior.

“Fine spirits are wasted on you.”

The glass table rattled as Tristan slammed down his tumbler.

“Damn right they are.” Tristan crossed to the door. “And fine pussy is wasted on you.”

Tristan exited the office before Jeremiah could voice a protest. Muffled shouts came from behind the glass wall but did nothing to stop Tristan’s retreat. He needed to get away from Jeremiah and all his bullshit for a moment. Yes, the case was important, and yes, George’s injuries weighed on his conscience every day. But right now, Alexis was the biggest thing going on his life, and he knew that Jeremiah felt the same way.

Chapter 7

The Lasso looked quite different without the flickering neon sign. Alexis walked up to the entrance, hoping the door would be open. Tristan had warned her that the Lasso would be closed, but she hadn't imagined it would be so desolate. No sounds came from within its walls, and no light shone from underneath the doors. Alexis tiptoed up to the door nervously.

After what Tristan had said last night, she knew there was a chance of her new fantasy being fulfilled. The strength of her arousal at the thought shocked her. Standing alone on the dark, shadowy porch of the Twirling Lasso, she felt her pussy muscles clench and her panties dampen.

She wrapped her hand around the rusty doorknob and pulled. The Lasso was drenched in darkness. The sign outside said it was closed on Sunday evenings. Had this been some sort of cruel joke?

"Come in," she heard Tristan's voice say. She stepped fully into the space, closing the door behind her. Now she was in complete darkness. Only the twilight sun drifting from the crack under the door provided any illumination.

"Tristan?" Her footsteps sounded like thunder in the silence.

"Follow my voice."

Trusting him completely, she walked forward toward the source of his voice. She felt the dance floor beneath her feet as she continued, before she was finally stopped by a wall of muscle. She embraced the man in the dark, and she reveled in the chance to squeeze the man that had taken her in the finest way possible once more.

Something didn't feel right underneath the skin of her cheek. The fabric was too soft, and was that wool underneath her hands?

"Tristan?"

"Right behind you, gorgeous."

Behind her? Then who was...

The lights flickered on, and after her eyes adjusted to the light, Alexis looked up to see Jeremiah standing over her, dressed impeccably in a suit that showed off his muscular frame.

Jeremiah wrapped his arms around her and pulled her into a crushing embrace. His mouth found hers, and captured it in a kiss reminiscent of the one they had shared in this same room only one night earlier. However, this time, the kiss did not stay so sweet and soft. It escalated quickly, and Jeremiah began roving his hands over Alexis's body. He wrapped his hand around the curve of her ass and pressed her closer to an ample erection. She moaned into his mouth as she felt exactly how rock hard this man was, all for her.

Tristan landed his hands on Alexis, causing her to jump a little in Jeremiah's arms as they moved over her breasts, cupping them from beneath and massaging them. His warm body came up from behind Alexis and pressed into her.

"So how do you feel about Male Order now?" Tristan whispered into her ear, his breath tickling the strands of hair that hung there and sending a chill down Alexis's back. He traced his hands over the shudder all the way down the curve of her spine, stopping at the small of her back and wrapping around to hold her stomach. Jeremiah released her, backed up, and began shedding his clothes.

Alexis turned to Tristan and looked up at him questioningly.

"We both want you, baby. We want you together." His words were punctuated by his mouth landing on her neck, sucking and biting, leaving Alexis a whimpering mess. One hand entangled in her hair and pulled it, jerking her neck back and giving Tristan better access to the wide plane of flesh created by the plunging neckline of her dress. His kisses, licks, and nibbles moved to the spot at the

bottom of her throat. His tongue traced over her collarbone slowly, leaving a blazing trail behind it that had Alexis believing her skin was melting into his mouth. Tristan's exploration went further south, brushing over her cleavage and causing her to gasp at the stimulation so near her sensitive breasts. His mouth lingered at her neckline, and Alexis pressed her chest upward, desperate for his tongue to continue its southward journey.

Her mission was interrupted, however, by the overpowering heat that came up behind her, sending a steamy rush of excitement to her pussy. Tristan released the grip on her hair and sank to his knees in front of her. Jeremiah quickly encircled Alexis with his arms, leaving no time for her to miss Tristan's presence in front of her. Jeremiah's chest hairs tickled Alexis's back, as she leaned back against his shoulders.

The hem of her dress lifted, and Alexis looked down to see Tristan carefully peeling it upward, his eyes examining and appreciating every inch of flesh he revealed. His hands came to rest on the small patch of black lace at the front of her G-string. He grinned up at her.

"Someone's been on a bit of a naughty shopping spree," he teased, hunger and darkness audible in his voice. "Looks like we're in luck, Jer."

Jeremiah tightened his grip on Alexis's waist, and Alexis felt his cock bump against her ass, unencumbered by fabric for the first time. Its hardness excited her, making her want to grasp it, to feel his hot rod of steel that was his cock covered in fabric. As she attempted to grab it, though, Jeremiah pulled her harder against himself and bit sharply into her shoulder, eliciting a yelp of pleased pain from Alexis.

Tristan closed his hand over her warming mound, and Alexis's hips bucked forward, her body unconsciously seeking its satisfaction. Tristan obliged her bodily needs, hooking one finger underneath the crotch of the G-string and brushing against the wet folds of her beyond-ready pussy.

“Feels like she’s ready for us, Jer,” he said. He pushed his knuckle up against her clit and sent tiny sparks flying outward, causing Alexis to jerk in Jeremiah’s grip and her legs to give out completely. Jeremiah only tightened his grip, holding her upright to receive Tristan’s ministrations.

One finger penetrated Alexis without warning, and she howled in response. Her pussy clenched around Tristan’s finger, milking it, trying to suck it deeper. It wanted to be filled again, to be stretched to the limit, and fucked with abandon. Tristan added a second finger and tilted his fingers toward him, pushing against her G-spot and causing her to cry out in ecstasy.

“Fuck! Yes!”

“Hear that, Tristan? She’s ready to fuck.” The low vibration of Jeremiah’s deep baritone sent shockwaves through Alexis, ensuring every tiny part of her body was tingling with anticipation.

Tristan removed his fingers, taking her G-string along with it. Her cunt felt empty without some part of him in it, as if it had always needed some part of him filling it to be truly complete. Jeremiah hauled Alexis into his arms, turning her to face him and caressing her against his chest. All Alexis wanted was to give him everything he wanted, to let him use her body to find his ultimate pleasure.

Jeremiah placed her gently on the stage of the Lasso and backed up. For the first time, Alexis saw him completely naked, and her lungs stopped functioning for a moment. He was an Adonis, all muscle from head to toe, not an ounce of fat on his body. Her eyes lingered on his six-pack abs, and her tongue darted out to lick her lips. Then there was his cock. Where Tristan’s had been thick and meaty, Jeremiah’s was long and throbbing under her stare. Pre-cum glistened on the tip, and he fisted his own dick as she looked at him. It didn’t look like Jeremiah could hold out much longer.

He launched toward Alexis, ripping her dress off and revealing her matching lace bra. His teeth pulled the fabric to the side, and Jeremiah closed his mouth on a nipple and sucked, causing Alexis to

writhe violently underneath him. He covered her mound with one hand, and she felt his fingers part her outer folds and delve into the wetness there. He flicked her clit lightly, and the contrast of his soft touch with his rough treatment of her heated her blood to a boil. She needed him, and she needed him now.

A second set of hands landed on Alexis's bra, and she turned her head to see Tristan hovering over her, entirely naked, his own cock standing at full attention. His eyes were full of a tender affection, even in the midst of all this clawing desperation. He removed her bra, and the feel of Jeremiah's cock bumping against her wet entrance snapped her attention back to the man turning her into a shuddering mess. He wrapped his hand behind her back and flipped her over so that her breasts squeezed against the wood of the stage. His hands gripped the insides of her upper thighs and spread them open, exposing her completely to him.

Jeremiah didn't treat her like a delicate virgin as Tristan had. His cock pressed against her slit, rubbing up and down once, and then he pressed his full length into her, making her scream at the fullness. He thrust into her, and his position gave his ample cock ready access to that magical spot inside her. With every stroke, he hit it, sending tiny electric shocks outward from her pussy to scatter over her body. No longer was she capable of coherent thought. The only sounds that came from her were loud moans to match Jeremiah's primitive grunts.

Something wet bumped against the side of Alexis's cheek, and she turned her head to see Tristan kneeling on the stage beside her and his cock waiting at her mouth. His hands entangled in her hair and pushed her face forward. She readily obliged him, her tongue licking out to taste the liquid already pooled on the bulbous head of his cock. Tristan looked down at her with a questioning look in his eyes. She gave a small nod, ghosting her lips over the head of his cock. He must have found the approval he sought because he caressed the back of her head with one hand and pressed his cock to the back of her throat. She sucked him in, feeling the tip of his head bump against the back

of her throat as he timed his thrusts with Jeremiah's strokes into her pussy.

Jeremiah pushed himself into her faster and faster, and Tristan withdrew from her mouth. Jeremiah gripped her hips and pulled her against his cock, causing friction that created little sparks in the hard pebbles of her nipples. Jeremiah dipped a hand below her hips and pressed against her clit. She felt the orgasm building inside her, tightening her womb until she couldn't take anymore. With one stroke directly against her G-spot and a sharp flick to her clit, Alexis's inner muscles spasmed around Jeremiah, and something inside of her snapped, causing her consciousness to shatter into a million shining pieces of color as she found her ultimate satisfaction.

She felt Jeremiah pull out and place her gently back onto the stage. He rubbed the soft globes of her ass with one hand, a finger dipping into the forbidden crack. Alexis's arousal mounted again as that finger traced to her puckered hole and pushed. At that moment, she felt hot liquid pouring over her ass and lower back as Jeremiah pumped his seed onto her. He collapsed against her, panting. He withdrew from her and smiled as he dropped onto the stage next to her.

"Hi, Alexis." His grin turned silly as he spoke. "Welcome to the Twirling Lasso."

It was then that Alexis realized those were the first words of greeting he had spoken to her that night. They hadn't needed much verbal language. Their bodies told each other everything they would ever need to know.

"Hi."

"Okay, enough with the pleasantries," Tristan said from behind them. Alexis turned her head and saw him standing there, cock in hand, clearly ready to find his release from his earlier blowjob.

"Just a second, okay?" The annoyance was palpable in Jeremiah's voice. He placed a kiss on Alexis's nose and rose to his feet. "One moment, darlin'."

Jeremiah went behind the bar, and Alexis sat up and watched with amusement his cock bouncing with each step. Tristan claimed her attention, though, with a hand behind her neck. Their faces met quickly, and Alexis lapped into Tristan's mouth, her arousal back in full swing. He reached down, pinched a nipple, and squeezed. Alexis squealed at the pressure then noticed as Jeremiah returned with something Alexis didn't recognize in his hand.

"I told you to give me a second."

"Shit, man, I was just kissing our lovely lady," Tristan responded. Jeremiah gave a pointed nod to Tristan's substantial erection. "Okay, and maybe a little bit more."

Jeremiah grunted at Tristan then turned to Alexis. He opened his palm and showed the object in his hand to Alexis.

"Do you know what this is?"

She examined the object. It was small object with a wide center tapering to a point at one end and had what looked like a handle at the other. It was made from clear stone and exquisitely carved, no hard edges, only smooth curves. This object was definitely not something Alexis had ever encountered before. She conveyed this with a confused look up at Jeremiah.

"It's an anal plug."

What?

"Excuse me?" Alexis managed to squeak out. Jeremiah moved nearer her, his movements smooth and nearly feline, predatory but controlled.

"It's an anal plug. Remember how much you liked it when I pressed my finger against that pretty asshole of yours?" Alexis gasped at the memory and nodded, speechless. Jeremiah continued, "I want to put this in you. Imagine that. Being filled in two holes, your ass clenching around this little toy while Tristan fucks you."

Saying nothing, Tristan moved toward Alexis and put a hand over her wet mound. He parted her with his finger and darted into her, the suddenness of the action pulling her fully into the whirlpool of

excitement building within her. A second finger joined the first but quickly pulled out. Tristan examined his fingers for a moment, dripping with the cum he had drawn from Alexis that evening, and took the plug from Jeremiah. He rubbed Alexis's juices on its tip then reached downward. Alexis jumped when she saw it plummeting below her waistline, not sure yet if she was really ready for someone to penetrate her most forbidden hole. All this had happened so quickly, and she didn't know if she could keep up.

"Relax, baby," Jeremiah cooed in her ear. "Not yet."

She felt the cold stone of the plug against her clit, and Tristan plunged the object into her, pumping several times, each stroke adding to Alexis's excitement. He withdrew it, though, and she let out a frustrated sigh. Tristan and Jeremiah kept getting her a little bit excited then pulling away her stimulation. The act was getting old.

"Please," she managed. "I need something, I need you, anything."

Jeremiah smiled darkly and placed one hand on Alexis's shoulder to roll her to the side. Two sets of hands warmed over Alexis's ass, massaging and kneading her tense muscles. She closed her eyes and melted into the sensation, letting herself relax under their hands. Licks and nibbles followed the hands, heat spreading over Alexis's skin at each new application of nibbled pain and laved pleasure. Soon she felt the warmth of her own juices against the seam of her ass. One set of hands held her cheeks apart, fully exposing her puckered hole. The air blowing against it sent a chill through Alexis, but it soon dissipated. Cold stone pressed against her, the tapered end of anal plug pressing into the hole. Her eyes tightened as the plug pushed in farther and pain radiated outward from her anus.

"Shh, baby, it doesn't last long."

Tristan's words were somewhat reassuring, but the pain blocked everything out from her mind. Just when she thought she couldn't take the stretching anymore, the plug popped through her tight ring of muscles, and an entirely different sensation overtook the pain. A warmth radiated there, and a pleasure unlike anything Alexis had even

imagined filled her consciousness. She moaned as the plug twisted into her, the feeling of being filled there driving her to new, forbidden levels of excitement.

Jeremiah's dark laugh sounded behind her. "Told you she'd like it."

Tristan flipped her onto her back, and the wood hitting her ass again caused the plug to move and a fresh wave of pleasure to wash over Alexis.

"You ready for the ride of your life, honey?"

"Bring it."

Tristan pushed the wide head of his cock against Alexis's slick opening and slowly pushed forward into her, filling her more and more until she thought she would explode from the feeling. Once he had buried himself to the hilt, he paused for a moment, and Alexis adjusted to being fucked while filled from behind. Tristan withdrew a little and pushed back into her, sending a fresh volt of pleasure to radiate from her front and back entrances. At first, his strokes were gentle, but Alexis's moans and thrusting must have convinced him that she enjoyed this very, very much. He began fucking into her mercilessly, sweat pouring from his forehead as he thrust over and over. Jeremiah reached between them to stroke at her clit, and Alexis screamed at the addition of a new tingling between her legs.

Tristan's thrusts became harder, and so did Jeremiah's rubbing of her clit. Each stroke pushed her higher and higher, propelling her to that place over the clouds of everyday life that she had just seen. She pressed back, anxious to feel that again and to feel it with the blunt object buried in her ass. Tristan cried out as his hot liquid squirted into Alexis, and his final thrusts were her undoing. She went flying and finally arrived that other plane of existence where carnal delights were the only things that mattered, where feeling and touching and tasting and smelling were glorified as they should be.

Finally, she floated back to earth. She felt a warm hand against her ass and sighed as it pulled the plug from her ass. At first, there

was a little pain, and then the only pain came from missing that emptiness. Both men came to lay beside her on the stage, Tristan out of breath from his recent cardiovascular exercise. For a moment, silence consumed them.

As she listened to her own breathlessness there in the bar, she felt a sudden self-consciousness. She rolled toward Tristan, lifted her knees to her chest, and wrapped her arms around her, trying to cover herself, slightly embarrassed from the scene she'd just made.

"What's wrong?" Jeremiah sat up and looked over her. Alexis closed her eyes and turned her head to the side, unwilling to meet his gaze.

"Darling. Tell us what's going on." Tristan caressed her hair, but Alexis spooked at his touch. Suddenly this was all too much.

"Nothing," she muttered into the floor, wanting to just be alone for a moment. What was she doing? Only twenty-four hours ago she had been a virgin, had never felt a cock sinking slowly inside her. And only a few days before that, she had been completely innocent. Never had any man brushed against her mound, squeezed her breasts, licked her...

"Hey." Tristan's voice demanded her attention. "Don't be like this. We need to know what's going on." Alexis felt a tear trickle down the side of her cheek.

"It's just..." She couldn't do this. She couldn't tell them how ashamed she felt.

"You can trust us, Alexis." Jeremiah's voice held none of the darkness and hunger it had earlier. "I know we just met, but..." He took a deep breath. "You're not just any girl Tris met in a bar."

She laughed a little at Jeremiah's statement, and the feeling loosened the tightness clenching around her heart.

"I was a virgin. And now I've been with two men within twenty-four hours." She looked up to see both of them staring at her with open, caring expressions. "Excuse me if I'm a little overwhelmed. Everything's just happening so...fast."

“It’s fast for us, too, baby.” Tristan wrapped his arms around her and pulled her up to sit on his lap. “I don’t want to scare you, but this is all brand new.” He looked toward Jeremiah. “Not just sharing you, but falling for you.”

Falling for her? They were falling for her? Her heart began a joyous dance at the idea that these two incredible men could be falling for *her*, of all girls. She could only smile in response, not yet brave enough to look either man in the eye.

“You’re an incredible woman.” Jeremiah petted her hair as he spoke. “And we want to get to know you better, but...” He gave Tristan a meaningful look. Tristan only nodded in response. “There are a few things you need to know about us, Alexis.”

That sounded horribly foreboding to Alexis’s ears, and she made to scamper from Tristan’s lap, but he held her in place.

“Don’t get so antsy, beautiful. What we have to say isn’t bad, it’s just... different.” He took a deep breath and paused. “Jer, why don’t you do the honors?”

Jeremiah placed a hand underneath Alexis’s chin and turned her face to his. “What I’m about to tell you is to be held in complete and utter confidence. I’ve worked hard to keep my life the way it is now, and if this information got out, that could all change. Do you understand?”

Alexis nodded, thoroughly confused.

Jeremiah took a deep breath and continued. “You’ve heard of Burke Pierce Energy, correct?”

“Yes, but what does that have to do with—”

“Think about it.”

Realization dawned on Alexis, and she looked up at the two men in awe, examining each in turn with an entirely new understanding of who they were. “You’re Tristan Burke.”

“At your service,” Tristan said with a tip of a nonexistent hat. “Pleased to meet you.”

“But isn’t Tristan Burke some heir that’s run away to...”

Oh. Right. To work on a family rig. Alexis recalled reading about Tristan's disappearance on a few gossip blogs that had referred to him as "Big Oil's Prodigal Son." They had all said he was good looking, but none had come close to describing fully the drop-dead gorgeous real thing.

She looked back to Jeremiah in awe. "So you're really one of *those* Pierces?"

"Indeed." He gave a cold smile reminiscent of the one he used with customers. "And as my sisters want nothing to do with the company, I'm the new acting Chief Executive Officer."

"Hold on." Alexis needed answers. "Weren't you just bitching about billionaires last night? Talking about how you thought showing off wealth was terrible?"

"I wasn't bitching about *all* billionaires." He gave Alexis a playful fist to her shoulder. "I was only talking about the snobby ones. That's why I came to Male Order, in fact. Everyone's pretty damn down to earth around here."

Alexis continued staring at him in confusion then turned her attention to Tristan.

"And you! You got in a fight last night and cursed out that rich kid! Were you being that hypocritical?"

"Honey, that wasn't about money. That was about him being a douche."

All of this was too much for Alexis to comprehend. She rose and began collecting her clothing. Her mission was cut short when she realized Jeremiah had destroyed her dress.

She shot an irritated look at him, and he only grinned in response.

"I've got some clothes back at the apartment, darling," Tristan offered. "They'll be a little big on you, but they should keep you covered enough."

"Covered enough for what?"

Tristan hauled himself to his feet, crossed to Alexis, and claimed her mouth in an abrupt, passionate kiss.

“Wouldn’t you like to know?”

“Tris, we don’t have time,” Jeremiah interjected. “We have to be in a certain courtroom at eight o’clock, remember?”

“The trial!” Alexis exclaimed. It all started to make sense now. Tristan’s sullenness, the deposition, Jeremiah’s standoffishness at the Lasso, all of it was a result of the lawsuit filed against Burke Pierce Energy.

“Starts bright and early in the morning.” Tristan rubbed his temples as he spoke, suddenly looking very stressed. “And Tristan and I are both taking the stand, though God knows when...”

“Point is, sweetheart, you can’t stay.” Tristan put it bluntly. “And it’s not because we don’t want you to. Believe me, we want you to stay as long as you can, sexy.” He waggled his eyebrows at Alexis. “But that shit starts early, and it’s already late.”

“I’m sorry, Alexis.” Jeremiah wrapped his arms around her and kissed her hair, and she could feel exactly how much he wanted to stay bumping against her naked stomach.

Tristan exited to the apartment and returned with a too-big T-shirt and a pair of boy’s boxers. When Alexis raised an eyebrow at his possession of the boxers, he held up his hands.

“Hey. I have a nine-year-old brother. Don’t give me that look.”

The three of them burst into laughter, and for the first time in months, Alexis felt safe and content. These two men wanted her to stay, and why not? What was there for her in California anyway? It didn’t matter one way or another that they were billionaires. A small part of her was disappointed that they had lied to her, or rather, made some key omissions, but something deep inside her gut told her to trust them. Plus, their wealth could make for some fun times, right?

She cuddled against Tristan as they laughed, never wanting to leave the warmth of his arms and never wanting the warmth blooming within her to cool. With these two around, she doubted it would.

But with their lives, would they be willing to stay around?

Chapter 8

A large crowd had already amassed outside the Dallas County Courthouse when Jeremiah and Tristan stepped out of the back seat of the black Lincoln Town Car. The Burke Pierce lawyers had insisted on the car as a safety measure, although both Jeremiah and Tristan would have preferred driving themselves.

They emerged into a sea of cameras and microphones accompanied by reporters shouting questions at the top of their lungs.

“Mr. Pierce, what do you have to say about Representative Johnston’s statements about the Burke Pierce site closures?”

“Why has progress building the new clean energy plant slowed?”

“Do you want to give a statement about the relocation of the company’s headquarters to Male Order?”

Jeremiah and Tristan held their heads down and rushed through the group of reporters, lawyers and bodyguards flanking them in an attempt to shield them from the onslaught. They had almost emerged from the gaggle when Tristan heard one question that stopped him in his tracks.

“Mr. Burke, do you plan to take a more active role on the Board of Directors now that your negligence as a foreman has caused a near-death accident?”

Tristan turned and looked for the source of the reporter. A short, round man waved to Tristan, and despite Jeremiah’s attempts at holding him back, Tristan took off in his direction.

“Mr. Burke, do you think your privileged upbringing had anything to do with your failures in the field? Did you purposefully put George

Herndon in danger? Are the rumors true that Herndon was gunning for your job?"

Tristan only saw red and lunged toward the reporter, hands extended. How dare he? Tristan was a damn good foreman, no matter what any ignorant reporter spewed. But saying he would do such a thing to George on purpose? That was low, really low.

Hundreds of flashes flooded the crowd of reporters with lights as photographers elbowed each other in an attempt to get Tristan's outburst on camera. One of the Burke Pierce bodyguards took hold of Tristan's arms before he could do any damage, but even as he was pulled away, he fought to get free.

"You can take your questions and shove them up your ass!" He didn't care about the press response right now. He only wanted to set the record straight. "George was a damn fine worker and one of my best friends. It's all of you motherfuckers I'd stick in the line of fire!"

The bodyguard finally wrangled Tristan away from the mass of reporters and into the glass doors of the imposing concrete courthouse building. Jeremiah ushered him into the elevator, but Tristan still wanted to go back out there and pummel that reporter.

Once the elevator doors closed, leaving them in solitude, Jeremiah turned to Tristan. "What the fuck, man? This is going to be a public relations nightmare. As if we didn't have it bad enough with Johnston and people bitching about the clean energy plant, you have to go and *attack* a reporter?" He shook his head and leaned against the elevator door.

"Did you hear what that fucker said to me, though?" Tristan was determined to stand by his actions. "Calling me negligent? Claiming I did this to George on purpose? I couldn't let him get away with that, Burke Pierce be damned."

"Burke Pierce be damned, my ass," Jeremiah shot back. "You just cost us some valuable sympathy points for this trial, and we weren't in a position to afford that. If you lost this for us, I swear I will have your ass mounted on my wall, Burke."

Tristan merely stared back at Jeremiah, completely willing to settle this quite violently. The dinging of the elevator and the doors opening, however, interrupted their standoff. Now a sea of legal personnel waited for them. Tristan went with his respective lawyers, and Jeremiah went with him. Tristan couldn't hear their advising as they made their way toward the courtroom. He could only hear the rushing in his ears caused by his anger and agitation.

* * * *

The courtroom was consumed in a buzz of excitement when Jeremiah and Tristan entered. Jeremiah couldn't stand the idea of even looking in Tristan's direction. His primitive behavior may have ruined the case. He didn't think Tristan quite grasped how vital the win was for the continued operation and flourishing of Burke Pierce. If they lost, the bad press would cost them their most valuable clients and, as a result, the funding for the clean energy plant they were building nearer Male Order.

The clean energy plant. An idea flickered through Jeremiah's mind, but it vanished at the banging of the judge's gavel. He took his seat at the defendant's table and straightened the substantial pile of documents in front of him. He looked to the case's lead attorney and instantly regretted it. The man was hunched over a similarly massive pile of documents and shaking his head in a sign of defeat.

Jeremiah continued flipping through his papers, not bothering to look up until he heard his lawyer delivering the opening statement.

"Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I'm sure you've been exposed to the media surrounding this case. It tells you that Burke Pierce is the enemy, that Burke Pierce doesn't care about the common man. Well, let *me* tell you something. Burke Pierce *does* care about their employees, especially the everyday man.

"The unfortunate victim of the accident, George Herndon, was a close friend of Tristan Burke, son of Burke Pierce founder Harrison

Burke. My esteemed clients tried to settle this out of court and offered to pay any and all fees associated with the Mr. Herndon's injuries, along with a significant sum for pain and suffering, but Mr. Herndon's personal insurance company, a private entity that contracts with Burke Pierce, refused to settle and insisted on taking your valuable time to settle this in court.

"Now, jury members, we hear day in and day out about insurance companies. Ads on television tell us that they will protect us, take care of us, see us peacefully into old age. But no such thing has happened to George Herndon, an honest guy just trying to make a living. His insurance company has decided to put him through a trial. A trial! One of the most stressful things known to mankind, and Mr. Herndon has to endure it in his state.

"So we ask you, nay, we implore you to take these issues into consideration as you hear both sides of the story of the next few days. Cost is not an issue to Burke Pierce. They're willing to do anything for a valued member of their team such as George Herndon. Please, reward him with the most substantial sum you can justify. Give the little guy a break, folks. Don't we all deserve a break?"

The lead Burke Pierce attorney returned to his seat, and Jeremiah nodded at him in appreciation. The words had been carefully planned and rehearsed over the past several weeks, designed to create maximum sympathy in the jury. Public opinion said that Burke Pierce was an evil, careless corporation. Getting the jury on their side was the oldest trick in the book, but necessary.

A series of insurance officials took the stand, but Jeremiah couldn't bring himself to listen to their testimony. His mind was stuck in the night before. Images of Alexis stretched out naked before him played across his mind. Just the thought of her screaming in ecstasy caused his cock to stir and press on the zipper of his pants.

His attention returned to the trial when the plaintiff's attorney announced that he had to refrain from calling a witness since that witness was occupied with official state business in Austin. When

asked for the name of the witness, a twisted smile broke on the attorney's face.

"State Representative Joseph R. Johnston."

Jeremiah felt like someone had punched him in the stomach. Joey Johnston would be on the stand. What the fuck did he know about the case? The plaintiff's reasoning then occurred to Jeremiah. Johnston had amassed a huge following through appearances on television and radio during his campaign. If he became formally affiliated with the case, his supporters would take up the cause of bringing down Burke Pierce. This was a huge blow to their case. Combined with Tristan's outburst this morning, it promised a very difficult road in the days to follow.

"Court is recessed until eight o'clock tomorrow morning." The judge's order boomed through the room, and the din of excited voices rained down on Jeremiah again. He turned around and searched the room for Tristan. He stood in a back corner, clearly trying to avoid attention. Their eyes met, and Jeremiah saw nothing but torment in Tristan's gaze. He knew this was even worse for Tristan than it was for him. Tomorrow Tristan would take the stand as the plaintiff's witness, and his competency as a foreman would be called into question, as well as his friendship with Herndon.

Another man in a suit touched Tristan's shoulder, and he turned toward him, breaking his gaze with Jeremiah. He slowly headed toward the exit, his brain unable to focus on what his attorneys were saying all around him. This day had been pure fucking torture, and he needed relief. He needed Alexis.

* * * *

Tristan had really fucked up. His image was plastered across every major news outlet, and some jackass with a cell phone camera had uploaded a video to YouTube. It now ran about once every ten

minutes. He sat in Jeremiah's apartment in SoMale staring at his own image on television.

"What did I tell you?" Tristan had only heard Jeremiah this angry a few times in his life. "Public relations disaster. First your idiocy, then motherfucking Joey Johnston. Damn it." He slammed his fist on the glass table to the right of Tristan. "There's no way out of this."

"There has to be a way, Jer. We haven't done anything wrong. If we can just get rid of all this insurance bullshit, we can take care of George like we always wanted to."

Jeremiah paused his frustrated pacing at the mention of George's name. "Are you ready for tomorrow?"

No. Tristan wasn't ready for tomorrow. The image of George flying through the air after the blast preventer went played itself on repeat in Tristan's brain. The thought of that failure made him physically ill. The worst part was that he had no clue how it had happened. That damn rig had been checked and rechecked about a dozen times before it went out. There was no way it was an equipment malfunction, and Tristan had thought of himself as a pretty damn good foreman.

"I can't not be ready. They're gonna skewer me alive on the stand. I got no excuse."

"You know they're going to call everything about you into question, right? Your whole private life is going to be laid bare for the jury."

"Alexis," was all Tristan could manage. Her image kept looping through his brain. This change in their lives would impact her hugely, and that was the last thing he wanted to happen.

"I know."

"We gotta do something. I mean, I know she's the one, but I don't know how we can get her through this. Our lives aren't like other people's, and this whole incident will illustrate that for her in a big way."

Jeremiah laughed as he put a hand on Tristan's shoulder. "Now you know how I was feeling." He took a seat next to Tristan and stared at the silent flashing images on the TV for a moment. "But you convinced me that my life wasn't complete without her, and now I can't let her go. We're gonna get through this."

An idea walked fully formed into Tristan's brain. "Speaking of Alexis, you gotta be at the Lasso tonight?"

"I should, but I think Jan and Win can hold down the fort on a Monday."

"Then I think it's time to give Alexis the night of her life."

* * * *

Alexis returned to the apartment drenched in sweat from her workout in the building's fitness center. Now that she knew that Tristan was filthy rich, the fact that the gym was fully outfitted with a personal trainer hanging around to help residents didn't surprise her as much as it normally would have. She took a swig of the Evian bottle she had been given at the gym and fell onto the large leather couch in the center of the living room. The door to her room had been left open, and she spied something inside that looked unfamiliar.

She cautiously entered her room, now on the lookout for home invaders. But what she saw wasn't the sort of thing burglars would leave behind. In her room hung a garment bag with *Jacqueline's* emblazoned across it in white script. A note was attached to the hanger.

Hey, gorgeous. Meet us downstairs at 8 and get ready for the time of your life. XO, Tristan

Alexis's heart started beating faster as she unzipped the bag. She pulled it down to reveal a bright red lace dress. It had a fitted bodice and a short, flowing A-line skirt. Alexis laughed to herself as she

fingered the rich lace. With its straight neckline and three-quarter sleeves, it was distinctly reminiscent of a ballet costume. Her men were messing with her.

She glanced across the room and saw that it was already nearly five o'clock. Time to start getting ready. After examining the dress once again, Alexis danced toward the bathroom, shedding her clothes as she prepared to ready herself for a night with two deliciously sexy cowboy billionaires. Damn, she was lucky.

Chapter 9

Clicks echoed as Tristan's Italian leather oxfords hit the marble floor of the apartment building. He felt like Jeremiah with his pacing back and forth, but he couldn't erase the news footage from his mind. Over and over moving pictures played in his brain of his near assault on the reporter. There would doubtless be hell to pay, and the reporter would probably press charges. However, none of that mattered to him as much as the impact of the footage on his relationship with Alexis.

"Calm down, Tris." Jeremiah sat calmly on one of the white leather and metal modernist chairs positioned in groups around the lobby. "You were an ass and may have lost the case for us, but that has nothing to do with Alexis."

"You think it doesn't? You think she's going to like seeing video of me assaulting a man over and over again?"

"Technically, it was only attempted assault."

Tristan shot his dirtiest look at Jeremiah, who had the audacity to merely shrug.

"Jer, I want this to work. I want this to be the one. And I may have jeopardized that today."

"Hi." The soft coo of a female voice broke into their conversation. Tristan looked over to see an angel in red stepping off the elevator and heading in their direction. The dress they had picked out looked perfect with her tan and her big, light brown eyes. And damn, did it hug her curves. Her breasts pushed against the lace of the dress, and Tristan could feel something of his own straining against some fabric. She wore her hair in a tight ballet bun and topped off the whole thing

with bright red lipstick. He couldn't wait to see the lipstick stains that color would leave on his cock.

His pacing turned into a quick stride to where she stood. He lowered his head to taste her mouth gently, not wanting a hair out of place on this vision in front of her. God, this was the woman whose virginity he had taken. Just the memory of the wet heat of her pussy had him hard and ready to fuck her again. But he knew that wasn't possible.

Jeremiah also crossed to Alexis and kissed her gently. They had talked about it earlier, and after last night, they wanted to give her the sexual reins today. Granted, they both fully intended to take over once they got to some sex, but she had to initiate the interaction.

Both men offered their elbows, and Alexis hooked her arms through each. She looked between them, and Tristan thought about how perfectly she complemented them. She was tall, blonde, and gorgeous, but she was also sweet and innocent with a strong independent streak. This was the kind of woman Tristan could see himself growing old with.

"So where to tonight?" Jeremiah asked as he pushed the door open. "We want to give you whatever you want."

Alexis bit her lip as she thought, and Tristan wanted to run his tongue over the little bite and soothe the sting. Hell, he just wanted to plunge his tongue into any part of her. Remembering the taste of her sweet cream made his mouth water.

"What about dinner?"

Tristan looked at Jeremiah and knew he was thinking exactly the same thing.

"You like Asian food?"

"I love it!"

"Hold on, I've just got to make a call." Jeremiah released Alexis with a kiss on her cheek and walked around the corner.

"What was that look the two of you exchanged?"

"What look?" Tristan feigned innocence.

“I’m not that stupid. The two of you have something up your sleeve.”

Tristan wrapped his arms around Alexis’s waist and pulled her body against his. “You haven’t seemed to mind what we dreamt up in the past.” He moved close to her and whispered into her ear. “You certainly appeared to enjoy yourself last night, all laid out on the stage with Jeremiah fucking his cock into you from behind.”

Alexis whimpered a little and leaned into his chest, and Tristan swore he could smell the distinct aroma of female arousal.

“Okay, all set.” Jeremiah strolled back around the corner, looking smug and confident as ever. “Alexis, would you fancy a trip to Male Order’s magnolia grove?”

She looked in between Jeremiah and Tristan. “What does that have to do with any...” She closed her eyes, took a deep breath, and then nodded enthusiastically. “Let’s do it.”

“Oh, honey,” Tristan said. “We’ll do it, all right.”

* * * *

Alexis’s eyes had widened when he’d walked her to the Rolls Royce waiting around the corner. Tristan had suggested they impress her with one of Jeremiah’s many sports cars, but Jeremiah felt the Rolls had a certain classic, romantic feel to it.

He ushered her in and headed south toward Blue Topaz Lane and the lake, eager to show Alexis what he had waiting for her. They arrived, and Jeremiah delighted in taking Alexis’s hand as she navigated the dark grove of trees. Between him and Tristan, her feet barely touched the ground. The transformation was so fast for Jeremiah. All of the sudden, it was beyond him how he’d lived without having a woman to care for and spoil all these years.

They got to the edge of the water, and a full Chinese meal was laid out for them. A string of white Chinese lanterns hung in the trees above them, casting a soft, romantic glow over the setup. The chef

stood to the right of his opulent picnic. Alexis looked so adorable as she rushed forward then turned back to them, an incredulous expression plastered across her face.

“That’s...that’s...how did you get...” she stammered as she looked back and forth between them, the meal, and the chef.

Jeremiah stepped forward to take care of the situation.

“Alexis Darnielle, my darling, meet Shen Jie Rui, winner of *Chef Wars*, season two.”

She stuck out her hand to shake his, but the expression didn’t leave her face.

“Oh my god, it’s such a pleasure to meet you.” Her giddiness warmed Jeremiah from the inside out. “I’m such a fan, and I mean, Andrei was so terrible when he insulted your—”

“It’s okay. Winning made it all worth it. Call me Jie.”

She continued shaking his hand, wide-eyed.

“Okay, sweetheart, time to let the man go.” Tristan ushered Alexis toward the picnic blanket.

“Thanks, man, I owe you.” Jeremiah and Jie bumped fists.

“No problem at all. Let me know how it goes, all right?”

“What, the meal?”

Jie gave a knowing smile and a wink. “Whatever you want, man.”

Jeremiah headed quickly to the picnic blanket, eager to spoil Alexis exactly as much as she deserved. They ate in peace, talking and laughing quietly. Alexis switched between leaning on each one of them, as she had the night before. Jeremiah felt himself relaxing, finally free of the stress of the trial. Alexis made all that cease to matter. Her coy smiles and warming laugh endeared her more and more to him each minute.

Jeremiah’s attention, though, didn’t stay on that. He couldn’t help but notice the way fitted red lace emphasized her perky, round breasts. He remembered the feel of those in his hands, and his cock pressed against the zipper of his pants, eager to feel the warm sheath of her pussy again.

“Well, that was delicious,” she said as she stretched out and her breasts strained against the lace of her dress. Jeremiah caught her while she was stretching and dragged her to sit against his chest.

“I know something more delicious.” His words were muffled as he pressed his mouth against the side of her neck and landed several small nibbles. Alexis giggled, and Jeremiah caught her chin in his hand and tilted her face toward his. He had only meant to give a sweet, teasing kiss, but the feel of the hot abyss of her mouth pushed his libido into overdrive. He plundered the sweetness of her mouth, licking, biting, sucking, doing everything he wanted to do to other parts of her.

She responded in kind, her fists balling around his shirt, her hips pumping against him relentlessly. He paused for breath and saw that Tristan had crawled behind her to kiss the revealed flesh of her neck and palm her breasts.

They were going to need to move this little adventure. Jeremiah hauled himself to his feet, difficult with his raging erection begging for relief.

“Let’s go.” His growled words were all it took for Tristan and Alexis to follow as he hurried toward the car. He looked back and saw that Tristan had Alexis flung over his shoulder as he took long strides forward. The hold presented her ass to Jeremiah, and the round globes called to him and his straining cock.

They arrived at the car, and Tristan practically threw Alexis into the seat. As they all settled in, Tristan asked, “Are we going all the way back downtown?” Clearly, he did something to Alexis in the back seat because her soft moans filled the car.

“Fuck no,” Jeremiah said, suddenly wishing he had taken the Lamborghini instead. “My place.” He turned and headed toward SoMale to his loft where he had plans to claim Alexis as his.

* * * *

Tristan's kiss was blistering. His teeth and tongue seared Alexis's mouth with their desperation. A soft bed captured the two of them as he pushed her backward and landed on top of her. Alexis tried to open her eyes and take in the room, but another sight distracted her.

Jeremiah sat back on his heels, already naked, his impressive cock fully erect and ready for action. He reached down and knotted Alexis's hair in his hand. He pulled her head backward and rubbed the pre-cum dripping from his cock along her lips. She licked the tip of his cock eagerly, savoring his salty tang. He pushed his cock forward, and Alexis eagerly opened her mouth, more than happy to oblige his desires. He groaned as she wrapped her lips around his head and sucked, taking him deeper down her throat, inch by inch.

"No fair." Tristan straddled her lap, and her eyes darted toward him, her lips still encircling Jeremiah's erection. "Your day was just fucking dandy, Jer. No one was personally attacking your job performance left and right." Tristan wrapped a hand behind Alexis's neck and dragged her up to a sitting position. She sighed a little after her mouth reluctantly released Jeremiah's cock.

Tristan had undressed, and yet again, the sight of his muscular chest sent lightning bolts of pure heat rushing to Alexis's pussy. He moved into a sitting position and pulled Alexis to sit on his lap, his erection pushing against the soft globes of her ass. His lips found hers in another scorching kiss, and Tristan wasted no time getting to his final destination. He slid one wide, work-roughened finger into Alexis's wet entrance, causing her to gasp and break the kiss. He added a second finger and pumped into her with a relentless pace. Her sheath clenched on his fingers, wanting every bit of fullness possible. An image flashed through Alexis's mind of her ultimate fantasy, but she quickly dismissed it. There was plenty to keep her distracted.

Tristan playfully pushed Alexis off his lap, and she plopped onto the large, soft bed. Tristan stood on the bed and walked to hover over her. He stood with his legs on either side of her head and lowered himself to dip his cock into her mouth.

She decided to try a little game of her own. Her mouth widened to let in the substantial girth, and his massive cock dipped into her waiting mouth. She wrapped her lips around just the very tip and sucked as hard as she could, eliciting a sharp hiss from Tristan.

“God, yes.” His cry of pleasure came from behind gritted teeth.

Alexis refused to indulge him too much just yet and only laved her tongue around the head. Tristan tried to hold her head in place, allowing him to fuck her mouth. She had other plans, though. Her head twisted from side to side, always just out of reach of Tristan’s searching hands. He finally captured Alexis’s head and held her in place, but she closed her mouth tightly and wouldn’t allow Tristan to push his cock inside.

He growled at Alexis’s flirtatious insubordination, and she allowed herself to release a small giggle.

Never one to give in easily, Alexis just shook her head, and pressed her lips tighter, the tips turning up in a grin.

Suddenly, Tristan massaged his callused fingertips into the flesh of Alexis’s hips and tenderly flipped her so she lay on her stomach. If this turned out like the last time she had been on her stomach, she didn’t mind at all. Two hands massaging her ass suggested it would turn out exactly the same. She relaxed into his massage, inching her ass up into his hands in a silent request for more.

“So you think you can run the show?” Tristan’s voice held an even more erotic edge, and for reasons beyond Alexis’s comprehension, a fresh wave of liquefied heat poured from her pulsing cunt.

“Aaaahh!” Alexis heard herself scream before she registered what was happening. Her brain rushed to comprehend the situation, but a second forceful slap to her ass expelled all rational thought.

Her ass was on fire as it received a third loud smack. It burned, but after the fourth slap, something strange happened. The fire of the spanking turned from pain to white-hot pleasure. She found herself wiggling her ass upward for another blow that would resonate through

her dripping pussy. Slap after slap, her screams turned into moans, and she longed to be touched.

“Tristan, Jeremiah, please,” she managed between gasps and slaps. “I need you, I need something.”

“Our little plaything is begging, Tris. Should we do something about that?”

Tristan only responded with another smack to Alexis’s ass. He stopped his delectable pummeling for a moment to massage the soft globes. The contrast of his gentle touch only fanned the fire blazing between Alexis’s legs. He issued another smack then leaned over and slid his tongue along the curve of one cheek.

“This ass tastes delicious,” he murmured as he landed a small bite right in the center of one cheek. Jeremiah’s lips landed on the other cheek, and Alexis’s inner muscles convulsed with the power of the flames consuming her.

“She seems a little wet.” Jeremiah’s breath ghosted over the wet folds of her pussy, and her hips bucked upward of their own volition. She needed more, and she needed more *now*.

“I can’t do this.” Much to Alexis’s embarrassment, her voice came out like a strangled cry. “I need something...I need you.” Another upward thrust of her hips punctuated her plaintive cry.

“She seems to want something.” The vibrations of his voice seemed to flow straight to her asshole, and the image of her fantasy flashed up in her mind.

“Both of you.”

“What was that, beautiful?” Jeremiah laid his head on the pillow next to her face, and Alexis mustered the courage to tell him what she wanted as bluntly as possible.

“I want both of you inside me.” She searched his eyes, still uncertain, even after their conversation the previous evening, if her desires were too strange, too illicit for her to voice aloud.

Apparently, that was just what Jeremiah wanted to hear. A wicked grin spread across his face, and he hurried away from her back to where Tristan was still kissing and massaging her ass.

“You heard the woman. Time to give her what she wants.”

As Jeremiah dismounted from the bed, Tristan moved his hand beneath Alexis and brushed over her mound. He pushed her lips aside with two fingers and used his thumb to massage against her engorged clit. Fuck! That felt too good, and Alexis knew that between that and her spanking, she was about to come.

“Tristan,” she begged, “Tristan, I’m close.”

His hand instantly disappeared, and Alexis turned her head back to him in protest.

“What the fuck?” Her disappointment erased any sense of propriety she’d once had.

“Not until we say so. You’re gonna come when we do. We don’t want to wear you out too soon.” He leaned over her back, and the feeling of his cock bumping against the seam of her ass added to the painful arousal coming from between her legs. “There are so many things we have to do to you, honey. Trust me, we’ll make you come. And when you do, it’s gonna be like anything you’ve ever felt.” He pushed his cock forward, separating the globes of her ass. “Ever.”

Jeremiah reentered the room and climbed onto the bed. Alexis heard a slurping noise and then the sound of liquid being rubbed against something.

Lube.

“I think it’s time to give the little princess here what she wants.”

Obedying Jeremiah’s wicked command, Tristan put an arm beneath Alexis’s chest and hauled her to a sitting position. He released her and brushed a hand over her pebbled nipples, eliciting a soft whimper from Alexis. Jeremiah placed his hands on her shoulders and turned her to face Tristan.

Alexis obediently opened her legs, understanding Jeremiah’s silent orders completely. Tristan put his hands on her hips as she

straddled his lap. He held her over his cock, moving the tip up and down the wet folds of her pussy. Her hips bucked in objection to the teasing, and an amused sparkle appeared in Tristan's eyes. He turned suddenly serious for a moment and looked straight at her.

"You're sure about this? Because I don't want to do anything that would hurt you."

Although Tristan's concern and sensitivity warmed Alexis's heart, there was something much hotter right now controlling her actions.

"Yes, now please."

Tristan pressed on her hips, and she sank onto the hard shaft of his cock, her muscles squeezing in a grateful welcome.

"God, you feel so fucking good." Tristan's eyes closed, and his head rolled back as he gave a small thrust up into Alexis's sheath.

Jeremiah's hands landed on her shoulder and pushed her forward so she lay on top of Tristan, her hands on either side of his head.

She felt Jeremiah separating her ass cheeks, and fear overtook her. Maybe this wasn't such a great idea.

Jeremiah must have sensed her tension. He began massaging her ass and leaned over her, putting his lips against her ear. "Don't worry. We'll make this good for you. If it's too much, just tell us to stop." That low rumble of a laugh sounded, making Alexis clench around Tristan. "But believe me, you won't want to stop."

He returned to his position behind Alexis, and she felt the slickened head of his cock pressing against her puckered hole. The tip of his head pushed into her, and she gasped at the pressure. Having a real cock fucking her ass was nothing like just having the plug there. She gulped in air and squeezed her eyes tight, preparing to take all of Jeremiah's considerable length inside of her.

"Shh, baby," Tristan assured from beneath her. "You're doing just fine."

A burning pain shot through her as she was suddenly stretched wider than she had ever thought possible, and then it vanished, a different kind of pleased pain shooting through her pussy. She felt

Jeremiah sink into her completely, and the fullness drove her mad with sheer desire. Bucking her hips toward Tristan, she found that sex was very different with two cocks. Tristan felt even bigger with Jeremiah stretching her ass to the limit.

Cautiously, Tristan gave a thrust up into Alexis, grazing against her G-spot and causing her whole body to tighten with arousal.

“Fuck, Tristan,” Jeremiah said from behind her. “You can’t do that too much. I just about lost my load.”

Jeremiah gave a matching thrust, pushing Alexis forward onto Tristan’s cock. They started up a steady back-and-forth rhythm, each stroke touching parts of Alexis she never knew existed and pushing her closer to her free fall into the endless oblivion of bliss that awaited her.

Tristan reached between them and stroked against her clit, and Alexis spasmed at the sudden sensation.

“Damn it, Tris!” Jeremiah’s strokes quickly escalated in force and speed, in turn driving Tristan to the same intensity. With one forceful thrust forward, Jeremiah poured a hot jet of semen into Alexis’s ass, sending her hurtling toward the edge of orgasm. Tristan gave another thrust that grazed against that magical spot inside of her, and Alexis’s body could take no more. She dove into the eternal blackness of bodily delights, allowing herself to be consumed completely by the rush of feeling breaking all around her.

As she came down, Tristan found his own release, sending a matching stream of hot seed into Alexis’s cunt. They all lay on the bed, a panting tangle of limbs, glistening in sweat. Captured between the two sexiest men she had ever met, Alexis felt completely decadent but also entirely safe. The feeling of both their cocks filling her at once had given her exactly what she had always been missing.

Satisfaction.

Chapter 10

The crowd was worse on the next day. Jeremiah's prediction had proven true. Swarms of protesters gathered in front of the courthouse, their number so great they spilled out onto Commerce Street. They held signs with clever slogans such as "Big Oil Little Heart," "Don't Mess with Texas Jobs," and Jeremiah's personal favorite, "Burke Pierced Herndon." Unsurprisingly, there were also several "Joey's Just Jolly for Texas" campaign signs.

A chant of "Save our jobs!" broke out amongst the protesters as soon as Jeremiah and Tristan exited the car. Today, two bodyguards flanked Tristan, more protecting the crowd from his wrath than protecting him. Tristan walked with his head down, and Jeremiah thought it best. Their case couldn't take another public relations shipwreck like they'd dealt with yesterday. The shouts were deafening, and Jeremiah picked up his pace to surround himself in the security of the courthouse as soon as possible.

When inside, the glass did little to block out the cacophony of shouts on the street. The shouts quickly turned from protest to joy, though, when another Town Car pulled up and delivered Joey Johnston. He waved to the crowd, pumping his fist in the air along with his protesters. Jeremiah watched as he painstakingly gave statements to each and every reporter that lined the sidewalk and posed for the flashes bursting left and right.

News trucks pulled up to courthouse, and video cameras and news anchors scampered out to shoot footage of the frenzied mob. Jeremiah shook his head and stared at his own Italian leather oxfords. This was

a full-out media blitz in favor of the plaintiff. He could see no way out of the hole they had dug for Burke Pierce.

* * * *

The annoying buzz of her phone ringing awoke Alexis. She pawed toward it and glanced at the number. She didn't recognize it. The idea of silencing her ring and going back to sleep was tempting, but Alexis figured she might as well answer it and get out of Jeremiah's very warm and comfortable bed.

"Hello?" She tried to hide the sleep in her voice but failed horribly.

"Hello, Alexis? Did I wake you up? I can call a little bit later so—"

"It's okay." She cleared her throat before continuing. "May I ask who's calling?"

"Oh, I didn't even introduce myself. This thing tonight... Right. My name. I'm Robin Abrams-Clare, Alexander Abrams and Bryant Clare's wife. We met at the Lasso on Saturday."

"Right. Hi, Robin."

"Hi. Look, I wish I could call you just on social terms, but I have a huge favor to ask of you. My husbands and I are hosting a charity gala benefiting breast cancer research tonight. Our entertainment just called and cancelled, and Jeremiah had mentioned that you're a ballet dancer. Is there any way I could ask you to—"

"Whip something together? No big deal." The prospect of breaking out her pointe shoes again had her more excited than she'd expected.

"Oh my God, thank you so much, Alexis. You have no idea how much you're helping us." Robin gave Alexis the details for the performance, thanked her profusely again, and hung up.

Alexis's grogginess had faded away, and she leaped from the bed, landing with her left foot in pique.

A sudden thought caused pain to stab at Alexis's stomach, though, and her good mood vanished. This was a performance. In front of an audience. She remembered her last times on stage and shivered at the thought of repeating that experience.

Instinctively, she reached for her phone and went to her call history, intending to call Robin and tell her she couldn't do it. Her fingers wouldn't obey her brain, though, and she just stood in the middle of the floor holding the phone.

Alexis had no interest in being the sort of girl who experienced some sort of trauma then spent her whole life reeling from the pain. She hadn't so far, and she wouldn't start tonight. Dancing was a huge part of her identity, and dancing in front of an audience gave her a rush that nothing else could duplicate. She needed to go through with this.

Despite the twisting feeling in her gut, Alexis began to gather her things around Jeremiah's bedroom. The room still smelled like sex, and remembering the previous night's exploits distracted her from her task. Her pussy flared to life at the memory of Jeremiah's cock pushing against her ass, filling her completely, and Tristan's wide cock stretching her tight pussy to fit around him like a glove.

Her phone buzzed with a text message and jolted Alexis out of her titillating daydream. It was Jeremiah.

We're gonna be in court all day. Meet us in Dallas for lunch?

The thought of seeing Jeremiah and Tristan again sent a dizzy sensation straight to her head as all of her blood rushed between her legs. Of course she'd meet them. Right now, she'd do anything they wanted as long as she knew that something else like tonight was possible. Anyway, a trip to Dallas was necessary to acquire a costume for the night's performance.

Alexis would face her demons head-on tonight. She'd be dancing Juliet.

* * * *

Jeremiah told her to expect a crowd in front of the courthouse, but this was far beyond Alexis's idea of a crowd. Angry protesters flooded the streets, and the media presence was overwhelming. Twice, reporters and their camera crews nearly knocked Alexis over as they rushed toward the courthouse entrance in an attempt to get a glance at the defendants and their lawyers as they made their way to lunch.

"Alexis!" She turned at the sound of her name being shouted. Winston Fairchild was fighting his way through a gaggle of photographers. "I never thought I'd find you. Jeremiah asked me to escort you into the courthouse. They're going to be a few minutes more."

"Of course." Winston offered her his elbow, and she politely hooked her arm through his. He helped her to hustle past the reporters and protesters toward the entrance. He flashed an ID card to one of the four armed guards outside the door, and the glass doors opened, allowing them to escape from the madness outside.

"Thank you." Alexis gave Winston a brief hug. "That could have been terrible. How did you get in here? I've never seen that much security."

"Ah, my little secret." He leaned in and dramatically whispered, "My firm is handling the case."

"Is that why you were down here?"

"Yes. I can't represent Jeremiah and Tristan myself as that would be a significant conflict of interest, but Mr. Pierce keeps me around as his personal errand boy." He rolled his eyes, and Alexis laughed at his exaggeration.

Winston led Alexis to a secluded group of chairs in the corner and instructed her to stay there until Jeremiah and Tristan came down. He took his leave, and Alexis grabbed a notepad from her purse to begin

planning exactly what she would do in her performance that evening. Just as she was beginning to get really involved in her planning, a hushed but arrogant Texan accent sounded directly behind her.

“They don’t have a chance in hell.”

“No, sir, they don’t.”

“Ha! We finally backed those tree-hugging pussies into a corner.”

“Sending them the altered blast preventer—”

“Shh! There are reporters around.” The voice paused then burst into laughter. “As if they could do anything. Ah, buying that oilfield equipment supplier was the best damn decision I ever made. I got friends at every major news outlet.” The voice dropped to a low grumble. “No one can touch me.”

“The campaign is certainly going better than expected.”

Campaign? Wait a minute, Alexis thought to herself. That voice is eerily familiar.

“Yes, it is. And with Burke Pierce out of the way, we can finally put a stop to clean energy development in Texas.”

“That will make you popular with the oil community, sir.”

“Well, why the hell did you think I was doing this?”

Realization dawned on Alexis. Turning her head slowly around, her suspicions were confirmed. Representative Joey Johnston was standing behind her, scolding a young assistant who was cowering under his commanding presence.

The pieces of the puzzle suddenly came together, and Alexis was sitting on some highly charged information. Joey Johnston had purposely sent an altered blast preventer to the Burke Pierce rig, and he did it to halt Burke Pierce’s development of a clean energy plant. This was the key to the whole case. It hadn’t been Tristan *or* the company’s fault! Tristan had nothing to do with the manufacturing of the equipment, and since Johnston owned the equipment supplier, he could have switched the blast preventer at any point. Burke Pierce hadn’t fallen down on the job with their safety checks!

She had to tell Jeremiah and Tristan. With this new information, they could easily get the case dropped. Insurance companies had to treat intentional harm differently than an accident, right? Her excitement was short-lived. She didn't have any proof. While she was sure Jeremiah and Tristan would trust her, she'd watched enough TV legal dramas to know eavesdropping was hardly admissible evidence.

A hand dropped on Alexis's shoulder, and she jumped.

"Sorry, sorry." Tristan crossed in front of her, squatted to her level, and took her in his arms. "Shh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to scare you."

"It's okay. It's just..." Alexis looked around at her surroundings, now aware of how easy it was to eavesdrop. "Is there somewhere more private we can talk?" She turned out of Tristan's embrace, too confused and anxious for physical affection.

The hurt look on Tristan's face twisted her heart, and while she hated keeping anything from him, she had to tell him this in complete confidence. She twisted his messy mop of blond hair in her hands.

She whispered, "It's about the case. We need Jeremiah, a lawyer, and maybe a cop."

Tristan's eyes widened so Alexis could see whites all around them. "I'll get Jer." His voice was weak as he stood and walked away.

Alexis took a deep breath to steady herself. This was bigger than her, Tristan, and Jeremiah combined. This was a game-changer. They only needed a way to get the information into a form admissible in court.

And Alexis had an idea of how to do just that.

Chapter 11

Alexis wasn't comfortable at all while she waited behind the curtain of the stage set up in the garden of the Abrams-Clare mansion. After a few weeks out of pointe shoes, they stung as they bound her feet, and although her new costume was beautiful, it felt foreign and stiff. Most of all, she was terrified of being used as bait.

"Hey, you about ready to go on?" Bryant Clare, one of Robin's husbands and one of the hosts of the event, approached Alexis. It wasn't until he put an arm around her that she realized she was shaking. "Nothing to be scared of, darlin'. We've got it all covered."

Jeremiah had filled in Alexander, Bryant, and Robin on the details of their sting, and they had been very helpful and supportive all evening. Now Bryant stood comforting her as her resolve wavered just before the performance.

"It's not just the setup. The last few times I performed were disasters. If that happens again tonight, I'll blow the whole thing for everyone and—"

"Still nothing to be scared of. It's almost time, and you're past the point of backing out. Just get out there and be your beautiful self." Bryant gave her a last squeeze before he hurried away, and she moved to the center of the stage to take her opening position. Panic rose in her chest, but as the music swelled from the small string section set up in front of the stage, Alexis closed her eyes and let the music dispel her anxiety.

The curtain rose, and Alexis began the choreography of the dance. Somehow, all thoughts of Representative Johnston, the case, and her role in taking down the opposition disappeared. Only one thing

occupied her mind. This was the first time Jeremiah and Tristan were seeing her dance anything besides the two-step. Every movement was more graceful, her limbs more delicately extended, all due to the thought of them watching her. She wanted to perform for them to show them exactly how much they meant to her.

The music came to a close just as Alexis hit the final arabesque. The elegant crowd sprang to its feet and erupted in applause. A weight lifted from Alexis's shoulders as she soaked in the audience's appreciation. She'd done it. She'd gotten up on stage and just danced. Traumatic memories didn't haunt her, and no disasters occurred. She moved to curtsy toward the audience and saw Jeremiah and Tristan at the left front table, beaming toward her, their admiration and devotion obvious in their faces. She took a graceful bow, dropping her forehead nearly to the ground, and scampered off the stage.

Robin Abrams-Clare bounced toward her and threw her arms around Alexis's neck. "Oh, that was brilliant. Way better than what we had lined up. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

Robin's enthusiasm was contagious. "No, thank *you*. I haven't had that much fun dancing in a very long time."

"Probably because you have Jer and Tristan drooling over you. I mean, if I wasn't married to—"

"Choose your words carefully, Mrs. Abrams-Clare." Alexander Abrams appeared behind Robin. He took Alexis's hand and brushed a kiss over her knuckles. "You were brilliant, really."

Alexis received compliments left and right as she made her way back to the mansion to change. Jeremiah and Tristan appeared as she left the crowd of the gala to escort her.

"You were enchanting." Jeremiah captured her lips.

"I've never seen anything more beautiful." Tristan put a hand around her waist and brushed his lips against the back of her neck.

They left her at the back entrance to the mansion and released her into the care of the household butler. He led her to a richly decorated dressing room with a large vanity table topped by a mirror with an

intricate golden frame. The dress that had been selected for the evening by Jeremiah, Tristan, and the Dallas County police force hung by itself on a rack in the middle of the room. The idea of actually wearing it in public scared Alexis a little. Even though the sting was her brainchild, she knew that Jeremiah and Tristan were the experts on what men found sexy. She needed to look irresistible for their plan to work, but did she have to wear this?

It was a very short, pale pink halter dress with a plunging neckline. Alexis knew she wasn't the bustiest of girls, but she doubted her C-cups could fit in those little triangles of fabric. If that wasn't bad enough, the open back and side panels meant she definitely couldn't wear a bra. And the little flower disguising the microphone at the base of her cleavage didn't help, either. She took a deep breath to strengthen her resolve and changed into the dress.

Once she donned the garment, along with the matching strappy stilettos, she studied herself in the large mirror. As she had feared, her breasts bulged from the dress, giving her some ample cleavage. Even to her particularly harsh judgment, she looked damn sexy. She reached up to the bun still tucked tightly atop her head and pulled it out. Her long, wavy blonde hair spilled in ripples onto her shoulders, completing her look. Time to get down to business.

* * * *

A golf cart driven by a tuxedoed man returned Alexis to the gala in the garden. The string section had been replaced with a jazz trio, and several of the guests were dancing, inhibitions erased by the champagne fountain bubbling by the bar behind the tables. Jeremiah and Tristan were sitting at a table by the dance floor, and their attention focused on Alexis as soon as she crossed into the light of the party. She saw the lust in their eyes, but all of them knew they could do nothing about it. She had to look completely available in order for this to work.

Joey Johnston stood leaning against the bar. Alexis started in his direction with the sexiest walk she could muster. She approached the bar where the serial womanizer was standing uncomfortably close to a couple of other girls, regaling them with stories of life on the campaign trail.

Alexis cleared her throat, and Johnston turned his attention to her. His eyes widened as he took her in. She felt violated by the look in his eyes, but continued anyway.

“Representative Johnston? Hi, I’m Alexis. I’m a really big supporter.” She batted her eyelashes at him for good measure.

“Well, hello, Alexis,” he drawled as he took one of her hands in both of his. “I am always happy to meet supporters, especially when they’re beautiful young ladies such as yourself.”

His eyebrows waggled, and Alexis had to tamp down the bile rising up the back of her throat. She forced a smile.

“I’ve been following the Burke Pierce case very carefully. Can you believe that they want us to think they’re taking care of that poor man? I mean, he’s just a hardworking Texan trying to make a decent living.” The words came pouring from her mouth in a rush, and she hoped she had recited the line properly.

“Well, I am so glad that young people such as you are taking an interest in this case. I’m workin’ as hard as I can to make sure that those yellow-belly pansy-boys at Burke Pierce don’t get away with this.”

It appeared that he was buying Alexis’s act.

“Oh, you’re so brave, standing up for the everyman.” She giggled and placed a hand on his arm and left it there. Touching him contributed to the nausea building in her stomach.

“You know Tristan Burke and Jeremiah Pierce are at this function.” He bent over, now uncomfortably close, put a hand on the small of her back, and whispered in her ear. “I’d love to talk about this some more with you in a more...private setting.”

Alexis forced a giggle over the gag that built at the back of her throat. “I’d like that. Sure you wanna talk about this with a little old dancer like me?”

His eyes focused on her cleavage, intensifying her disgust. “I’d talk to you about anything, sweetheart.” His use of a pet name only enraged her. She was ready to back him into this corner.

“Then let’s go, State Representative Joey Johnston.” Her playful use of his full name and title was meant for the microphone. She was establishing the identity of the speaker.

“By all means.”

As they crossed the boundary of the party’s lights and out of earshot of the other guests, Alexis went in for the kill.

“I know this will make me sound just horrible, but that accident was a blessing from God. It just showed everyone how poorly Burke Pierce treats their employees. And if I understood what I read on your website, Representative, it’s stopping them from building that new energy plant and getting rid of all those jobs.”

“It is, indeed. And you seem to see things my way, so I can be totally frank with you.” The slur in his voice betrayed just how much the evening’s alcohol had affected him. “I think it’s a great thing that it happened.”

Here was Alexis’s opportunity. She had to seize it, even if that meant saying things that she found utterly repulsive.

“You know.” She stopped and moved closer to Johnston, rubbing her barely covered breast against his arm. “The idea of taking scum like them down gets me so hot. It sort of makes me want to fuck Tristan Burke just for being such a lazy foreman and letting the accident happen.”

“If you wanna fuck someone responsible, don’t fuck Burke.” The hand on the small of her back moved over her ass, and Alexis had to fight every impulse inside of her screaming at her to whack it away and knee him in the balls. Hard.

“Why not? You said it was his incompetence that—”

“That’s just an act. I’ve had to tell a little white lie to keep the press satisfied. You see, I’m responsible for the accident.”

“I knew you were sexy.” The bile was threatening to project from her throat at any second. “What’d you do, handsome?”

He was silent for a moment, and she worried she had pushed too hard. She was about to tap her mic in a signal for help when he finally spoke.

“I bought Burke Pierce’s equipment supplier about six months ago, you know, as a wise investment. They called us up right before the accident to take a look at some of their cable systems, so it was easy as pie to slip in a faulty blast preventer.” He grabbed Alexis’s ass and squeezed her pelvis to his side. “And a few days later, boom. We got Burke Pierce good.” His mouth lowered, and she squirmed desperately to stop his lips before they arrived at their final destination.

“This is the Dallas County Police Department. Hands in the air, Representative.” Flood lights flashed on, temporarily blinding Alexis.

“I swear, I thought she was eighteen!” Johnston’s hands flew from where they groped Alexis, and he looked around with a very confused expression.

Before she could figure out what was happening, a man dressed in all black with a helmet and vest pulled her backward and away from the representative. When her eyes adjusted to the sudden change, she saw the Dallas County SWAT team surrounding Johnston. His eyes darted side to side, and Alexis guessed that he was still wondering if this was the usual treatment given to statutory rapists.

Footsteps came running from behind her, and she saw Tristan and Jeremiah hurtling toward her. The SWAT team member released her into Tristan’s arms, and she wrapped her hands around his neck.

“We got him, baby. We got him.” Tristan held Alexis close to his chest and kissed her hair while Jeremiah gave his heartfelt thanks to the SWAT officer.

“Is it all going to be okay?” Alexis finally squeaked with her head buried against Tristan’s chest. “Are you guys going to be okay?”

“We have to hear from the district attorney about the criminal charges against Johnston, and the judge has to make a ruling.” Jeremiah joined Tristan in holding a trembling Alexis. “But with this new evidence you procured, the insurance company is going to find it damn difficult to call what Burke Pierce did negligence.”

Alexis’s ears started ringing, and suddenly she felt dizzy. She tried to walk away from the two men holding her, but her legs wouldn’t obey her brain’s commands. Tristan caught her before she hit the ground. He carried her, and she could faintly hear him shouting at someone. Her vision blurred, but she thought she saw Jeremiah take off at a run toward the mansion. A cold chill overtook her, and she couldn’t fight to stay conscious too much longer.

The only thing she could hear was a buzzing and the insistent beating of her own heart, and then the world went black.

Chapter 12

“Alexis? Alexis, are you awake?”

Her eyes blinked open to see concern plastered across Jeremiah’s perfect face. “Jeremiah,” she sighed and tried to reach up to touch his face, but a mound of blankets seemed to be inhibiting any movement on her part.

“She’s okay!” Jeremiah’s face relaxed, and he pressed his lips against her forehead. “You’re okay, baby. It’s all okay. It’s over.”

“What’s...” The night flashed through Alexis’s mind. Her performance. The dress. Johnston’s hands all over her. The SWAT team. A numbing cold broke over her, and sweat began running down the back of her neck.

“Does no one around here have a heating pad?” Tristan’s insistent voice sounded somewhere to her right. She blinked and looked around. She didn’t recognize her surroundings. Everything was dark wood and leather with portraits adorning the walls.

Robin Abrams-Clare appeared behind Jeremiah, and Alexis remembered the location of the night’s events.

“Oh my god, is she okay, Jer? She still looks really pale. Did the EMTs—”

“I’m fine, really.” Shaking, Alexis attempted to sit up but was met with several hands pushing her back to the couch.

“Oh no you don’t. Not until you’ve been awake for a few minutes.” Jeremiah gave her a harsh look, and she decided it was best to obey.

Alexis crooked her neck upward and saw two aging men enter the room. They waved in her direction, and Jeremiah and Tristan

approached them. Both the men were very handsome with a dignified air about them. Alexis realized that they must be Tristan and Jeremiah's fathers, the elder Burke Pierce duo.

All four men talked in hushed tones while Robin flitted around Alexis, making sure she was comfortable. The men finished their conversation, and the four of them turned toward Alexis. Tristan ran forward and dropped to his knees beside the couch. He ran a hand through her hair and smiled.

"We just heard from the DA, and the judge filed an injunction against our case. The insurance company is suing Johnston's company for malfeasance, which isn't gonna look so great for his campaign, either. And we've already got our accountants cutting the first of many large checks for George."

"Really? So our plan worked?"

"Like a charm." Tristan looked to where the group of men stood behind him. "Alexis, there are some people that Jer and I want you to meet." He indicated the shorter of the two men, and the glint of the man's blue eyes told Alexis he must be Tristan's father. "This is my dad, Harrison Burke." He gestured to the tall, thin man beside him. "And this is Jeremiah's dad, Isaac Pierce."

"It's great meeting you, Alexis," Isaac said as he bowed toward her. "Thank you for saving our company."

"It was my pleasure." The older man was so handsome, like an aged carbon copy of his son. He had the same open, easy expression that could soothe anyone who talked to him.

"Our boys won't shut up about you." The shorter man stepped forward. "Can't get through a damn conversation without 'Alexis this,' or 'Alexis that.' Ike and I were starting to think you were a figment of their imaginations."

"Told you she was real," Tristan grumbled under his breath.

Alexis couldn't help but laugh at their situation. Despite the anxiety and trauma of the day, everything was turning out just fine. The case had taken a turn for the better. Burke Pierce could keep

working on opening their clean energy facilities, and Tristan could go back to his...

Shit. A tightening sensation pulled at Alexis's stomach. Was Tristan going back to his job now? Alexis didn't want to begin to think about what that would mean.

Tristan threaded his fingers through her hair and turned her to face him. "Hey, what's going on? Everything's fine. No reason to worry."

"But what now?"

"Well, as soon as we're sure you're stable, we'll head back to either Jeremiah's or the Lasso—"

"Don't do that!" Robin interrupted. "We never have guests, and we literally have fifteen guest rooms. Please stay."

"Or, we'll stay here with the Abrams-Clare clan, and we'll go to sleep and put all this behind us," Tristan said, pure affection shining from his eyes.

"That's not what I meant." Alexis's voice was soft, and she knew her pain must be audible. "I meant what now? Now that the case is settled. Will Jeremiah go back to his crazy CEO work schedule, and will you go back out into the field?" *Please say no, please say no, please say no.* Alexis repeated the words in her head like a mantra.

Tristan hesitated and turned to look back at Jeremiah.

"I think we have business to attend to. It's been absolutely lovely meeting you, Alexis." Isaac Burke stepped forward and tapped Harrison Burke on the shoulder. "Hopefully, we can meet under less hectic circumstances in future." The two of them smiled warmly at Alexis then took their leave. Robin must have understood the look Tristan and Jeremiah shared since she hurried to follow Harrison and Isaac out the door.

"I'll just show them out. You guys can stay in the guest rooms on the top level. I'll just give you guys some privacy for right now." She carefully shut the door behind her, and Alexis heard the lock click into place. She was finally alone again with Tristan and Jeremiah.

“Alexis, we need to talk.” Jeremiah came to kneel next to Tristan. The two of them carefully peeled the blankets from Alexis and helped her to sit up. She didn’t want to sit up anymore, though. Those five little words Jeremiah uttered had been a dagger to her side.

“Yes, we do,” she said in defense. If they wanted this to end, then she would be the one doing the ending. There was no way in hell she would walk out of this with her tail between her legs. “I—I don’t know about staying in Male Order. Maybe i—it’s time for me to go.”

Tristan and Jeremiah visibly wilted at her words. Clearly, that hadn’t been what they had anticipated her saying. Shit. Had she just fucked this up even more?

“If that’s what you want, honey,” Tristan said, breaking the silence. “But I’ll tell you for sure, that’s the last thing Jer and I want.”

“Tristan is right. We won’t stop you from going out and living your dream, finishing your road trip, or living out the California dream. But we would like you to consider staying in Male Order before you go.”

“If this trial has taught me one thing, it’s that I’ve had enough of the oilfields. With the rigs closing and the shift to the clean energy model, they don’t really need me, anyway. It’s time for me to man up and do my duty back here at the offices. Jer’s been bugging me to take over as Chief Operations Officer, too.”

“What we’re saying is, please, Alexis, stay.” Jeremiah’s bright blue gaze melted any desire to leave lingering in the corner of Alexis’s brain. She trailed a finger down his chiseled jaw and held it against the cleft of his chin. He took her hand and pressed a kiss against the back of it. Alexis turned to Tristan and brushed aside that pesky lock of hair that had fallen in front of his gorgeous face yet again. Tristan tangled his fingers in her hair.

“Stay, Alexis.”

She looked back and forth between the two of them, their plaintive expressions causing her heart to race with excitement, with anticipation. With love.

“Okay.”

“Okay?” Jeremiah’s eyes lit up as he held her hand against his chest.

“I’ll stay in Male Order.” Tears stung at the corners of her eyes, and she felt a giddy grin spread across her face. A giggle escaped from her throat, and she couldn’t keep her voice down. “Of course I’ll stay! That’s all I’ve wanted since I met the two of you.”

“Really?” Tristan’s eyes lit up, and the lock of hair fell in front of his face again.

Alexis couldn’t help but lean forward and kiss him. He curled his hands deeper in her hair as he turned their kiss passionate, the heat of his mouth igniting heat in Alexis’s pussy. Tristan stood and moved to sit next to her on the couch. Before he could sit, though, Jeremiah also claimed Alexis’s mouth in a deliberate kiss of painful desire. Jeremiah roamed his hands her body, and he massaged one breast, moving his hand toward the cleavage.

“You know,” he said as he broke the kiss, “I can see why Johnston confessed everything. You could get a man to say damn near anything by wearing that dress.”

Tristan slowly began undoing the strings that held up her halter dress. “He’s right. You are the sexiest creature I’ve ever laid eyes on.”

“You’re gonna have to wear that little number. Only around the house, though.” Jeremiah followed his words with kisses against her neck. Alexis moaned and leaned into the sensation, but something he said caused her to stop. With great pain, she put a hand on Jeremiah’s chest and pushed him back.

“Wait a minute. House?”

“Of course,” Tristan whispered in his ear. “We wouldn’t ask you to stay in Male Order without making sure you had a place to live.”

Alexis turned to put a hand on his cheek and draw his lips to hers for a brief, romantic kiss.

“I love you.” Alexis searched Tristan’s eyes for any hint of insincerity but found none.

“And I love you.” Jeremiah put his arm around her and planted a soft kiss on her neck.

Alexis couldn’t believe her life. Here she was in a gigantic mansion, having just found the key piece of evidence in a major trial, and now the two men that had opened her eyes to the joys of being a woman were confessing their love to her.

“I love you, too.” She beamed as she looked back and forth between her two men.

“You get that we’re planning on living in that house with you, right?” Tristan’s words made her heart beat quicker again. Living with these two! Alexis could only imagine that she would have a very sore ass.

“Tristan, you don’t have to explain that to her. Of course we’ll live together when we’re married.”

“Married?” Alexis hadn’t thought she could get any luckier, but it turned out she was wrong.

“Marry us, Alexis.” Jeremiah sealed his request with a kiss.

Alexis pulled back just an inch and whispered her answer.

“Yes.”

Tristan didn’t speak to convey his happiness. He just dragged Alexis into a tight embrace and smothered her with the force of his kiss. His hands finally unwound the string holding up her dress and the top fell down, revealing her breasts. Jeremiah’s hands went straight to her breasts, pinching and pulling at her nipples. Alexis could feel the thong she wore dampening with the extent of her arousal. Tristan kept kissing her, but put both hands on her thighs and inched his way upward. Every inch upward he traveled made Alexis’s inner muscles clench in anticipation of the feeling of his wide cock stretching her to the limit.

“This dress really is quite a hindrance.” Jeremiah took care of his problem easily and pulled the dress over Alexis’s head. He turned her to face him and just stared at her for a moment. “God, you’re beautiful.”

Alexis didn't have time to respond as Tristan's hands completed their journey and he pressed two fingers into her inner folds. That soft touch caused a fresh wave of cream to flow out of her and onto Tristan's fingers.

"You're so wet," he whispered with sinful intention in his voice. "I think you want something from us."

Once more, words weren't possible. Tristan flicked her clit with his thumb, and Alexis gasped her appreciation of the gesture.

"Not fair," she managed to squeak out as Tristan and Jeremiah both slowed their ministrations.

"What's not fair?" Jeremiah pulled and twisted a nipple as he spoke, reducing Alexis to putty in his hands again. "Your nipples being so hard and red? You being so ready for us? Because that's all perfectly fair, darling."

Between gasps, she found her voice again. "Your clothes. I wanna see both of you naked."

"Well, Jer, it sounds like our fiancée knows what she wants. Think we should oblige her?"

"I don't know. What is she gonna do for us?"

Tristan plunged two fingers into her wet entrance, and Alexis screamed.

"Anything! I'll do anything to see your cocks."

"You know what I want?" Jeremiah's hot breath sent shivers down her spine. "I wanna be inside your tight ass again. I wanna feel you clench around me when Tristan fucks that cunt of yours."

Alexis could only nod her agreement as both men rose and began stripping from their elegant suits. Piles of black and grey wool formed a pile in the corner of the room when they'd finished, and both approached her, their movements as sleek and measured as a predator's.

"You gotta reciprocate, though." When Alexis threw Tristan a questioning look, he pointed to her crotch. "The thong."

The pink, lacy patchy of fabric flew across the room as Alexis removed it quicker than she had ever removed a piece of clothing. Jeremiah took that as a signal to attack and scooped Alexis into his arms. He sat on the couch, placed Alexis on his lap facing him, and jerked her legs wider. She looked down and saw the purple head of his cock dripping pre-cum, just begging her to wiggle off of Jeremiah's lap, bend over and take it into her mouth, but her men had other plans.

His fingers dug into her hips then his hands went to cup her buttocks. He pulled her up, and she rested her hands on the back of the couch on either side of his head. His cock rubbed up and down her slick entrance and teased her by dipping into her only the slightest bit. Without warning, he forced her down onto his cock, filling her completely in one powerful stroke.

Alexis pumped her hips, rubbing her clit against his pelvic bone with every thrust. She felt the orgasm begin to build inside of her and quickened her pace. Just when she thought one more thrust would release the flood of satisfaction upon her, Jeremiah lifted her off his cock.

"What the fuck?" she said as he crawled out from under her.

"I just needed some lube."

Her annoyance faded quickly as Tristan came into her view, holding his cock in her hand. Every time she saw his massive dick hard and throbbing for her, her pussy pulsed with need. He sat on the couch and turned her head to the side. He looked deep into her eyes, and their gazes locked. For one moment, she saw the love shining there, and a peace broke over her, like being in the eye of a storm.

The peace switched back to searing sensuality when Tristan claimed her mouth in a torrid kiss, nipping at her lower lip as their tongues entwined. She was so involved in the kiss that Tristan's first stroke into her surprised her. But his wasn't like Jeremiah's had been. He sank slowly into her ready pussy, sheathing himself in her heat. He pulled back and whispered to her.

“I love you, Alexis. I can’t wait to spend the rest of my life with you.”

As Tristan spoke, Jeremiah’s cock, lubed with her juices, pressed against the crease of her ass. He positioned his cock at her puckered hole and pushed forward.

Like before, Alexis felt pain first, but Jeremiah ran a soothing hand up and down her back. “Don’t worry, honey. Remember how good it feels. I love you so much, and I’d never do anything to hurt you.” Alexis tried to believe his words as the burning in her ass intensified.

Jeremiah sank his cock entirely into her, and a warmth spread outward, fanning the flames of her arousal. Both men held still, and she felt the tension in their muscles. They wanted the same thing she did.

“Move, damn it!”

They needed no prodding. Both men started stroking into her. At first, they were long, slow strokes as they kissed and licked all over her body, but they turned harder, more insistent, and Alexis felt her orgasm fast approaching. Tristan and Jeremiah set a back and forth rhythm so that Alexis was always filled with scorching, hard cock. Each man grabbed one of her breasts and massaged gently, and that was it. The sweet release of orgasm rained down upon her, hot drops of excitement, pleasure, and complete and total satisfaction. Jeremiah’s strokes sped suddenly, and she felt his balls tighten against her ass right before his stream of hot seed spilled into her ass. Just after that, a matching jet of semen shot into her as Tristan found his release as well.

Sticky and covered in sweat, the three of them collapsed against the leather cushions of the couch. Alexis laughed a little at the sight they must have made.

“You guys have enough money to get Robin and her husbands a new one of these, right?”

“Don’t you worry a bit about that. We’ve got everything taken care of,” Tristan said gently.

“Alexis, really, don’t worry about those things.” Jeremiah hooked a finger under her chin and turned her face toward his. “We don’t want to stifle you, but we also don’t want you ever to worry about money. We will support anything you want to do.”

She felt suddenly guilty. “I didn’t mean anything like that. I don’t need anything from you.”

“Jer and I want to give you everything. You walked into our lives and changed them forever.”

“You deserve to have whatever you want, whatever you need, anything.”

A naughty thought crossed her mind. “Well, I need *some* things from you. I can’t come like that on my own.”

“Oh yeah,” Jeremiah growled against her neck. “We’ll just have to keep you constantly satisfied, I guess.”

“Gosh, what a task.” Tristan put a hand to his head and feigned exasperation. Alexis stuck her tongue out at him, and he surprised her by catching her tongue in his mouth and sucking it. The motion caused her pussy to flare to life again.

“You guys wanna show me exactly how you’re gonna do that?”

Epilogue

Alexis looked out from what had become “her table” at the Lasso. Jan and Win were delighting the crowd with another of their fancy routines, and watching them warmed her heart. She wished she could be out there right now, but a hand to the small bump growing in her stomach reminded her of why pulling intricate turns and lifts wasn’t such a good idea.

“Is my son kicking you?” Tristan took a seat next to Alexis and placed his hand over hers on her stomach. “I can’t wait to get the rugrat into peewee football.”

“Oh god, Tris. Are you still on that football kick? He’s following in my steps.” Jeremiah sat on Alexis’s other side and also placed his hand on the bump. “Fencing.”

“You trying to get our kid beat up?”

“Okay, you two, stop it.” Alexis whacked both their hands away from her stomach. “He can choose whatever he wants. Although, the Burke Darnielle Pierce Ballet Studio is always looking for more male dancers...”

“No,” they said in unison, causing the three of them to dissolve into laughter.

Taking in the sight of both her husbands and caressing her belly where their son grew inside her, she couldn’t have been any happier. Everything had turned out splendidly with the case. The insurance company dropped the lawsuit against Burke Pierce, and they were able to finish building the clean energy plant, which had been a rousing success. A host of companies lined up to sue Joey Johnston,

and the criminal charges brought against him resulted in his dropping out of the race for Lieutenant Governor.

Life in Male Order was wonderful. Her parents and siblings had been slightly confused when she told them about the new life she'd chosen for herself, but they supported her in whatever she wanted to do. They came down from Kansas for her wedding, and her parents had witnessed when she legally married Tristan at the courthouse.

The real party, though, had been their commitment ceremony held in the magnolia grove by the lake. There, she pledged her love and devotion to both Tristan and Jeremiah, and they pledged the same to her. It was small with only their families and Janet and Winston in attendance.

They had the honeymoon of a lifetime. Jeremiah and Tristan had taken her in a private jet to Paris, Alexis's fantasy destination. On the way, she joined the mile-high club more than a few times. And their wedding gift to her had been the funds to open her own ballet studio in Male Order. Alexis couldn't have dreamt of a better present. Her men knew her so well.

Jan and Win completed their routine, and Alexis applauded with the rest of the crowd in the bar. Tristan rose and pulled her up. He kissed her hand, placing his lips on the large diamond that now lived permanently on her left ring finger. Jeremiah had bought it for her, and it symbolized dropping his secret identity. He had thought it would change the way everyone at the Lasso treated him, but they still gave him as much shit as ever.

"Well, since that's over, care to move this party?" Tristan waggled his eyebrows at Alexis.

"Whatever could you mean?" Alexis tried to stifle a giggle at his behavior.

"What he means, dearest, is do you fancy going back to the house and letting us do what we do best?"

"And what would that be?" Alexis lowered her voice as she leaned toward Jeremiah.

“Fucking you, gorgeous,” Tristan responded from behind her. She felt a blush heat her cheeks at his explicit words as he turned her to face him. “That’s so cute. You still blush after everything we’ve done to you.”

“Shut it, Burke.” She gave him a playful slap on the shoulder. “You two corrupted me. I am but a delicate flower.”

Both men burst into laughter, and Tristan took her in his arms.

“I love you, baby.”

“And I love you.” Jeremiah ran a hand through her hair.

“I love you both, too. More than I ever thought possible.” Alexis straightened up and gave each man a stern look. “Now are you two teasing me, or are you roughnecks planning on fucking me?”

THE END

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Helena Ray has always maintained that the world inside her head is much more exciting than the real world. Growing up as an only child, she spent many happy afternoons dreaming up companions. These included her evil twin in Mexico, puppets that would pop up out of the ground, and many a talking dog. Born the daughter of a newspaperman and a lawyer, Helena has always given words a vital role in her life. Over the years, her love affair with the written word turned torrid, and she couldn't stop herself from following in her parents' footsteps.

She loves to travel, and her most recent adventures have included several trips to Paris, leisurely weekends on Lake Constance in Germany, and raucous nights in Dublin. She has traveled all over the United Kingdom and has lived in London and northern England. Currently, Helena lives in Texas with her very handsome boyfriend, his two cats, and her also quite handsome dog. She hopes that readers have as much fun occupying her imaginary worlds as she has creating them.

Also by Helena Ray

Male Order, Texas: *A Bride for Two Playboys*

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