



# DELIBERATION PLANTATION

DESTINY BLAINE

ASPEN MOUNTAIN PRESS

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## Warning

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## Chapter One

Marcy Mahoney shook her ass in a downright naughty wiggle. She understood how to turn a man's head, how to stir things up with a sexy little sway and a confident as hell strut.

She owned a cocksure attitude and for good reason. Marcy employed a few strong and capable men in an effort to keep her ranch running properly. Without a doubt, several of the cowboys there knew how to make a woman ache for a little bit of sugar and a whole lot of spice. And best of all, a few of them were about to land in her once-empty bed.

"Good morning, fellas," she drawled, greeting her rowdy staff of ten anxious men. "Today is a big day for us."

Her attentive employees shot back their own independent ways of saying hello. Some gave her a good head-to-toe appraisal, a few flashed their dimples and others simply tilted the brims of their hats. She stood right still and gave the fellas ample opportunity to take in her every curve. Then, she sashayed around the spacious breezeway, working her swagger. With an additional effort, she stuck out her chest and squared her shoulders.

"The barn looks good, guys," she said, noticing the hayloft was filled to the brim. "That red paint job on the main stable is so blasted bright I bet a pilot could see this place in the dead of night."

"We aim to please, babe."

She didn't look over to the right but she recognized the voice. Cort Campbell sounded bored and ready to get on with the day.

The morning promised plenty of excitement and her cowboys were probably a little nervous. Marcy couldn't help herself. She enjoyed the angst in the air.

This informal gathering represented a final meeting for some of the ranch hands. The time had come to let the boys know which men she planned on keeping and which cowboys she was ready to send away. There was no turning back now. Her choices were etched in stone and had been almost from the beginning.

Her gaze flickered over each hard male. The task at hand would be much easier than anyone there might think. "I guess y'all are ready to find out about the status of your employment here."

Muffled responses rippled through the barn.

"As a reminder, those of you who are invited to stay will be expected to follow through on the explicit conditions discussed when we went over the terms of your employment."

"That ain't no problem, Marcy," a burly fella said—one of the very cowboys she'd decided to let go.

Marcy scanned the crowd one final time. Several of her guys winked and, thanks to the tight-fitting denim the cowboys wore, she noticed a few of them trying to conceal what only Levis and Wranglers properly adored.

Man, what she'd give to be the blue dye in some of those jeans.

A few ranch hands would leave soon and some of them would probably be disappointed. But those men remaining? Well, they understood what they had to anticipate in the coming weeks.

Marcy focused on the wagon piled with luggage. Some of the guys came prepared for a possible departure. Others, those like Cort for example, probably didn't bother packing.

Some pretty confident men smiled back at her. Damn, she sure was a lucky woman.

Pacing the length of the barn, Marcy traipsed by the cowboys. The guys there signed on for employment, but the perks led them to her Bristol, Tennessee ranch. She was no man's fool. When she'd put together the ad campaign, she made the job offer sound better than going to work for Heidi Fleiss on her Las Vegas Stud Farm. Then again, Heidi's place never opened its doors.

Marcy's ranch was a different story. Her estate gates would soon part and divide, right along with her legs—something she couldn't wait to spread, too, for the right cowboy.

Prior to the initial selection, Marcy placed explicit ads on the internet. She conducted background checks, exchanged pictures back and forth and then invited a select few to join her on the two-thousand-acre property. The photo-swap was her undoing and the only reason she invited Landon, who for some reason, couldn't be traced on paper.

Marcy was intrigued by that fact alone. No one ever said she had to play by her own rules. In any event, Marcy was glad she'd met Landon. He'd grown on her and she hoped he'd stick around.

The men remaining would be kept men, employees of Deliberation Plantation and Marcy's constant companions. Marcy was as excited as a never-bred mare prancing around with her tail held high.

A sudden sigh tumbled from her lips as she thought of the coming hours. Marcy was an easy woman, that was a given, but she wasn't downright trash. A woman had to be selective in order to be respected, especially when she chose a man for her bed.

Marcy was an entrepreneur but she was first and foremost a woman. She'd made a mental list of qualifications her employees needed. She wanted someone who looked good on the outside, but she also needed the whole package—a strong man, or men, she could admire.

Marcy was crippled by numerous trust issues. Her personal history included one relationship after the next. She couldn't commit to someone who expected her complete confidence. If a man wanted Marcy to rely upon him, well, he'd most likely be

disappointed. She was one of those gals who didn't need a man for much more than a few rolls across the hay.

Independent, that's what she was, and for good reason. Marcy had the money to buy the looks and the looks to entice the best men money could buy.

She walked to the end of the line and strolled in front of them one last time. She'd practiced her speech, not that it was necessary. Marcy had never been one for mincing words. "Gentleman, we've had four weeks to get to know one another. I want each of you to understand—I didn't make a hasty decision. If you're asked to stay on here, it's because of what I have in mind for this place—and for myself.

"As you know, the property used to be one of the hottest nightspots in the county. Jules and Brogan Evans, the former owners of the plantation, made sure this was the kind of place a girl could visit and find herself a real good time. The gals who came here didn't have to worry about their safety. That's important." She copped a smile. "Girls like me want kinky sex but when we say no, we want a man who can rein that thing in on a dime."

A round of chuckles followed. A few of the guys adjusted their situations below the belt. If the excitement in the air could be measured by the level of testosterone in the building, Marcy was in for one hell of a sex party in the near future. "This place is full of some sweet memories."

Mason Longworth, a cowboy with dazzling marine blue eyes, winked. Mason was the epitome of a rogue cowboy. Whenever Mason saw Marcy, he undressed her with his fiery gaze. When they'd first met, his bedroom eyes roamed over her faster than a runaway train. Marcy had a thing for him, a real bad thing, about a second after they said hello.

After she and Mason enjoyed some visual groping, she moistened her lips and asked, "What do you think, stud? Can you help me recreate the past?"

"Put the past behind you, darlin'. The future is gonna trump anything you've ever had. That's a fact."

"Is that right?"

“Absolutely,” Mason bragged, rubbing that delicious tongue over his bottom lip. “There’s a reason the old days are called the *good* old days. The best days of your life, the sensational ones, well those are straight ahead, sunshine. That’s a solemn promise.”

Marcy almost purred right there, but instead she kept her focus and found another man to stalk. There were plenty of cowboys present and any one of them could sweet talk her right out of her pants. She didn’t need much persuasion, but she was sort of curious to see which of these sexy drovers would stand first in line.

She focused on Landon. He’d moved down from New York—the Bronx—or so he’d said. Marcy never found anything solid in his background check to support what he told her.

Landon was tall, dark and hell-hot handsome. The first day he stepped foot on the ranch, he looked like a city slicker, wearing an expensive suit. He arrived by limousine, which was a classy act. There was something special about Landon. He dressed up sex appeal and sported it around like the latest in men’s fashions. If Marcy were a betting gal, she’d wager a real good time was found in his solid body. Although, come to think of it, she’d yet to see him flash some skin.

Before Marcy set her sights on cowboy number three, she lingered a little longer, hoping Landon would try and seduce her. “You know I never asked you. What brought a city boy like you down here to the country?”

He shot her one of those Wall Street grins, flashing straight white teeth and pretty little dimples right in the corners of his mouth. “I heard there was a lonely country girl looking for a gentleman to take care of her.”

“Uh-huh,” she said, chewing her bottom lip. “You’ll have to do better than that, Landon.”

He took a step forward and bracketed his arm around her waist. “I was hoping to sink some roots while I’m here.”

“Oh yeah?”

“You’d better believe it,” he said, a little clumsy when he released her.



"Watch out, city boy. If you're not careful, I may drag you around back. I bet I can come up with a place to bury that first stem."

Everyone laughed. Landon's chuckle was contagious, the laughter a woman remembered, cherished. Landon rarely smiled so seeing his personality warmed her. Marcy moved on, stopping in front of the next ranch hand in line. Her breath immediately caught in her chest.

Kemper Kendrickson was rough stock. He was the whole fucking package and owned the title cowboy. Hispanic-American, Kemper possessed deep emerald eyes—she assumed those were enhanced by contacts—strong facial features with a broad bone structure, a wide but quite perfect nose and full, thick lips. Whenever Marcy surveyed the rest of him, she felt a little moisture between her thighs.

"Mornin', Marcy," Kemper said, bringing her hand to his lips and brushing his mouth across her knuckles. When his large, long fingers laced through hers, she felt delicate and fragile. Her olive complexion looked snow-white next to Kemper's tanned hand. Whenever he'd touched her in the previous weeks, she'd tingled from head to toe.

"Kemper, I have a question for you this morning."

"Shoot." Copping a wicked smile, he added, "Come to think of it, I've been waiting nearly a month to do that very thing."

Her heart fluttered a little faster. She'd wondered about Kemper. He was the one cowboy there who hadn't been overly friendly. He was reserved and she rarely heard him say anything off-color. After his shocking insinuation, she took a minute to regroup. "How old are you, Kemper?"

"Twenty-three. Almost twenty-four."

*Like age mattered.*

"You'll do at twenty-three."

Marcy's pulse raced, the excitement settling in her core. Some of these men would soon know the feel of her bare skin. They would discover what brought her pleasure and willingly take her into their beds because they understood what their jobs entailed.

In order to keep their positions, her employees would make sure she stayed sated, truly satisfied.

“While I’ve hired the obvious—irresistible men—and I’ve made my intentions known, we are running a legitimate business here. If you’re chosen to stay on, you’re a potential partner. We’ll be announcing the grand opening of Deliberation Plantation in a few days. When we swing our gates open for the first time, we want to make sure our customers are pleased by what they find.”

One cowboy—Lance something or another—looked positively bored. No time like the present to cut a man loose. Besides, he was forty-one. Marcy never played well with others close to her own age. “Thank you for coming out. I’ve enjoyed getting to know you, Lance, but there’s no chemistry.”

He tilted his hat and left without looking back. Marcy popped her chewing gum, understanding for the first time in her life that rejection certainly worked both ways.

After Lance disappeared, she continued, “This plantation is a large working ranch. You’ll be expected to spend a great deal of time baling hay, taking care of the animals and making sure this farm is in perfect order at all times. You’ll also be responsible for managing the day to day operations of Deliberation Plantation. And then we have recreational activities to consider as well. I fully expect to enjoy quality time with each of you.”

Don, a short and pudgy fellow, stepped forward. “Wait a second. Are you suggesting we’re here to service you?”

“The audacity of such an accusation.” Marcy rested her hand against her chest. She started to ask Don if he missed the part where she outright stated the fact when he was first hired.

“Well? Are you?” Don asked.

Marcy scanned the faces of the remaining fellows. Some of them looked amused and others looked downright hopeful. No one there liked Don and she’d definitely planned on saying farewell. “I resent the implication. You’re fired, hon. Have a nice life.”

“Bitch.” Following a grunt, Don headed for the double barn doors, just a-stompin’ and a-cursin’ the whole way out.

A few of the cowboys jerked. One, in particular, set his jaw and clenched his fists—Cort Campbell.

Cort’s upper lip curled and his cold eyes followed Don all the way down the hill. Marcy halfway expected Cort to chase after the insignificant prick, wrestle him to the ground, and beat the ever-lovin’ hell out of him. He didn’t, but the passing thought made her smile.

“Say the word, Marcy,” Cort growled.

She might have, if he didn’t provide such a delicious distraction. Viewing Cort’s hard body was like taking a tour of God’s country. He was a rebel, a damn rogue of a man, standing there with his legs parted and his hands stuck in his front pockets. A white fitted T-shirt and light-blue denim jeans squeezed every inch of his flesh. The contour of hard muscles and a nice looking package in the front made Marcy’s mouth water.

Cort Campbell wasn’t just a man. He was a big girl’s favorite intimate toy. Even better, he’d been the source behind Marcy’s recent wet dreams and for various reasons.

They’d bantered back and forth on several occasions and she enjoyed their late-night conversations. He’d kissed her numerous times, and though she’d sworn off any explicit sexual contact until she reached her final decision, Cort almost became the exception.

They had chemistry. When they kissed, her lips burned. Her body sizzled. And Lord have mercy, she understood what it meant when a man made a woman hurt for sex.

“How are you today, Cort?”

His eyes were like cold liquid until his gaze met hers, and then they softened like creamy chocolate pudding. He glanced toward the massive opening at the barn entrance and returned his focus to her again. “Never better. You?”

“I can always be a little better.”

"Sure you don't want me to escort Don off the property?" Cort's lips twitched when he asked the question. Cort was cocky as hell. The damn man knew he'd receive an invitation to stay. Marcy hadn't been able to place any distance between herself and Cort since he arrived there.

"I have a better idea," she said. "Do you like iced tea?"

Cort's tongue rolled over his bottom lip. "Sure do."

"Good," she purred, still eyeing those balled fists of his. If there was one thing Marcy loved in a man it was his willingness to defend the woman in his bed. Marcy needed to hurry up and earn her place there. She enjoyed a fellow with pent-up angst, especially when he needed a place to expend some of that anxiety.

Since Marcy and Cort hadn't tossed back the blankets, she was beginning to think the time was rapidly approaching. If she fucked him wild, she'd probably be better able to control him.

She glanced over her shoulder as Don's pick-up truck peeled away from the ranch. Gravel spun around his tires as he revved up his engine.

Cort stalked to the end of the barn. Kemper and Landon were right behind him. Marcy took a deep breath and eyed their backsides.

*Wow.* She had her work cut out for her, all right.

She was tempted to jump-start a few cowboys, give them a whirl around her private corral and see if they were worthy of a buck or two or, better yet, raring to go like high strung studs.

"Cort?" Marcy called out, forcing the men to redirect their attention and focus on her again.

He approached her. The other two returned to the cowboy line-up.

"What do you say you go on over to the house and wait on the front porch?" Marcy asked, inviting trouble.

"You sure you want me to wait there?" Cort countered, hinting toward a few sinful ideas of his own.

"Yes, Cort, on the porch."

"I ain't got a problem with on the porch, against the wall, in the bed, on the floor or anywhere else, and you sure as hell know it."

He was right. What his lips promised to deliver was the main reason she invited him to take up space. With any luck, Cort Campbell would stake his claim. If she were a gambling woman, Marcy would bet a fortune on the coming hours. Cort wanted her in bed by the end of the day.

"I was suggesting iced tea."

"That's a fine idea," Cort said, nodding his head toward Mason, Kemper and Landon, which left her to believe the guys already had a few notions of their own.

"I'll see you over there in a few," she said, wanting him to walk away, willing him to leave without her lips meeting his.

She didn't need to start kissing on these fellas in front of one another. Things were strained enough between her and Cort. Every single time he spoke to her, her knees buckled. Their sexual chemistry was incredible. Anyone there could've felt the heat rising between them. Worse still, he seemed to recognize and gauge her lust. He pushed her buttons faster than any other man had found them.

"I'm glad to be of service, Marcy," he whispered in her ear. "And I can't wait to work up a sweat in your honor."

His hot breath broke like parting waves against her lobe and his guttural voice sent her libido into overdrive. Her sex clenched from the very second he stepped in front of her.

Cort studied her like he planned to make her all his.

*Whew!*

She couldn't wait to get a hold of his possessive nature. Marcy was praying for an obsessive lover, the kind of man who never had enough of a woman once he found a gal who was woman enough to handle him.

Marcy straightened her shoulders and when she did, all eyes dropped to her chest. Cort smirked. He made a performance out of staring at her breasts. "You like a cowboy's compliance, don't 'cha, sugar?"

"You'll never hear me complain when a man does what I ask."

Cort looked over her shoulder and tilted his head toward the others once again. They grinned from ear to ear. Now Marcy knew she was in trouble. A couple of lasso-twirling cowboys typically brought new meaning to the good old boys club.

Cort looped his arm around the small of her waist and drew her to him. She landed against a rock-hard chest, her hands caught between her middle and his washboard-perfect stomach. Such a shame he wore a shirt.

"I got a question for you."

"You do?" She tried her best to keep from puckering her lips, a natural instinct whenever Cort came within kissing distance.

"How do you respond to the men in your life who *expect* you to do what *they* ask?"

Marcy gulped. There was an alluring quality in Cort's question. He obviously expected an answer but Marcy didn't have one. Marcy chose to tread softly in territories where she deemed herself uneducated. *The lifestyle* was one such place and Cort struck her as the type of man who'd dabbled in a little role play, maybe even the whole shebang.

Marcy had known plenty of Doms in her life. Most of them were arrogant, domineering, and hell on wheels when it came to loving a woman. Marcy's friends in the BDSM community enjoyed their roles. Her submissive friends relied upon their *Masters* for everything.

Marcy wasn't going to call any man "Master."

Period.

She stilled with the thought. Then why was she thinking about Doms in the first place?

Cort pinched her thigh. "Marcy, honey, I asked you a question."

"If you stay on at the ranch, I'll have certain expectations."

"That makes two of us, gorgeous." His lopsided smile was telling. He looked good enough to sip and swallow, or gulp right down in one sitting. He tilted her chin and

dropped a peck right on her lips. "I might as well let you in on a secret. The fellows and me, we've been makin' a couple of predictions."

"You have." She wasn't asking and she wasn't surprised by Cort's declaration.

"Oh, yes ma'am," he rasped. "You may be in for a few stormy days but you'll do all right in the end."

"I don't understand." Oh, but Cort Campbell would explain everything in due time, no doubt about that. He was the kind of man Marcy never learned to leave alone—a man at ease with women, arrogant and relaxed. Driven to take what he apparently wanted, Cort was capable of convincing the woman in his arms she couldn't do without whatever he had to offer.

Cort cupped her nape and yanked her against him. His full lips hovered at her ear, and his hot minty breath divided her nerve endings like a spark igniting several independent flares. "Marcy, if you want me in your bed, you'd better decide before you meet me for a tall glass of iced tea. 'Cause you see, sweet cheeks, once you make a decision to keep me on for a more permanent arrangement, the rules will change."

Marcy flinched, her lame attempt to break free unsuccessful. His grip changed and he held her in place, nuzzling her hair, allowing her to feel his strength. He clung to her with remarkable confidence, like he wouldn't let her go even if she asked, only because he understood down deep his touch turned her on.

Marcy shivered. If she were a smart woman, she'd cut her losses and let him go. Fire him on the spot.

"I'll be waiting on the porch. But I won't tarry long."

Humph, if she were an intelligent gal, she'd test that threat. Instead, she couldn't wrap up her current meeting fast enough.

## Chapter Two

Cort Campbell was the big O waiting to happen. Marcy would bet the plantation on *that*.

She studied Cort from a safe distance—from behind the locked doors of her extended cab four-wheel drive. After she asked Landon, Mason, and Kemper to stay on at the ranch, she'd released the other men from their duties and hurried home.

In terms of distances, two football fields separated the main barn from her house. She hauled ass up the hill and then sat there, staring through the windshield like she didn't quite know what to do with herself.

Cort's hands were dropped between splayed legs. He was sitting on the stoop looking down at the ground. Even when she threw the gearshift into the park position, he didn't look up. Maybe he was waiting for her to make the first move, and if so, he'd be mighty disappointed.

She hadn't decided on her approach yet but she'd be damned if she'd bounce out of that truck and act like a cougar ready to pounce on her younger prey. Although...the image provided a tempting visual.

Debating on how she wanted to handle Cort, Marcy pretended to shuffle through some veterinarian bills, holding them parallel to the steering wheel in an effort to convey her complete interest in reading over her statements. One of the thin sheets fell to the wayside and she shot Cort a quick glance. That's when she was met by quite possibly the hottest gaze she'd ever seen in her life. And she couldn't tear herself away.



How could a man and woman sit this far apart and still experience such a strong chemistry? She wondered. Did Cort feel the physical connection, too?

Her muscles sensitized. The mere thought of him caressed her nerve endings, heating her pussy like a long indulgent lick. She took a deep breath and thought about the latter. Man if trouble had a twin, Cort was a definite stand-in.

Cort possessed a rare and unusual quality. Very few men knew how to convey raw hunger with only a stare. Cort had mastered the technique.

Marcy knew all about those guys. They were the kind of fellows expecting a hard romp with no strings, sort of like Jules and Brogan Evans had been in their younger years, prior to meeting that little whip who somehow stole away with their hearts.

Marcy gripped the leather padding on the wheel. Heaven help her. Cort was exactly like the kind of men Marcy had discovered she couldn't handle. She didn't like feeling powerless. She couldn't relinquish her self-control to a man like Cort. If she did, she'd never be the same again.

Cort finally moved. *Thank goodness.*

Maybe he'd walk away before she strolled over to the porch and propositioned him with an offer a man couldn't refuse. Why sure, and then he'd teach her some of the things she'd planned on learning after Deliberation Plantation's grand opening.

She cleared her throat and shifted uncomfortably in her seat. She'd anticipated an education by watching, not by participating. On second thought, opportunities knocked on a woman's door, but they seldom took a seat on the stoop and waited. That was worth something, right?

*Ah bull.* She could analyze this all day long.

Cort planted his palms flat against his hips and crossed one leg over the other one. Now she had a good idea of how blue jeans failed a man and won over a woman. She zoomed right in and stared directly at his crotch.

If he wanted to flaunt what he kept situated between his legs, she planned to admire him inch for inch. The cowboy had it coming to him.

Her gaze went on tour, working from left to right. Meeting his eyes again, she gasped when his tongue darted out of his mouth and held at the corner. Rather than take the gesture as a straightforward oral offer, she cursed under her breath and left the truck, slamming the door behind her.

"I planned on waiting all day."

"Yes, I can see that."

"You seemed to be enjoying yourself over there. I was trying to do the right thing."

"What's that?" she asked, rushing by him.

He grabbed her by the wrist and she fell smack-dab across his lap. "I wanted to make sure I gave you a good show."

Marcy shifted her weight, trying to avoid crushing his erection, not that he was in any imminent danger given his size. "I didn't get my eyes full."

"It's not your eyes that need their fill," he told her, focusing on her lips.

"I need something to drink," she said, grabbing hold of his right shoulder and pushing away from his body. "It's been a long day."

"Honey, it's still morning. Besides, I have some idea of how we can use up the afternoon. So you might as well cancel your plans, if you have any."

Marcy was completely aware of the cowboy's presence when he stood and followed her inside. She headed to the back of the house, hurrying toward the elaborate country-style kitchen with pots and pans hanging over a large chopping block.

"I didn't," she finally said, snatching a lemon from the windowsill.

"Iced tea won't quench your thirst."

"I didn't say an icy beverage cured everything. I just said I'm thirsty."

He stalked her. His coal black hair matched his deep dark eyes. "I can quench that thirst, Marcy," he said, looping his arms around her waist. "I can feed that hunger too, darlin'. You know I can."

"You tired of waiting, cowboy?" Marcy dared him, realizing she was playing with fire. Still, she was determined to get all she could of that smoldering hotness, guaranteed to make a woman pay attention.

"A month creeps by for a man when he only has one thing on his mind."

"Which is?" she asked, twisting free of his arms. She pulled a tall narrow-mouthed pitcher from the refrigerator. She'd meant to cool things down. Instead, she was asking the kind of questions guaranteed to heat things up.

"I've been as blunt as a man knows how to be."

"Have you?" she asked, setting the pitcher on the counter and placing her hand at the small of her back. "I don't think so, Cort. I think you can do a little better."

He smirked. His gaze drifted slowly, painstakingly so, over her body. Then he diverted his attention from her onto the refrigerator. "You got a beer in there?"

"Sure," she said reaching for a bottle and then handing it to him. "You got a better line, cowboy?"

Cort twisted the top off the bottle, took a long draw, released an "ah" and then bracketed his arms around her waist. She landed against him with a thump.

"What'd you have in mind, Marcy?"

His minty sweet breath mixed with the alcohol was intoxicating, but those dark eyes—*oh, God*—they were more potent than several shots of the world's best whiskey. They were the eyes of the haunted man, the tortured and the lonely. His gaze held something dangerous, and right then and there Marcy knew what he held in store.

He backed her against the kitchen counter and placed his palms on either side of her hips, forming a cage around her body. "First I'm gonna kiss ya, and then I'm gonna fuck you—so hard and so long that you'll know who's been between those pretty legs of yours. In fact, I'll leave my seed there just to make sure you carry me around for the rest of the day."

Marcy's heart turned flips. This was precisely what she'd hoped for when she'd first ran her ad for cowboys—real men who knew what to do with an insatiable woman. Cort was also more than she'd bargained for because in that moment, Marcy was finally certain. She had a Dom within her grasp, the type of man she feared, but admired. Wanted, yet avoided. That is, until now. "Don't waste time now, ya hear?"

A guttural sound seeped from his lips as he lowered his mouth to hers, nipping at her lips. "That's exactly what I'm gonna do, baby. I'm taking my own sweet time with you and if you're lucky? I'll leave you with an addiction guaranteed to get you hooked on my lovin'."

He teased her, kissing a path down her neck until she was arching in his arms, pressing her breasts against his chest. Oh dear Lord, his mouth should've been patrolled. She was losing all control.

"Just why would you wanna do such a thing, Cort?" Her head fell back and he sipped at her neck, kissing the underside of her jaw and dipping his tongue into the neckline of her shirt.

He drew her tighter against him, his length stretching against his zipper, threatening to pop free of the denim. "Because maybe I'm not a fair weather kind of guy. Maybe I want to crawl in bed with you, pitch a noticeable tent, and camp out a while."

Marcy slapped her hands against his shoulders. "I'm not the monogamous type of gal, you know."

"You don't say?" he asked, nipping at her ear. "Damn. And here me and the boys thought we had a pure little virgin on our hands. Heck, Kemper even bet me who'd get to go for that cherry first."

"So the two of you have been placing explicit wagers, have you?" Kemper was beginning to sound more and more like her type of man, too. She thought back to what her grandmother used to say.

*Marcy, you gotta watch out for those quiet boys. They're the ones who don't have a lot to say but let them catch you behind the barn and they'll show you they have a little more to do than just a-talkin'.*

Cort stopped kissing her and placed his hands on either side of her face. "I'm gonna train you, Marcy."

"You can't teach an old dog new tricks."

"Dog?" He shrugged. "If you say so...I'll have you groveling like a bitch in heat. Is that what you wanted to hear?"

She swallowed hard, certain of several lumps caught in her throat and wondering why this darker Cort had never stepped out of the shadows before. Why had he waited to show this side of himself?

"I will, Marcy. I'll keep me and you both so tore up we'll be counting down the minutes until we can meet in your bedroom for a little more lovin'. Even when you're with the others, you'll be thinking of me. You'll remember who pleases you most. That's for certain."

*Oh God. Oh God.*

"You like that idea, don't 'cha, sugar? Turns you on doesn't it? Tears you up?" He growled gutturally and looked down the length of their bodies, deliberately grinding against her. "You can't handle the thought of one man possessing you in such a way that he owns your heart, lives in your soul, and is so much a part of you that you're willing to do anything to please him. But real soon-like, you'll understand. One day you'll wake up and have only one man on your mind."

"And you think that's you, cowboy?"

He shot her a mischievous grin. "Ain't no question."

*Whew.* If he rubbed that thing over her crotch again, she was going to drop down to the floor and help him out of those tight-fitting jeans.

"Cocky somebody, aren't 'cha?"

"You got that right. A man knows when a woman's gonna be the death of him."

"Well I tell you what," Marcy said saucily. "I'll do my best to leave you alive."

"You do that. 'Cause I sure don't want to miss out on you, babe."

Marcy watched him for as long as she could without jumping his bones. Then she looked away. He was damn straight about everything he'd told her and that should've frightened her.

Her fears were well warranted. She was afraid of falling in love and for good reason. Women in the lifestyle had taught her to believe that love made a woman submissive.

Marcy planned to study her customers like a science and see if that theory held merit. Cort was cocky, handsome, sexy as all hell, and sure as shootin' he was the man for her bed—him and the other three cowboys waiting in the bunkhouse.

## Chapter Three

"Why don't you let me drag you upstairs and have my way with ya?"

Marcy barely heard the question. She was staring out the kitchen window, watching the two midnight black SUVs race up the paved driveway at a high rate of speed.

"Hmm, baby?" he asked, gripping her hips a little tighter.

She flattened her palm against his forearm. "You'll have to wait."

"Nope, can't do it," he said, pressing her hand to his cock. "Tell me this is something you want to postpone."

"Trust me, Cort, your dick isn't going anywhere," she said dismissively, but not before she gave him an affectionate squeeze. "Something's wrong."

"Well that is not what I wanted to hear after a good groping."

Marcy hurried by him and stood at the window. She waited for someone to exit the intimidating vehicles with their shiny chrome wheels and dark tinted glass. She straightened her blouse, adjusting the top two buttons. "Maybe someone heard about the club opening and they came to check out Deliberation Plantation."

"They aren't friends of yours?" Cort asked, looking over her shoulder and narrowing his gaze on the men stepping away from the automobiles.

"No, I've never seen them before."

"Wait here," Cort said, starting outside.

"Not on your life," she retorted, scooting by him.

Cort caught her arm with a locked clasp. "Marcy, I said stay put. I don't think this is anything you want to get mixed up in."

"What do you mean by that? What the hell is going on? Who are those guys?" By this time, six men were walking toward her porch.

"I don't know, but those SUVs have New York plates. And those guys don't look lost to me. Now stay here. I mean it. If you don't, so help me God, I'll bend you over and spank your ass raw once they leave."

Marcy gulped. "What did you just say?"

"You damn well heard me. I'm not a man who stutters."

Maybe he didn't but she did. Somehow, she finally managed to say, "Y-yes, but—

"Turned you on, didn't it?" he asked, looking at her with pure unadulterated lust pouring from his eyes one minute and stark determination replacing the desirous gaze, the very next. "I'm serious. Don't you dare step foot outside."

The knock came. Cort disappeared on the other side of the door.

Marcy peered around the curtain, watching as a man introduced himself. The stranger wore a long black coat with a fedora-style hat, the brim pulled low on his brow. If the New Yorker was after an intimidating outer appearance, he accomplished his mission.

She glanced toward the barn after noticing movement in her peripheral vision. Landon rushed into the loft and dove for something, presumably ducking over a few bales of hay.

What the hell was going on?

Whatever it was, she'd bet a handsome ransom Cort knew exactly why the guys from the city were paying them a visit. And she'd double down on another guess, too: Landon was running from something. Now she was beginning to question why she didn't pay closer attention to the background check. According to one report, Landon didn't even exist.

Releasing a deep breath, she cursed. Why hadn't these New Yorkers shown up before she made her final decision on who to keep and who to let go? She rolled her



eyes. It wouldn't have mattered anyway. She chose the men she wanted and unless one of these guys committed murder, she didn't anticipate rescinding her invitation to any of them.

Then again, how could she be sure she wasn't housing the next Charles Manson? Red flags had been waving all over the place. She'd ignored them and still hired Landon!

Marcy pursed her lips, pissed because she was actually doing what Cort asked. She'd be damned if she'd sit inside her house because Cort Campbell ordered her to stay there.

Oh no, this didn't sit well at all.

She swung her door wide and marched outside on the porch. There, she came face to face with the most intimidating creatures she'd ever met in her life.

"Ma'am," a few of them said in unison.

"Hello," she said. "May I help you with something?"

"Your husband has answered our questions," he told her.

Marcy shot Cort a sideways glance. "Yes, I'm sure he has but who are you?"

The front man's lips twitched. "Who I am isn't important, but who I'm looking for may be of interest to you."

She narrowed her gaze on the man's extended arm. He clutched a photograph in his hand.

"Go back inside, Marcy," Cort ordered, practically under his breath.

"If you don't mind," the stranger said, flipping the eight by ten glossy over, "I'd like to see if *your wife* has seen this man."

Marcy started to reach for the picture and Cort curled his fingers over her wrist and glared straight ahead. "Why do you want to go and scare a woman for, huh? You people are a long way from home and coming here with a picture of some guy from New York doesn't make a lick of sense."

"It does when his family tells us he was headed here after some kind of illicit offer of employment." The bad-ass goon with gold teeth and a scar across his right cheek looked her up and down. His critical eye made her nervous.

Marcy snatched the photograph. She tried to remain neutral at the image staring back at her.

"Do you know him?"

"No," she fibbed, handing over the picture. "I've never seen him before in my life."

"Take another minute and be sure."

"Look around. Does it look like we have a lot to offer city slickers here?"

One of the burly guys stepped forward. "This is exactly the kind of place a man like Landon would look for if he needed to hide."

"Landon?"

"Yes, that's his name."

"What's his last name?"

"Why, do you know him?"

"No, but I can ask around."

"You'd do that for strangers, would you?"

"Marcy, go inside," Cort grated.

"I wonder if we might take a walk around your property," the front guy said. "You know, take a look in the barns and check out the house down the hill. Is that a bunkhouse, by the way?"

"Who are you?" Marcy asked.

"I told you our names aren't important."

"I want you off my property or I'll call the police."

"That wouldn't be a smart move, lady," one of the younger guys in the back said.

Marcy struck a pose. "Do I look intelligent to you?"

"No, but you look like a woman who can be taught a lesson or two. Is that what you want?"

Cort's eye twitched and he clenched his fists. "Time for you to go."

The fellow with solid white hair, the one who'd stayed in the middle of all these men finally stepped forward. "We're sorry to have bothered you, ma'am."

"No bother *a'tall*," she drawled.

"Please let Landon know—if you see him, that is—that Cap Dante sends his regards."

"Is that really your name?"

"Cap Dante shouldn't be too hard to remember," he continued, without giving her a direct answer.

She stared straight ahead, watching, as the six men returned to their vehicles. Cort's body was stiff beside her. Neither of them said a word until the SUVs started toward the main gate.

"Who the hell were they?" she asked.

"I don't know."

"You're not being honest with me, Cort."

"Whoever they are, they'll be back."

"You think I don't know that?"

"Marcy, wait for me inside."

"No, I'm going to find Landon. I want him out of here."

Cort pointed toward the house. "I said wait in the house and I didn't say please. Now get your ass inside, go upstairs and sit tight like I told you. I need to talk to Landon and when I'm done, I'll come and get you. Understand?"

Marcy set her jaw.

"Good. Now, we're getting somewhere." Cort stomped off the porch.

"This is not how things are going to be around here!"

Cort stopped and turned his head to the side, peering over his shoulder. His strong jawline and determined expression made her shiver. "This is exactly how things are going to be, Marcy. And you might as well get used to it."

She glared at his back until he stormed away. "Oh really?" she muttered, keeping her voice low so he wouldn't hear her. "Time to show you how wrong you are!"

## Chapter Four

"Landon! Get your sorry ass down here right now!" Cort yelled.

Mason appeared in the breezeway. "Something wrong?"

"You'd better believe it. Where's Landon?"

"I'm here," Landon called out, tripping over a hay bale. "Hang on a minute."

"What were you doing up there? Hiding?" Cort accused.

"Hell no," Landon said dryly. "I was locking and loading sniper rifles—something we should've done after we arrived." Landon backed down the clay slab ladder, exiting the loft.

Cort flinched. He was right. If the boys from New York had wanted a fight, they could've taken a blood bath there and each of them would've lost their lives. Hell, Cort had been unarmed when he greeted them at the door.

Kemper rounded the corner before Landon's feet touched the ground again. "They're gone."

Cort folded his arms over his chest. "Good damn thing."

"That was close," Landon admitted, running his hand through his hair. "For a minute there, I thought you might hang me out to dry."

"If we were going to do that, we would've let your friends finish you off in New York," Mason told him, turning his attention to Cort. "Does Marcy suspect anything?"

"Plenty. But I can handle Marcy."

"You better hope we can keep a good grip on Marcy. Now that Cap has been here, he's sure to show up another time or two in the next few days," Mason pointed out.

"What'd they have to say?" Kemper asked, wiping the sweat from his brow.

"They showed Marcy a picture, said they were looking for Landon and told her to tell him Cap Dante was searching for him."

Landon chuckled. "So he's going by Dante now? You gotta be kidding."

"This ain't no laughing matter," Cort told him. "Your damn family has been bought off again. You would've been better off going in the witness protection program."

"And live like a civilian instead of what I was born and bred to do? Forgetaboutit. I was taught to fight, not hide."

"I told you these guys from the Northeast were cut from a different cloth," Kemper said, staring at Cort. "You wouldn't believe me."

"I should've listened," Cort bit out, redirecting his focus on Landon once more. "Then again, who would've thought this city dude would arrive in a chauffeured car and step out of the back end dressed in a thousand dollar suit instead of cheap chaps and a cowboy hat?"

"I wanted to grab Marcy's attention," Landon retorted. "I was the one who needed this place for a cover and probably the most likely of the bunch to be asked to leave."

Kemper grinned. "What? You were afraid Marcy wouldn't like that thick Jersey accent?"

"I tried to score points before the game started. Cort had already set his sights on her and since he has a reputation with the ladies—one coveted by plenty of them in some of New York's BDSM clubs—I tried to be creative, make a lasting impression. And I'm not from Jersey."

"You've made an impression wherever you're from," Cort said, letting the lifestyle comment slide. The guys liked to rib him about the trail of women he'd left behind. "You made sure the locals would remember you, too."

"We need to tell Marcy what's going on," Mason said.

All eyes focused on Cort. They probably expected him to agree.

"I'm not ready to blow our covers yet."

"Well you might consider the fact they're already shot to hell," Marcy said, pointing a rifle in their direction when she stepped from behind the big green tractor.

"Well ain't you just a sight for sore eyes?" Cort said, winking at the others. "I was about to come and find you."

"Save it, Cort. I've been standing here for the last ten minutes."

He rubbed his jaw. "Damn."

"Yeah, it's gonna be tough wading through whatever line of bullshit you were about to give me, huh?"

Cort pursed his lips.

"What the hell is going on here?" she asked, maintaining a firm grip on the gun. "Who are you and how do you know one another?"

Kemper stalked her, which surprised her since she thought he was the reserved, quiet one in the bunch. "Put the gun down, Marcy."

She stared down the gun's barrel, narrowing one eye on the scope like she fully intended to fire the weapon. "Don't be a typical man and assume I don't know how to use this rifle, Kemper. You wait right there. You aren't going anywhere until I get some answers." He took another step and she fired into the mounds of shavings located at the rear of the barn. Poor Kemper danced like an Indian circling a celebration fire.

"Believe me now?" she asked, aiming the gun at one man before moving onto the next. She was deliberate when she paused at each, taking a moment to study the cowboy standing on the wrong end of her weapon.

"Shit, Marcy! Put that damn thing down!"

"Cort, I've had about all the mouth I can stand from you today."

He grinned. "Now that ain't true and we both know it."

She blushed. God love her heart. He was getting to her.

"Come on baby, put the gun down. You know we won't hurt you."

"Who were those men?"

No one answered.

"Damn it," she moaned, lowering the gun for a moment before deciding she liked her position a little better when the weapon was high and aimed straight ahead. "Why are you here?"

"We came here for the job, like everyone else," Kemper replied, still overly concerned with the weapon in her hand.

"Then how come you arrived separately and apparently from different areas of the country, but seem to know one another so well?" Her voice cracked at the end. She was frantic. Their unexpected visitors had rattled her.

"We live in different towns, but we've bumped into one another from time to time," Cort answered.

"How's that possible? This world isn't the size of a tennis ball."

"We run in the same circles."

"Uh-huh," Marcy said, lowering her gun a few inches. "And what kind of company do you keep exactly?"

Cort growled, "If I told you, sugar, I'd play my hand before it's time. I'm not sure you want me to strip you right here or bind and gag you before I fuck you in front of an audience. Or do you?"

Marcy flinched. Good, he was getting to her and he was betting she was aroused as hell. Maybe if he could keep her distracted, she wouldn't worry about the danger surrounding them.

She made Mason her target. "Did you plan this from the start? How did you manage to earn an invitation to stay? Have you all been working to seduce me? I mean, has this been like a joint effort?"

Cort folded his arms over his chest. "Coming from you, Marcy, that's like the paisley thong calling the black one skimpy. A man can't entice a woman who stays so wet she has to change her panties five or six times a day. Seduce you? Hell. You've been revving up that vibrator several times a day in our honor."

"Did I ask you?" she blasted Cort.

He should've told her he knew about all her secrets, how he'd caught her with her legs splayed, her pussy impaled, and how she'd come with his name falling from her lips. Maybe then she would've been more interested in entertaining her work force rather than trying to find out about things that didn't concern her.

"I'm waiting, Mason," she said. "How did I manage to keep a group of men who know one another?"

"We're charming?" Mason suggested, shrugging. "Or maybe just lucky?"

She narrowed her gaze. "Super. Now that explains everything. You're handsome, rugged, sexy and everything a woman could ask for except for one small fact. At the end of the day, after you've baled the hay, mucked the stalls, and such, you what? Pick up machine guns and transform into mobsters?"

"We're the good guys, Marcy," Kemper assured her, keeping his distance.

"Really?" she asked sarcastically. "The good guys?"

"Yes," Kemper replied, smiling. "We've just got a tiny problem. Nothing we can't handle."

Marcy glared from one man to the next. "I have a ranch to run and a club to open. I don't need any problems, regardless of how small they are."

She glared at Cort's cock.

All the fellows chuckled.

"Good one," he commented. "Want to feel again for accuracy?"

She made a cute little face and then turned her full attention to Landon. "What did you do?"

"Put the gun *all the way* down and we'll talk like sensible adults," Landon said.

"The gun is down. It's just not leaving my hand."

Cort studied the other men, who were quickly becoming putty in her hands. For some reason these fellows loved a woman with bigger honkers than they had balls. Personally, Cort couldn't wait to tame the defiant vixen.

"So you all knew one another before you came here?" She tried for confirmation again.



The men exchanged glances.

"Well that's just swell," Marcy said, pacing. "So do you mind telling me how all of you managed to secure a spot here or did I cut one of your men loose?"

"No," Mason said softly. "You kept us all."

"Super. Well, I'm so glad no one was disappointed." Her finger grazed the trigger but she didn't squeeze. "I ran background checks. I came up empty-handed with Landon. He shouldn't even be here."

"I hope that thing isn't loaded," Landon pointed out, changing the subject.

"Did you fail to hear the first shot fired?"

"She had one bullet," Cort said.

"How do you know?"

"I know you, Marcy," he said, stalking her.

Marcy clutched that gun like Cort imagined she might take hold of his cock. She kept a good grip, a real firm hand, and when she brought the rifle upright again, she slid that thing through her fingertips like she knew how to grab something worthwhile, something meaningful and special.

God, he'd lost it.

"Let me have the blasted gun," Cort said, standing in front of her.

"Give me some answers."

"I'll tell you whatever you want to know."

She dropped the rifle and he caught a woman. He hoisted her into his arms and tossed her over his back, planting a firm palm against her bottom.

"Damn you, Cort. Put me down," she demanded. "I mean it."

"No you don't," Cort teased.

"I'm not asking."

"Well good, because there's not even a small chance I'm letting you go," Cort said, turning to the others. "Boys, lock up the barn and get our stuff out of the bunkhouse. We're staying in the main house tonight."

Marcy's small fists struck at his back. "You let me down right now, Cort Campbell!"

"In fact, we might as well go ahead and start taking turns with this one. If we keep her busy, she won't be able to get in our way when Cap comes back."

"Get in your way?" she squealed. "I'll show you how a woman gets in a man's way! I'll have you escorted off this property by sunset tonight!"

Cort slapped her bottom. "No, baby, I don't think so. By the time the sun goes down, there's only one place I'm heading and that's your bed. You might as well get ready."

"I will not!"

He walked away, calling over his shoulder, "Boys, I'll see you in a bit."

The other guys laughed and Mason asked, "You sure you don't need some help?"

"Oh no. I've got this," Cort assured him.

"Like hell you do! Let me go!" Marcy wiggled and kicked.

He smacked her round bottom several times. "Marcy, I ain't in the mood."

"You only wish that were true!" she screamed, striking him. And that's when she gave up. "Good Lord, I've never been more aroused in my life."

"You think I don't know what turns you on?"

He grinned to himself when her body went limp against his. She was conceding. It was about damn time.

A minute or so later, he spanked her ass repeatedly. He'd bet—because it wouldn't be a long shot—that each time his palm collided with her cheeks, she felt a bolt of lust fly through her body.

"Don't push it, Cort. I said I was aroused, but I'm still pissed at you. It will take more than a minute or two to get over this."

"I got nothing but time, darlin'!" he exclaimed, swatting her sweet little caboose. "I'll spank you all the way to your bedroom if I have to but you're gonna act straight once we get there. You understand me?"

She stilled against his shoulder.

"Good, now we're getting somewhere."

"Well we're not headed where we were an hour ago. That's for sure, cowboy!"

"Oh yeah?"

"Yeah," Marcy grumbled.

"Care to put some money on that, Miss Mahoney?"

## Chapter Five

"Who are you?" Marcy asked, her voice chillingly quiet. Cort didn't help her mood when he traipsed upstairs and tossed her on the bed like a sack of potatoes.

Cort started to unbutton his shirt.

"Oh no, you don't." She slid across her sleep-easy mattress until her back hit the headboard.

"I thought I read in those papers somewhere that you could fuck on command."

Marcy sneered. "I never said that."

"What I heard."

"You may have heard it but I sure as hell didn't provide that information in my literature."

"Literature was it?" Cort taunted. "If you say so. I'll give you this — there was some mighty fine reading in that pamphlet."

"I worked for several weeks on that employee handbook."

Cort lost the shirt and rubbed his jaw. "Is that what you call it? Well, I didn't bother reading it in the first place." He grabbed her ankles and yanked her toward him. "Why on a cattleman's ranch would I need a woman to tell me how to respond to her in bed or take care of her stock in the barn?"

"Thought you didn't read it."

"I didn't."

"Well, someone did because that's exactly what was in the damn thing!"

Cort's eyes darkened. "You are a beautiful woman. I'll give you that."

She cocked her head. She'd heard pleasantries before but coming from Cort, the compliments sounded like a bewitching love song. She stood, pulling away from him before she lost her sensibilities.

Cort pointed toward the bed. "You might as well take a seat, baby. Unless of course, you stood up so you could undress."

"We aren't fucking."

"Wanna bet?"

"I'm not attracted to you."

"The hell you aren't."

In fact, the way he approached her drove home a point if nothing else. She was actually standing there, waiting for him to seduce her. What the hell was wrong with her anyway? She should've been afraid of him. She should've been running.

She should've called the damn police.

Instead?

Cort stole her lips like a renegade might, taking her mouth like she owed him something and he'd come to collect the past dues. His tongue pressed through the seam of her mouth and he kissed her like a man who'd paid a mighty high price for a woman's attention. Evidently, he was under the impression he deserved that kiss—pretty much earned it.

"We can do this the easy way," he whispered, kissing his way to her ear. "Or we can do it the rough and rowdy way. Makes no difference to me."

She shoved him away. "How do you do that?"

"What?" he asked, acting surprised.

"That!" she yelled, pointing at his cock. "You use sex to tear down my defenses and then the first chance you get, you piss me off!"

He shrugged. "You had a month to get to know me and I never heard the first complaint."

She stormed across the room and opened the bedroom door, only to find three more just like him standing in the hallway. She immediately slammed it again. Shaking her head in fury, she said, "Well now I want you to leave."

"Is that right?" he asked, plopping down on the bed.

"Yes, that's exactly what I want." She definitely wanted him gone—just as soon as she fucked him.

"Mind telling me why your nipples are hard little beads pressing through your shirt if you're so damned eager to get rid of me?"

Marcy looked down, not at all ashamed. Hell, she was caught. She couldn't help it if her body couldn't decide whether or not she needed to fuck the man. She was a raging lunatic one minute and ready to screw aside her anger the very next.

The other three entered the bedroom cautiously. "Everything all right in here?" Landon asked.

"No," she said, pointing toward Cort. "He is the most God-awful, most stubborn, most..."

Good Lord, he looked like a sexy dream sitting there with his legs splayed and his hand working over his erection.

A woman like Marcy didn't turn down sex with that! Hell, she couldn't remember having sex with a man who looked like any of these men. And that was saying a lot, especially since she'd earned quite the reputation of a promiscuous woman, a woman who most definitely knew her way around a man's body.

Cort loosened his belt. "Might as well get out of those clothes, Marcy."

"You might as well keep your pants on."

He stood, unfastened his belt, unhooked a few snaps and stepped out of his jeans in about two point seven-five seconds.

She gulped. "You aren't wearing underwear."

"You complaining?" he asked, lying down on the bed and fondling himself.

*Good Lord, no.*

She tossed her hair behind her back and after she gawked for another moment, she squared her shoulders and marched for the door. “I was making a statement and I highly suggest that you do the same—by answering my questions— especially if you want me to play with the one-eyed milkman sometime in the next twenty-four hours!”

Marcy passed Landon, Kemper, and Mason at a high rate of speed. She fully expected to be stopped in her tracks. To her great disappointment, no one followed her.

She took that to mean two things—she wasn’t getting laid and no one was going to tell her what she needed to know, at least not without some additional coaxing.

## Chapter Six

"The one-eyed milkman?" Cort stuffed his cock back in his jeans. "Who the hell says that?"

"Marcy, apparently," Landon answered him, grinning.

"I wouldn't smirk too much if I were you, Landon," Cort grumbled. "Ever since your people showed up here, I've been walking around with blue balls. If they hadn't found us, we'd all be cuddled up with Marcy right now having a grand old time."

"I doubt that," Kemper said, removing his cowboy hat and slapping the brim against his hand. "We could just tell her the truth. She already knows something is going on. She overheard plenty."

"He's right," Landon pointed out. "Plus, it's only a matter of hours before Cap and his crew come back here. She needs to be ready, Cort. Keeping her in the dark only puts her in danger."

"I'm not telling her shit until she comes back up here and plays nice. I've been walking on pins and needles waiting for this day and your men came in here and fucked everything up."

"Maybe you've forgotten why we were sent here," Mason casually mentioned.

Cort hadn't forgotten anything. Maybe he should just show all his cards and tell the boys why he came off an early leave and took this job in the first place. All he'd thought about since the day he saw Marcy's photographs was one little red-haired beauty.



On second thought, they had enough to gouge him about. He'd been left on the bed with his dick in hand and abandoned in front of an audience to boot.

Sweet lovin', he was gonna spank Marcy raw when he got his hands on her precious ass again. Cort faced the truth then, too. He'd prefer to just wrap his arms around her and hold her until all this was over. At least then, he'd know she was safe.

Cort ran his fingers through his hair. Every eye in the room pierced through him. After a long silence, he raked his hand across his face and said, "So suppose we talk to her...how much do we tell her?"

"As little as possible," Mason suggested.

"Whatever we share with her, it needs to be enough to protect her," Landon said. "And Cort, you need to be sure she can fire a gun."

"I can attest to the fact she isn't a bit shy about pulling the trigger," Kemper reminded them.

Cort chuckled. "She sure knows how to make a fellow dance. That's for sure."

Kemper frowned. "Yeah, and she doesn't have any problem leaving a few of us with blue balls either so I wouldn't laugh too hard if I were you. At least I didn't have my pants bunched around my ankles while I was trying to do the hokey pokey."

Cort stopped laughing. "That's not funny."

"Comical or not, it's true," Mason said, adopting a serious tone. "And like it or not, someone needs to make sure if Marcy fires a gun again, she can hit her intended target."

Cort dropped his head. "Hell, at the rate I'm going, I'm the man with the biggest bull's eye on his back."

\* \* \* \*

Marcy swung the door open and struck a pose, aware of the four sets of eyes behind her. "Pete, what brings you out here?"

Pete removed his hat and dropped it in front of his buckle. Poor fellow. He'd been married to Melissa for so long, he'd forgotten what it felt like to have a woman greet

him with welcoming arms and open legs. She'd save the hugs for later and shelf the sex for the time being – probably indefinitely seeing as Pete wasn't exactly the kind of man to cheat on his wife.

"Melissa sent me," he said, nodding his head in the direction of the men he hadn't had the opportunity to formally meet. "I need to talk to you, Marcy. It's important."

Marcy stepped out of the way and motioned him inside. "Come in. Meet the fellas."

Pete's gaze shifted across Marcy's men about as quickly as her hands used to skim over him. "I hope I didn't interrupt anything."

Marcy patted his arm. "Oh Pete, you know me so well. Hon, you didn't interrupt anything that you and I can't do better."

Cort turned blood red and he started to approach her, or so it appeared, until Kemper slapped his arm against his middle and Mason said, "I'm Mason. This here is Kemper, Landon, and Cort." He tilted his head toward the rest of the guys, shaking hands with Pete. The others shook too when they had their turn, with one exception.

Cort grabbed his hat and left.

"Can we speak privately?" Pete asked, lowering his voice.

"Why sure!" Marcy exclaimed. "You know how I love our intimate talks. Come on, let's sit in the study. I'll pour you a drink."

"Melissa told me not to drink with ya but if you have a bottle of water. That'll do."

Marcy walked in front of Pete, leading the way to the study. "So Melissa sent you over and gave you a list of rules to follow while you're here?"

"Something like that," he replied, following her to the wet bar when they entered the cozy area.

Marcy glanced up when she saw movement by the door. "Did you fellas fail to hear Pete when he said he needed to talk with me *alone*?"

"Ain't happening'," Kemper said sweetly, taking a seat on the sofa. "Pretend I'm not here or deal with Cort when he comes back but one of us will be right here until we listen to what Pete has to say."

Marcy glared at Kemper. "Do you mind telling me what happened to the men who were here yesterday?"

He smiled bigger.

*Damn him!*

Marcy immediately remembered more of her grandmother's words. *Watch the quiet ones, Marcy. And learn how to read them when they stub up and say nothing at all.*

Kemper folded his arms over his chest. He leaned back against the burgundy leather and looked right comfortable.

Disgusted, she shook her head. "He has a point. We put up with him or deal with Cort."

"Who are these guys?" Pete asked, thumbing the air over his shoulder.

"They work here now."

"You don't say?"

"I know. Truth is, I wish I couldn't say," she said saucily, leaning over the bar and yanking a bottle of water from the cooler. Twisting the plastic cap, she handed off the clear beverage to Pete and then pulled free a chilled goblet from another refrigerated compartment.

After she poured herself a glass of wine, she took a long, indulgent sip. Her eyes met Kemper's hooded gaze and she felt guilty for taking out her frustrations on him. She'd almost *shot* him, for pity's sake. The least she could do was behave in front of company.

"Would you like something, Kemper?"

"What you have under that bar isn't going to taste as good as what I plan to drink."

Her mouth dried immediately. What she had in her wine glass probably wasn't going to do the trick either. When she finally tore her gaze away from Kemper's, she muttered, "Why, Kemper, I didn't know you had it in you."

"There's a lot you don't know about me," he said, spreading his legs and patting his cock when Pete turned his back. "But I have a feeling you can draw the very best out of a man."

"I guess we'd better find out what was important enough to bring Pete out today, hmm? Then, you and I can run upstairs and discuss a little dirty business."

"You may change your mind about that after I get done with you," Pete said.

"Really?" Marcy drawled. "And why on earth would you assume that?"

"Because I know you about as well as anyone else. And this group you've got here? They aren't who you think they are."

## Chapter Seven

"Now I'm curious, Pete," Marcy leaned over and touched his cheek. She wondered for a minute if Melissa had even sent him. As far as the group she had there? Hell, she knew they weren't who she first thought they were. That was last hour's news. "So tell me, what is important enough for Melissa to send you to an ex-lover's place? I assume she's not feeling generous."

Kemper shifted on his cushion and so did Pete.

Marcy caressed Pete's hand, dragging her fingers along the veins etched in his flesh. "Tell me she didn't send you over here for a refresher course."

Pete's mouth instantly formed a wicked smile only Marcy could see. Pete had it in him to devil Marcy but Marcy sure didn't see him picking on her in front of someone he'd just met.

"Actually, doll," he rasped, "she did. See I told her you gave the best blowjobs this side of the Mississippi and she sent me over to see if you'd mind teaching her how you do it. You know, she could watch while you demonstrated." He cleared his throat and glanced over his shoulder. "She wants to sit back and watch you and me together. What do you think about that?"

"Like hell!" Kemper said, leaping to his feet.

"Sit down, cowboy," Pete ordered, never moving. "I'm joshing with Marcy. Me and her go way back."

Marcy felt like she'd swallowed Pete's little cock right then. She chugged the wine and slammed the glass to the bar, surprised the darn glass didn't shatter.

Slowly, Pete rose. He looked at Kemper dead on and that's when Marcy realized whatever Pete had on his mind, it was probably important.

Kemper stood in front of him with his fists clenched at his sides. "I think you need to leave."

"One of us does but it ain't me. I came here to talk to Marcy and I expect to do that alone. Now here's the thing—I get you like Marcy. Hell, for all I know you're screwing her or the lot of you boys are but what you don't seem to understand is that I need to talk to her and I need to do that alone.

"If you want to go outside and press your nose to the glass and keep an eye on her, then that's fine but I came to have a say and I mean to do that privately." He turned his back to Kemper. "Marcy, is that okay with you? If not, I'll go home and wish you the best. But I believe you need to hear this."

Marcy poured another glass of wine. "Kemper, give us a minute," she said, sipping the cool liquid.

Kemper didn't move. His gaze darkened and his eyes narrowed.

"I'll make it worth your while later, sugar," she drawled.

Smirking, Kemper turned. "I'll be right outside."

When he disappeared, Marcy shoved aside her glass. "What the hell is this about, Pete?"

"You need to get rid of them. Now."

\* \* \* \*

Cort was tossing hay faster than he could count the bales. He swung one right and another one to the left.

"What's the matter with you?" Mason asked, joining him in the loft.

"Damn if I know," he said, tucking his hands under twine and swinging again.

"Maybe you should've taken that vacation. You sure as hell don't need to be here."

"I'm exactly where I need to be," Cort said, working his thick padded gloves away from his fingers before taking a seat on a wooden ledge.

"You got it bad for her, don't ya?"

"No worse than the rest of you, I imagine."

"I wouldn't die for her, man, and you? Well, the rest of us think you'd stand in the line of fire to protect her."

"I would."

"Then you need to get the hell out of here. Take Marcy with you if you have to, but go, Cort. When Cap returns, he'll bring plenty of back-up. If your only concern is protecting Marcy, then we can't do the job we've been paid to do—making sure Landon gets to that courtroom in New York and testifies against that sorry son-of-a-bitch."

"I took this job. I'll see it through."

"Let me remind you, we're here to keep Landon alive. He's the job, Cort. Not Marcy."

Landon appeared about that time, slowly making his way up the loft ladder. "I may be the job but I was trained to fight just like you were. I can take care of myself. We all need to worry about Marcy. She's innocent. She didn't ask for this and I don't want her hurt."

"Don't get me wrong," Mason said, "I want Marcy protected but if she gets in the way—"

"She won't," Cort promised. "We're gonna tell her everything. If we let her know what's going on, she won't be a problem."

"I'm not worried about Marcy being the problem," Mason told him, pointing at Kemper when he started toward the barn. "I'm worried about what that Pete guy is telling her now."

"Shit!" Cort exclaimed, jumping up and hurrying to the main level of the barn. "I thought Kemper was keeping an eye on her!"

Kemper stopped Cort before he made his way to the house. "Don't worry. I've *got* this. The room is bugged." He held up a small scanner.

Cort shook his head. "I'm not interested in hearing something I should be seeing with my own eyes."

Landon and Mason joined them. "What's wrong, Cort? Are you afraid the neighbor might enjoy something you're not?"

Cort glared at Mason. "No, as a matter of fact, I'm not."

"Good," Mason said, obviously satisfied when his shoulders relaxed.

Cort sneered. "He won't have the chance."



## Chapter Eight

"What's wrong Pete? Is Melissa jealous?"

Pete shook his head. "Marcy, Melissa doesn't envy you."

"Are you sure about that? Because it sounds to me like Melissa is getting a little bored at home."

"That's not it, Marcy," Pete stated flatly. "She's worried about you."

"She's concerned because she doesn't want to drive by this place on her way to work every morning and see those good-looking men of mine making eyes at the very woman she once considered her only competition."

Pete ran his palm down his face. "Shit, Marcy. Can we leave the past where it belongs?"

Marcy licked her lips. Pete wasn't great in bed but he sure knew how to use that meaty tongue of his. Marcy, after a month of foreplay and banter with a few worthy men, had a real hankering for oral sex. She slipped her shoes off and climbed atop the bar. Settling her feet on Pete's thighs, she bit down on her forefinger. "No one has to know, Pete."

"No, Marcy," he said, gripping her ankles.

Spreading her legs, Marcy tilted her head from side to side. "No one is here except me and you." Lowering her voice, she added, "I swear I'll never tell."

Pete shifted in his chair. "I came here for one reason and only one. I love my wife. You know that."

Marcy planted her foot on Pete's rigid cock. She pressed up and down. "Yes, I can see how much you love her, Pete. But whether you love her or not, you still have a hard time resisting me."

Pete cleared his throat. He closed his eyes and halfheartedly tried to move Marcy's foot again. "Please don't do this."

"Why did you come here, really?"

"I told you."

"Because Melissa told you my men are bad influences?" she coaxed, sliding her foot over the well defined ridges of Pete's penis.

"Yes, Marcy. Yes."

"And she'd verify this if I called her, right?"

"Of course," he said, raising his gaze to meet hers. "Call her, if you don't believe me."

"I will, Pete," she said, using more power with her strokes, feeling the way Pete pressed against her when she rubbed more aggressively.

"I know you will," he groaned, leaning back in his chair.

"Get comfortable, Pete," she crooned, sliding her hands behind her back and reaching under her shirt. Unhooking her bra, she immediately squirmed out of her shirt and lost the only confinement that might hinder her goals.

Fingering her nipples, she said, "Now, tell me the truth, Pete. Why are you here?"

This time she slid down the bar and landed on his lap. Her legs draped on either side of his hips and she ground against him, pressing her bare breasts against his flannel shirt and riding him like she couldn't wait to get a good feel of what he had rising between her legs.

"God, you've got to stop this," he moaned, hoisting her up and bracketing her legs around his hips. "I'll fuck you, Marcy. So help me God, I don't want to but I can't resist you. And you know this."

"Yes, Pete," she said softly. "And you'd do anything in your power to run off a man I'm interested in, wouldn't you?"

He dropped his head to her breast and nuzzled her nipple, pressing his cheek against her fullness. "Shit, Marcy. You're driving me crazy again. I can't sleep without thinking about you. Lately I..."

"Shh," she said, running her fingers through his hair. "It's all right, Pete. Don't explain. Just tell me the truth. Why did you need to see me?"

He backed against the sofa and dropped down to the cushion, positioning her over him, making certain she straddled him when he sat. "I can't let you get involved with these guys. They're dangerous."

"Dangerous?" she asked, sitting upright but spreading her legs wider, hoping he'd remember the joys found in a woman who knew how to use her legs for all the right reasons.

"Yes, Marcy," he gulped, placing both hands on the sides of her waist. "They have friends."

"We all have friends, Pete. Good friends. Those that come with many benefits." She tossed her head back and really rode him, dry humping him like she meant to get down and dirty right then and there.

"These guys are – good hell, you're gonna make me come – carrying guns."

"What guys? Some men from New York?"

Immediately, he stopped bucking against her. "How'd you know?"

Marcy grated back curse words. She swung her leg across him and dismounted the asshole she'd been manipulating. "Well it sure as hell took you long enough to tell me you'd met Cap Dante. What, did he send you over here to see if Landon was here? Is that why you stopped by? Are you going to report back to that monster?"

"You know his name?" he asked, wide-eyed.

"Of course I know his name. Those guys came here!"

"They were at my place, too, asking a lot of questions. They scared Melissa plumb to death."

"And you couldn't have told me that the moment you came in my front door?"

Pete unhooked his belt. "Information costs you, Marcy. You know that."

"You've got to be kidding."

"No," Pete said. "I wasn't joking when I told your boy..."

"Kemper is no boy, Pete," she interrupted him.

"Whatever. He's young enough to be your son and you're out here carrying on like you used to back when we were all in college. When are you going to wise up, girl? When are you going to go back to the basics of fucking those you know and keeping things local, huh?" Pete grabbed her by the hair of her head. "You know what I like, Marcy. You know I can make you feel good, too, baby."

Marcy swallowed. At any moment, one of those cowboys she'd employed would bounce into the room and pounce on Pete. While he deserved it, and he sure as hell did – she'd never been able to turn down Pete's tongue. Good grief, the man could've made a fortune teaching classes.

"This probably isn't a good idea," she said, allowing him to pull her across his lap again.

"You're the one who lost your shirt first," he said, tweaking her nipple.

Marcy studied Pete, really looked at him. "You'd better be sure about this, Pete, because what's done can't be undone. I don't like your wife. I didn't buy your story when you walked in here and quite honestly, I could fuck you just so you'd have it on your conscience and I could hold something over your head. Is that what you want?"

"Yeah, whatever Marcy, I don't care," he said, stretching his neck and trying to kiss her. "Just fuck me like you used to baby. That's all I want. Just make me feel alive again."

"How about I just kill you and we'll call it a day?" Cort asked, rushing them.

"Cort!" Kemper yelled, trailing him. The other two followed close behind.

Cort grabbed Marcy by the waist and pulled her away from Pete, who looked scared to death.

"What the fuck is this?" Pete asked, leaving the sofa in a hurry.

Cort was ready to strike. "This is me telling you not to come back here!"

"Cort!" Marcy yelled. "Pete is my friend, for crying out loud!"

Eyes widened around the room. All five men stared at Marcy's breasts. Only then was Marcy aware of the fact that her hired hands hadn't seen her topless.

"With friends like you, he obviously doesn't need a wife!" Cort spat.

"That's enough, Cort," Kemper warned. "I overheard everything. She was working him for information."

Marcy shook her head, taking a double take at the transmitter Kemper clutched in his hand. "You bugged this room?"

"You were working me?" Pete asked.

Kemper turned his back to Cort and gritted his teeth. Marcy read through the stern expression, wrapping her arms around her chest in the process.

"Well?" Cort demanded, moving Kemper out of his way. "Were you or not?"

Tensions ran high. And poor Pete, while she hated to knock him down again—she'd done it numerous times throughout their lives—she sort of figured she was saving him in a way, too. "I wanted to see what he knew about those men who came here," she confirmed, really unsure if she was or wasn't. But that was the way things rolled with her. She was a promiscuous woman. She used sex to get what she wanted—a hard cock in between *her* legs. Men used her, sure, but she used them, too.

"You were using me?"

"Absolutely," she replied.

"I feel violated," Pete said, stunned and quite sincere.

"Now you know how Melissa will feel when I tell her what happened today."

Of course she wouldn't.

Cort grabbed her wrist and pulled her halfway across the room.

"Let me go!"

"No way in hell. If you're going to screw a man for information, you can start with me. But first? I'm gonna talk to your neighbor friend while you sit here and play quiet mouse. Understand?"

Marcy's mouth dropped. "You did not just talk to me like a child."

"Act like one and find out how quickly I'll bring out the toys to keep you entertained," he growled. "Trust me, baby. I know how to keep a woman busy."

Marcy tilted her head. "Pete, if you know something, tell them. Please. I'd pay for information about right now."

Cort looked her up and down. "Isn't that what got you in this topless predicament in the first place?"

She grunted.

"That's what I thought," Cort said, turning his focus to Pete. "What do you know about the guys from New York?"

"They're showing pictures of your buddy," Pete said, nodding at Landon. "They've taken several into town. These guys—thugs is what they are—have talked to shopkeepers, asking the locals to put out the word that they're offering a reward."

"Is that what you're after?" Kemper asked.

Pete's eyes met Marcy's. "No, that's not why I'm here."

Cort used his middle and forefinger to redirect Pete's eyes, apparently wanting his undivided attention. "Why are you here?"

"I told ya. I wanted to let Marcy know she's got a mess of trouble on her hands, especially if she's involved with the likes of you."

"Anything else?" Kemper asked.

"No," Pete replied, frowning. "That pretty much sums it up."

"Good," Cort said. "Now, go ahead and show yourself out. Since I'm staying on here for a while, I gotta get Marcy upstairs and see if she's gonna be able to handle this mess of trouble she's gotten herself into."

## Chapter Nine

"Things aren't working out like I'd hoped." Marcy glared across the room, wiggling her arms and trying to break free of the cuffs confining her to the bed.

"Oh yeah?" Cort asked, calmly. "I think everything is going much smoother now."

"You planned to handcuff me?"

"From the moment I met you, it's all I've thought about."

"I knew it!" she exclaimed, realizing she sounded more excited than satisfied that she had him accurately pegged.

Cort studied her. "You made me pretty damn angry, Marcy."

"Really?" she asked, crossing her ankles and deciding the new position worked for her. Maybe with her legs pressed together she wouldn't be so conscious of her damp pussy.

"I'm crazy about you and seeing you with Pete, a man you don't give a shit about, pissed me off."

Cort's revelation startled her. How did she respond to that? Men didn't fall in love with Marcy. They never said they were *crazy* about her. They fucked her and left her. That's what all men did to women they'd passed around and Marcy was well shared.

Cort knelt to the bed. He tilted her chin toward him and kissed her.

"Let me go, Cort," she whispered, twisting her arms and discovering the cuffs around her wrists were snug and secure.

“Not yet,” he said, smiling into their kiss. “I plan to love you well before you leave this bed.” He plucked her nipple, rolling the point against his fingertips.

Love you well? Had she ever heard the word love, in any tense or under any circumstance? She couldn’t remember. If she had, it had been rare.

She closed her eyes and savored Cort’s touch. Instead of fighting the cuffs, she enjoyed the confinement and wondered then if the sensations she felt were real or imagined. What was he doing to her? He promised to love her well? Ah hell, he was like any other man who’d ever visited this bed. He was working her—only Cort Campbell was better than the rest because for the first time in a very long time, she felt something when a man—Cort— touched her. And something sure beat the hell out of nothing.

\* \* \* \*

Cort watched the way Marcy behaved when he told her he would love her well. She’d closed her eyes and melted right before his, her body relaxing almost instantly.

He rubbed his palms over her nipples, massaging her breasts and taking his own sweet time pampering her. His hands skated down her torso and he tucked them under her, bringing her hips forward before kissing her stomach, licking right under her belt as he unhooked the knotted leather and released her contrary zipper and stubborn buttons.

Glancing up, he was amazed to find her so committed to pleasure. Her eyes remained closed and she seemed perfectly content.

He yanked her pants down and stared at her bare pussy. Again, he looked up, hoping to catch her watching him, longing to see her staring back at him. She never opened her eyes. She arched for him, spreading her legs when he completely removed her jeans and thong. But she didn’t watch.

Eyeing the glistening moisture sprinkled around her pussy lips, his mouth watered. He inched away from the bed and undressed, unable to strip as fast as he would’ve



liked. She opened her eyes then, studying him quietly, almost patiently and for Marcy, that must've been an effort.

"God, you're beautiful," he said, sounding like a real sap.

"You ain't too bad yourself," she replied.

Her breasts were full, her nipples drawn tight, and her flushed skin made her look like she'd taken a long run on a cold winter's day, perfectly blushed in all the right spots. Gripping his cock, he worked the taunt skin around the crest, kneading his length while observing how heated her gaze became.

"I'm going to love you," he told her again, easing to the bed, "but I'll do it on my terms, Marcy. Not yours."

She gasped. Her back bowed. Her neck arched. "You're on my time, cowboy. Don't forget whose payroll you're on."

"Yes, about that," he muttered, deliberately trailing off as he slapped her smooth mound.

She yelped. "I'm not inclined to being tied up."

"So I see," he said, raking his fingers over her nipple and loving the way the small gem drew tighter.

"I'm serious, Cort. Loosen these cuffs and I'll show you why you enjoy being a man."

"Don't worry about me, sugar," he growled, slipping between her legs and positioning the head of his cock at her entrance.

Her eyes were wider than before. Poor little vixen probably thought he'd fuck her silly and give her what she'd been dying to have without a better preamble. God bless her soul. She had no idea what he planned to do and do well. He was going to drive her out of her ever-lovin' mind.

"I'm surprised," Marcy purred. "I expected more from you, Cort."

He winked. "Don't worry about me, Marcy. You'd better be concerned with yourself."

Marcy licked her lips and he towered over her, pressing his tongue against hers and taking the kiss he desperately wanted to feed. His cock lingered at her entrance, the head bumping against her clit until she was spreading her legs wider, writhing under him in an effort to entice him.

The little vixen would have him wrapped tight with those strong, lean legs if he didn't watch himself. Smiling to himself, he continued to kiss her, using his knees to spread and confine her.

"No fair," she whispered, breaking their kiss.

"After what you've put me through? Oh yeah, darlin', this is just. Besides, if you're gonna dabble in a man's game, you'd better learn how to strip off those big girl panties and play."

\* \* \* \*

His soft lips were her undoing, but God help her, she wanted a hold of what he had casually lingering at her pussy. She bumped against him, strained to encourage him. If he penetrated her just once, allowed himself only one stroke, she'd close around him and never let go.

She wiggled her arms, trying desperately to break free now. "Let me go, Cort. Let me hold you."

"Later, babe," he whispered, trailing down her neck, giving too much attention to her right nipple until she went stir crazy. His mouth committed maddening acts. He licked at the peak, laving the point with such a rapid flickering of tongue that she saw stars.

"I'm wet, Cort," she complained. "Help a gal out."

He chuckled, that dry laugh as committed to taunting her as his cock was dedicated to teasing. She rolled her hips forward, bent her knees, and used the balls of her feet to push away from the mattress, hoping he'd give in and stop resisting her.

Instead, he moved lower. "Behave, Marcy."

"Never," she said, trying again.

This time, he slipped between her thighs, spreading her wide, exposing her to anyone who would've walked into the room. Then he introduced her to the carnal man, the man she always knew existed right below the surface.

Slapping her pussy once again, he knelt between her legs and with a devilish grin, he ran his fingers through her folds. She held her breath when his fingers trailed from front to back.

"What are you doing to me?" she gasped, stretching her neck, dying to watch everything. Good heavens, she'd have paid a high price for mirrors on the ceiling.

He twirled his fingers right inside her opening, using her own juices to slide them gently front to back. He stilled at the small opening between her cheeks, pressing one finger inside her anus until she couldn't breathe, couldn't react at all.

"I'm going to take you here, Marcy. Right here, honey."

She squirmed under his touch and he pressed higher, wedging another finger deep inside her passage. Then, he stretched out between her legs, continuing his initial assault and claiming another part of her in a way she never dreamed.

## Chapter Ten

Cort was committed to driving Marcy crazy. He lodged his tongue inside her pussy and let her body entertain him.

She rose and fell as he sipped on her pussy lips, awarding her every few seconds with an indulgent swipe. He kept his fingers wedged inside her ass, stretching and preparing her.

“Cort.” A breathless whisper fell from her lips and he rolled her clit with his free fingers, manipulating the little bead until it was nothing more than a hard, solid bud. “That’s it, Marcy. Enjoy me.” Then, he thrust his tongue inside her and ate her, fucking her with a merciless compassion until she was crying out his name, pleading with him, begging.

Oh yes, Marcy Mahoney was groveling.

Her orgasm spilled onto his lips and he continued to please her, lapping at his hellcat until he couldn’t breathe without the scent of her driving him forward. Higher he pressed his fingers inside her ass, twirling them around her entrance and forging into her chamber.

Good grief, he was hard. He’d hoped for control. He’d psyched himself up for every ounce he’d imagined he could muster. But the truth wasn’t so pretty.

Tasting her made him a weak man, a man who realized before he ever fucked her that he was sunk, he was a lost cause, a dying breed. He was a man who would soon fall hopelessly in love.

He eased his fingers away from her and licked her pussy one final time, taking a slow stroke, a last sip of her pleasure. "Good Lord, you taste like heaven," he muttered, gripping his cock. He rubbed her mound, circling her clit with his thumb.

"Fuck me, Cort. Please, fuck me."

He knelt next to her, freeing her wrists and tossing aside the cuffs. "Soon, Marcy."

After he released her, the little siren looped her arms around his neck and kissed him straight into heaven. Her hands were everywhere—gripping his shoulders, propelling across his chest, and reaching for his cock.

When he'd resisted her all she'd allow, she wrapped her slender fingers around his length and gave him one hell of a hand job.

"Careful, baby. I'll fill your palm instead of that sleek pussy."

She grinned. "Then give me what I want."

Bracketing his arms around her waist, he yanked her against him. They fell to the bed, her body landing across his. "Not so fast," he said, noting the quick smile shaping her lips. "You've been a bad girl, Marcy. And bad girls are spanked when they don't behave."

"Punish me, later," she said, kissing him with quick pecks.

"I'd rather punish you now." He sat with his back against the wooden headboard and pulled her across his lap.

Smoothing his palm across her round bottom, he flipped his wrist and the corporal punishment began, only it was far more erotic spanking Marcy than any other woman he'd taken to bed in the past.

His hand came down on her cheeks and she grabbed hold of his cock, working his length in and out of her closed fist. Again, he swatted her bottom. She took a tighter hold, pumping him, driving him crazy.

"You were trying to entice Pete, weren't you?"

"Yes," she purred, quite proud of the fact evidently.

Two swats came down on her ass. She squeezed him still tighter until his balls throbbed from the sensation zipping down his shaft.

"Watch it, Marcy," he said, digging his fingers into her hips.

She flipped onto her back and stared up at him. "I'm not going to be your toy, Cort."

He winked. "Oh honey, you already are."

\* \* \* \*

"Good Lord, what have you two been doing in here?" Mason asked, strolling in the bedroom like he had a reason to be there. Then again, he did. He'd listened to about all the foreplay a man could stand—along with Landon and Kemper—and they'd been good sports and waited in the hall just as they'd previously planned.

"Finally," Marcy breathed. "Maybe one of you will do the job Cort refuses to finish."

Cort smirked. "What took you so long?"

Marcy cut her gaze toward Cort and then looked back at them.

"We were kind of busy," Kemper said, kicking off his boots.

"Did you get rid of Peter Rabbit?"

Marcy choked out a laugh. "Really?"

"I call 'em as I see 'em, sugar," Cort said, slapping her thigh. "You'd recognize it too if he'd gotten between these shapely legs like he first thought he was going to. He would've hopped on top and shot off like a bunny. I know his type."

Marcy rose to her knees and placed her hands on her hips. "Well at least he had the initiative to get in between my legs and do a man's job. That's more than I can say for the rest of you."

Cort laughed. Mason snickered too. Hell, she didn't know Cort. In fact, Mason was surprised Cort had kept his word and restrained from fucking her.

By that time, Mason was undressed and Kemper was stripping off his shirt. Landon sat down on the window seat opposite the bed and Marcy's eyes widened. "You're not joining us?"

"Don't be greedy, vixen," Cort said, dragging his fingers up and down her spine. "You have enough with three."

"I want Landon, too."

"I'm here," he bit out, studying her with pure heat in his eyes. "I'm just into watching. That's all."

"That's all?" Marcy asked. Twirling her fingers around her opening, she added, "Then watch this, Landon. And don't miss a thing, now. You hear?"

Then, she started fucking herself, her fingers jabbing in and out of that sleek pussy so fast Mason thought he'd die right there if he didn't get to taste the kind of pleasure she was seeking.

He stood at the foot of the bed and grabbed her ankles, pulling her to the edge and dropping to the floor at the same time. Then his mouth covered her opening. His fingers lodged inside her channel, licking around the coated flesh. He used his tongue and greedily moved around her hand.

"Far be it for a woman to do a man's duty, right Mason?" she asked.

Mason fucked her with his tongue until he convinced himself he was going to blow if he didn't get inside her. She tasted like ripe strawberries and he wanted to know if she was as soft and sweet on the inside as she felt on the out.

He slid his hands up her hips, easing his way toward her, crawling up her body like a hungry predator stalking his prey.

"Let me guess," Marcy drawled, "you're just going to look and taste, too?"

"No, darlin'. You must have me mixed up with Cort." He towered over her, lowering his cock to her pussy and rubbing the head back and forth between her folds.

"Oh God," she whined.

"Easy, baby," Cort whispered watching Marcy when Mason pressed forward.

Cort was on his side now, groping her. Kemper was off to the left on bended knees.

Mason moved between her legs with three hard thrusts and then allowed Cort to pull her away. When he pressed in behind her, Marcy's eyes were bulged, straining from the pressure her body endured.

Mason sank between her folds once more and Kemper's cock disappeared down her throat. Perfectly sealed and apparently content too, her body reacted and seemed much too happy to oblige them.

The men fucked her while Landon quietly observed. And when Marcy's body complied and responded by bucking back and forth, writhing from side to side, Landon excused himself and missed the grand finale.

Mason had a feeling he'd return soon.



## Chapter Eleven

*Can anyone join this party, Marcy, or is it by invitation only?*

Marcy jerked awake and sat up abruptly, removing the arms surrounding her. She'd been dreaming of Landon. Had he been there watching them sleep?

"What's wrong, baby?" Cort asked, pulling her against his chest again.

"I thought I heard someone."

"You've been talking in your sleep," Mason informed her, leaving the bed.

"Where's Kemper?" she asked.

"Someone has to get this place ready for the grand opening tomorrow. Kemper drove into town with Landon to pick up the kegs," Mason said, bending over to pick up his clothes.

Marcy gulped. *Damn. Mason had one fine ass.*

Cort stroked her hair. "What do you say me and you hit the tub?"

She smiled. "I'd like that."

"What were you dreaming about?" Mason asked, hiding his cock under the clothes in his arms. Damn shame. Mason had a pretty penis, long and meaty and a real pleasure when he was stroking for a woman's cause.

Marcy rubbed her eye with the heel of her hand. "I don't remember. I just felt like someone was watching me."

"Must've been some dream," Cort commented. "You moaned and groaned all night."

She reached between his legs. "I guess I didn't stop fucking when the rest of you quit on me."

"You don't have to tell me," Cort agreed, reaching for her hand and sucking her finger down to the center bone. "We enjoyed quite a show about three o'clock this morning."

"Oh stop," Marcy whined. "I didn't fuck myself while I slept."

"You sure did," Cort assured her. "And you just hooped and hollered. Good Lord, I've never heard such carrying on."

Mason winked. "Oh I have."

Cort rubbed his jaw, scratching the stubble. "Come to think of it, I do recall somebody screaming out all sorts of threats and promises."

"I didn't make promises," she said, flipping her hair over her shoulders.

"Yes you did," Mason said, twisting her nipple until she yelped. "And Cort here will make sure you keep your word."

Cort stood. "You'd better believe it. Get up, sunshine. It's training day."

"Training?"

Mason nodded. "Today is the day you learn your place in a man's bed."

"My place?" she asked, appalled.

"Yes, ma'am," Mason said, strutting away and giving her a final view of that finely tuned ass. Without looking back, he added, "Cort, Kemper is picking up a few things we need while he's in town. Think you can keep your hands to yourself until he gets back?"

"I can manage."

"Good, I'm showering down the hall. I'll check back in before I head out to feed the horses. See if there's anything y'all need."

"You do that," Marcy replied, eyeing Cort.

The door slammed.

"I don't know what you boys have in mind but I am not going to be some kind of submissive woman." Cort didn't say anything. "I mean it, Cort. I'm more of a Mistress than a sub."

"Is that right?"

"Yes," she said, leaving the bedroom and entering the master bath. "And the sooner you all get a grip on that the happier we'll all be."

"Yes, ma'am," Cort teased, following her.

She shut the door in his face.

He knocked. "Open the door, Mistress."

She smiled to herself and then called out, "Good, you learn fast!"

"Honey, I aim to please."

\* \* \* \*

"Did you get everything we talked about?" Cort asked as Kemper entered the bedroom an hour later.

"You'd better believe it," Kemper replied, pointing toward the shower. "Tell me you didn't leave her spent again this morning."

"She locked me out," Cort told him, thinking he should've picked the lock and joined her anyway.

"Really?" he asked, grinning. "You don't say."

"I let her get by with it this time. Hiding behind the bathroom door is her final act of defiance. I swear it is."

Kemper shrugged. "I doubt that."

Landon entered the bedroom with Mason. "Where's Marcy?"

"She's still in there," Cort said, pointing toward the bathroom.

"Hmm," Landon commented. "Guess the three of you wore the poor thing out and she's taking refuge in the bathtub."

"Something like that," Cort said, rubbing his wet head with a towel. "By the way, Mason, next time you use all the hot water, I'd appreciate a warning."

"The damn water is always cold. They're still on well water. We need to see if we can't get the city to run a line out here soon."

"It'll cost too much," Marcy said, strolling out of the bathroom fully dressed in white-washed denim jeans, a white blouse and fire engine red high-heeled shoes. "Once Deliberation Plantation is open for business, we'll have too many patrons using the bunkhouse restrooms."

"Are you doing away with our sleeping quarters?" Landon asked.

"Oh now, Landon," Marcy drawled. "Surely you didn't think your move to the main house was only temporary, did you?"

"I actually had plans for that cabin," Landon told her, shooting the others a wide smile.

She giggled. "Cort always knew I planned on moving you here as soon as I made a final decision about who was staying."

"Do you tell Cort everything?" Landon asked, sounding jealous.

Marcy shot Cort a quick glance and then swung her gaze toward Kemper. "No. I tell *him* everything."

Kemper grinned at Cort. Oh, he was loving every minute of this. Cort would remember to give Marcy some extra licks next time he spanked her. She deserved a real ass whipping for that little play on words.

Kemper wrapped his arms around her waist and drew her to his side, planting a kiss on her forehead. "Why, thank you, Marcy. I'll reward you appropriately the next time I'm in your bed."

"What do you say we go there now?" she suggested, looking up at Kemper and batting her eyelashes.

"You are so whipped," Mason told her, studying Cort.

"Oh no," Cort said, grabbing her hand and pulling her to him. "She's punished."

Marcy rolled her eyes. "I think we need to get a few things straight."

"What's that, doll?" Cort asked.

"First, I am not going to submit to you. We discussed this, remember?" She plopped down on the bed and crossed her right leg over the left. By the time her leg started swinging, Cort's head was filled with ideas, delicious thoughts about how he could permanently tame a vixen.

"Secondly, you work for me. Remember?"

"Gotcha," Mason said, taunting her. Though knowing Marcy, she probably didn't realize it.

"And what's number three?" Landon asked, arching a brow.

"I'm no man's sex slave."

They all chuckled. When the laughter subsided, Marcy said, "I'm serious."

"No problem," Kemper said, handing Cort the shopping bag. "Come on boys. Cort will do the honors."

Landon stood firmly where he'd been planted from the beginning. "I'll wait."

Kemper and Mason exchanged glances.

"Something on your mind, Landon?" Cort asked.

"Yeah," Landon replied, staring at Marcy. "I didn't hear her say she wanted to be a submissive. She must be willing to submit if she's going to be a true submissive."

"Oh she's willing," Cort said, winking at Marcy. "Everything we've seen so far is just an act, isn't it Marcy?"

Marcy's bouncing leg came to a halt. She stood and inched her way toward Cort. "Do I strike you as a woman who says one thing and means another?"

"No," Cort answered her.

"See," Landon said. "She's not interested."

"She will be," Cort assured him, nodding toward Mason and Kemper who then disappeared down the hall.

"I won't change my mind," Marcy said, starting out the door too.

"You heard her," Landon said, keeping a level tone. "She's not interested. She doesn't have the willpower. She's not turned on by the dedicated kind of pleasure four

men can bring. You heard her with your own ears, Cort. Truth is, I don't think Marcy is the woman we once thought. She doesn't have the ability to trust a man, and quite frankly, I don't know if she'd ever be cut out for the lifestyle. It takes a special kind of woman for a submissive role. You know I'm right, Cort. Marcy just doesn't have what it takes."

Cort narrowed his gaze on Landon. He was smarter than the average city slicker after all. Marcy's eyes were heavy, filled with determination and something else too—pure lust.

She marched her cute little butt right up to Landon and stood there with her head held high. "This coming from a man who can't fuck a woman but instead prefers to watch?"

Landon's lips twitched. "This coming from me, a cowboy who only throws his leg over a saddle when there's something worth riding beneath him."

Marcy balled her fists tighter. "Why you...you..."

"I'm what, Marcy?" Landon defied her. "Telling the truth?"

Marcy shook her finger at Cort. "You ask him. I can please a man."

Landon shrugged. "I didn't say you couldn't please a man. But I'm not interested unless I find someone who suits me and what I desire, too. And Marcy, right now, you don't suit me." He pressed his fingers to her lips when she started to speak. "Shh, now don't go and say something you'll soon regret. I'm a patient man, love. I have all the time in the world. Believe me. I can stand back and watch for a long, long time. You'll come to me one day and when you do, you'll be ready for the right kind of lovemaking. When you are, you remember—I'll be ready for you."

Landon started for the door. Marcy's shoulders dropped. Before Landon made it down the hallway, Marcy turned. "Wait a second."

Cort resisted a smile. He didn't know whether to leave or stand there and enjoy the show. Landon was notorious in the BDSM community, or so he'd heard. That's actually how he'd gotten so marked up in the first place. He'd messed with the wrong sub, a woman who belonged to the mob and not just anyone in the mob, but the front guy—

Cap Dante, also known as Kenny Killian, Killer for short. And Landon had the sorry luck to love her and leave her.

According to some, he left her ruined for another Dom, too, which is why Cap had his eye on Landon. That and the fact he didn't want Landon testifying against him when he went on trial for the murder of his own wife.

Landon stopped but didn't turn around. "Having second thoughts about submitting, Marcy?"

She twisted her hands back and forth. "I didn't say that."

"I'll see you downstairs then," Landon told her flatly.

"Wait!"

"There's no waiting," Landon said, facing her. "Either you want to do this thing or you don't. Either you're cut out for it or you aren't. There's no in between and there's no right or wrong. It's about what you want and what I want. I won't change my mind. Will you?"

She took a step toward him. Cort felt like the outsider looking in but if Landon could pull this off, he wouldn't object. Truth was, he agreed with Landon on a few points, and one was that he wouldn't make Marcy submit or begin the training as a submissive until she was certain she could handle it. Sure, he thought it would be good for her, given what he knew about her, but he also didn't drag someone into the BDSM community until they knew what they were getting themselves into.

"What do you want?" she asked Landon softly.

His gaze raked over her. "I thought I wanted you. Turns out maybe I was wrong."

"That's not true."

"Prove it," he said firmly.

"Okay," she said in a small voice. "Tell me how."

Landon's lips formed a slow smile. He motioned for Cort. "Go tell Kemper and Mason they're on their own until later this afternoon."

"I said tell me how, not show me."

"I'll only show you if you're willing to submit. I don't play around, Marcy. Maybe these guys do, but I don't. Either you're all in with me or we don't need to waste one another's time."

She waved her hand at Cort. "He doesn't feel that way."

"You never asked him and he never said," Landon told her before Cort had the opportunity to stick his foot in his mouth—and say something dumb like his goals changed the minute he fell in love. That would've been something stupid to confess all right.

"Do you?"

"Do I what, Marcy?" Cort asked, trying to gauge what he should say and thinking he'd be better off to leave this initial training period to Landon. He seemed well prepared to handle Marcy.

"Do you need a woman who's in the lifestyle?"

Landon arched a brow. So much for his help.

Rather than give her a direct answer, which he'd supply at some point, he shot a question her way, "How is it that you're opening up a BDSM club and yet you don't know anything about the lifestyle?"

"I know plenty."

"Do you?" Cort asked.

"Yes," she replied. "Jules and Brogan Evans kept my hands full, believe me, and this place was once crawling with Doms."

"Uh-huh, so I've heard," Cort said. "Doesn't explain why a woman who is so in tune with her own sexuality would open up a lifestyle club but refuse to enter the setting herself."

"I'm a proprietor. I'm not a patron."

"Maybe not," Landon interjected. "But I would think you'd want to know something about the service you're providing."

"I'm not running a whorehouse," she stated.



"That's debatable," Landon said. "Some around town seem to think you're running a stud farm. Ask the locals. When Kemper and I went into town, everyone we encountered knew who we were. Everybody we met understood we worked for you. Some of the women coming out tomorrow night are coming here for us."

Marcy frowned.

"Bothers you, does it?" Cort asked, chuckling. "What'd you expect, Marcy?"

"I expected you to show some respect for your employer!"

Landon's gaze met Cort's and Cort said, "Well Marcy, the rules have changed. See you wanted to know whether or not I enjoy the lifestyle, right?"

She nodded.

"Truth is, I am the lifestyle. It's who I am. Problem with that is I fell in love with a woman I knew too little about and by damn now I'm caught in between what I know – what's familiar to me – and who I love."

## Chapter Twelve

"He walked out right after he said he loved me," Marcy complained to Landon. Actually, she *whined*. But a woman was entitled, right?

"He didn't act like a man who was professing his love and waiting on an answer from you. He just told you how he felt. That's one thing you can look forward to with men like us, Marcy."

"What, honesty?" she asked, balking at the thought.

"Yes."

"You've been truthful with me?"

"I've tried to be."

"Really?" she grumbled, her mind churning with all sorts of other questions and outright accusations. "Then tell you what, I'll make a deal with you. I'll submit to your training, let you have your damned way but first, you should prove you're worthy of my trust."

His lips formed a tight line. Then, he said, "See, you know more about the lifestyle than you wanted to admit. A Dom/sub relationship is built on trust."

"Then trust me enough to tell me why those goons from New York want something to do with you."

Landon glared at her.

"That's what I thought," she said, marching by him.

Landon caught her around the waist before she escaped. "You want to know the truth?"

"Of course I do, but you won't tell me!"

"I can do better than tell you but the fact is you can't handle seeing it with your own eyes!" He released her and then ripped open the front of his shirt. "Would you like for me to open up and tell you more now?" he asked, a guttural tone slipping from his lips. He turned around to show her his scarred back, which was much worse than the twisted pattern of jagged edges across his middle. "Here's a good stout dose of honesty, Marcy. Get your eyes full, honey. This is what a man like Cap Dante can and will do to a man—or a woman—if they their back is turned for longer than a second!"

Marcy's heart was yanked away from her body. "Oh my God," she gasped, standing there like a battered dog, an animal surprised by the closing of a snapped trap. "What happened to you?"

She went to him then and stared at the abuse his body had endured. Without thinking, she dragged her fingers over the trail of agony he'd suffered. She felt the indentions, the marks left behind in spite of the stitches he must've worn, the surgeries he must've endured, the lack of repairs on skin too damaged to heal. Her mouth dried. Her eyes watered. "Tell me, Landon."

Landon's shirt slipped from his fingertips. His body was rigid, hard and buff, every bit as sexy as she'd imagined, minus the scars but somehow those jagged patterns only made him look more masculine, rugged, and tough. Yet she couldn't imagine the pain he'd suffered when he was forced to wear the numerous reminders of what caused those marks.

Landon sat on the bed. His eyes were cold, empty, and very aware of her. He watched her every move as she inched toward him. "Stop."

A few feet separated them. "Turn around."

She listened to the sound of his voice, memorizing the heartache in his tone and the ache in his pitch. She didn't know why she complied except for the fact she wanted to show him some measure of respect.

"Undress for me," he said quietly.

She swallowed hard. The rasp of his voice held a brash note but it was sensual, sexually explicit.

"Do it now, sub. I won't ask again and you may not have another opportunity if you deny me."

Slowly, she faced him.

"This is what you want, Marcy. It's what you need."

"How do you know?" she whispered.

"I just do," he said, crooking his finger back and forth.

She walked over to him and he unbuttoned her shirt, taking his time working one button through the narrow slit and then another, deliberately rubbing the back of his knuckles over her breasts as his hands dipped lower. When he finished, he said, "Now back away from me and finish. Slide your arms out of your blouse, lose your bra, your jeans, and that skimpy thong you're bound to be wearing. I want you naked and I don't want to wait."

Her nipples pierced through the lace bra she wore under the now open shirt. Her body felt sensitized and in that moment, listening to him breathe became like a soft whisper from her conscience. Every breath he took she inhaled, desperate to become a part of him, imprisoned by his presence and captivated by his throaty commands.

In that moment, she felt like she'd do anything he asked of her and that profoundly confused her. She'd been used by men all her life. The Evans brothers once used her. Sure, she'd done the same to them but this was different. This man looked at her like he cared for her and she wanted to please him.

She'd known something was different about Landon. She'd assumed it was because their backgrounds were so opposite. He was from New York, or so he said. She was from Tennessee. He traveled. She didn't. He'd never visited the country and she had no desire to go to the city. Recognizing their differences, she couldn't have expected this.

Reaching around her back, she unhooked her bra. His liquid coal eyes were hooded and they looked darker than before, like they'd been painted with another splash of rich

black paint. The circles under them made him resemble a man who'd missed out on the luxury of sleep.

Splaying his legs, he dropped his hands between his thighs and raised his eyes to meet hers. She couldn't tear her gaze away from his. Those eyes weren't the windows to his soul. They were a gateway to this man's heart.

"Jeans, Marcy," he said, rolling his shoulders back.

The flash of mutilated skin made her gasp. "Did it hurt?"

Of course he'd been in unimaginable pain! Hell, he was slashed from his lower belly to his pecs. His back was much worse and she'd asked the man if it hurt?

"I'm sorry."

"You're stalling," he said, rubbing his tongue over his upper lip.

Yes, well, maybe she was. But she also wanted to know why someone abused him so. "You never told me what those guys want."

"I will," he assured her. "Jeans, Marcy."

With trembling fingers she tried to unhook the stubborn metal button at the top. She tried again and then started to jerk the material and loosen the button. Why was she so damned nervous?

"I'll do it," he said. "Come over here."

She inched closer. He gripped her hips with both hands and looked at her stomach. Closing his eyes, he squeezed them shut for a moment and then glanced up. "Do you want children, Marcy?"

The question was like a shot through the heart. It was powerful enough to have been delivered by a slingshot and rock.

"I've never thought about it," she responded quietly. "Given my age now, it's probably not something I should even consider."

He half-nodded and then unhooked her pants, sliding his hand around the denim before pushing them down her hips and thighs. Using his shoulder for leverage, she stepped away from the material.

Before she lost her thong, he drew her to him. He fingered the thin trim and then popped the side threads, ripping the material out of the way rather than allowing her the opportunity to lose her underwear all on her own.

"That's going to cost you," she said. "I paid fifty bucks for that thong."

He snarled. "Kneel."

"Huh?"

Landon took a deep breath. "I asked you to kneel."

Her nipples peaked and he grinned. Reaching for her breasts, he pinched one of the highly sensitive buds. "You'll be a joy, Marcy. Yes indeed, you'll be a real treat."

## Chapter Thirteen

Landon should have stayed away from her. He never should've agreed to come here. From the first time he saw Marcy's photograph, he'd known she was his future. Through her, he might be able to finally abandon the demons of his past.

He thought of Melinda then, the first time he'd really thought of her since he'd been dodging Cap and his men. He'd met Melinda in a New York underground club. She was young, eager and so damn interested in the lifestyle she was practically foaming at the mouth by the time he took her behind closed doors.

She'd been twenty-one then. He'd never thought to ask if she was married. She didn't wear a damn ring. He certainly didn't think she was tied to the mob. Who would've thought the mob had their hooks in something so pure, so innocent?

Landon jerked. Innocent—he'd taken Melinda's inexperience and considered her a gift. That was one thing he'd never disagreed with Cap about. Landon had taken Melinda into the throes of the lifestyle and then put her on display for everyone to enjoy.

That's what she'd wanted. That's what he'd done.

In truth, what she'd craved was spite. She'd longed to hurt Cap and she'd needed to do it publicly enough for him to find out.

Staring down at Marcy, Landon wondered how much he should share with her. Trust, he reminded himself, worked both ways. Could he trust her enough? There was only one way to find out. He had to face his fears.

Marcy was on the floor. Her knees were spread and her hands rested atop them with her palms upward. He forced himself to ignore the pristine shine polishing her pussy lips.

"When I ask you to present yourself, this is how I want you to come to me."

"Okay," she said, flippantly.

"You'll address me and the others as sir from here forward. Are we clear?"

"Yes, sir," she said, looking him square in the eye.

"Keep your eyes lowered unless I ask you to look at me. It's a show of submission."

She flinched. Ah, the little angel would have a problem with that one. He'd have to use the word 'sub' and 'submissive' as much as possible.

"Look at me now, sub."

"Yes, sir."

He smiled. He was so lost in the training, reveling in a first session that he barely acknowledged Cort when he entered the bedroom. Cort sat on the window seat where Landon had sat the night before.

*Good. No interference.*

Marcy didn't take her eyes off him.

"You wanted to know why the men from New York came here. I'll tell you everything. You'll wait until I'm finished before you ask any questions and I'll allow you three. Do you understand?"

She looked then at Cort, who stared at her blankly.

"Marcy?"

"Yes, sir."

Landon jerked. His cock twitched against the snug denim and he glanced at Cort. He could only imagine what Cort was thinking now. He'd bet a lot of dough the guy was about three days shy of proposing marriage. Marcy was already embedded in Cort's heart. Landon believed in love at first sight. He'd experienced it once in his life and Cort Campbell loved Marcy. There was no doubt in his mind. The only reason he



hadn't confessed that love on day one was this—he wanted a submissive lover, a trained wife.

"I was in love with a girl, a young woman I thought was single. I met her in New York at a lifestyle club, an afterhours spot a lot of those in the community frequented.

"I'd just moved down from Canada, which is where I was first introduced to Domination and submission. I wasn't really looking for a submissive partner that first night; I just stopped in to have a few drinks and see the club. I met a waitress there who introduced me to her best friend, Melinda Killian.

"I was with her maybe an hour and things progressed quickly. She asked me to join her in a private suite she owned. I was happy to oblige. Later, I discovered the room belonged to her husband. Unbeknownst to her, his private chambers had been wired for sound and the video captured some of the clearest images I've ever seen in living color.

"Anyway, we messed around that night and she told me she'd been coming to the club for a while, but never had the nerve to ask someone to accompany her to the suite. She begged me to train her as a submissive. Fact was, she wasn't interested in being my submissive. She wanted to be my slave.

"Melinda was so embedded in the lifestyle by the time I was finished with her, there's nothing I couldn't have asked of her that she wouldn't have done. And in the end, she lost her life because of her relationship with me.

"She was married to Kenny Killian. He goes by the name Cap Dante because he grew up the bastard son of an Italian woman who married a blue collar Irishman from Detroit. After he discovered his birth family was embedded in the mob world, he turned into one of the vilest creatures this world has ever known.

"Anyway, Kenny didn't like the fact his wife was messing around with a man she called her Master so he gathered her up and the two of them met me one night at the club. I was shocked to find out she was married but that wasn't the only surprise her husband had in store for us.

"That night, he killed her. I watched." Landon paused, caught his breath and ran his finger down the jagged reminder of why he was forced to watch the horrific demise of someone he loved. "I didn't have much of a choice."

"I wasn't supposed to live. I wasn't supposed to leave that room, but that night, there were several men in the club—men you know well—and one of them stumbled upon a room they weren't supposed to enter." He glanced at Cort, realizing, as he often did, that Cort was the only reason he was alive.

He cleared his throat and took a minute. Tears threatened to spill from his eyes. "I'd met Cort before and how he recognized me after the beating I took, I don't know. At the time I remember hating him, thinking he should've let me die, but now I owe him my life. Marcy, Cort and I trained together. We're undercover agents for a private security company. Our boss funds highly sensitive operations using guerilla warfare tactics. They're stationed here in the south with employees all over the world. My home base is always near a major city—usually New York or Boston."

"I see," Marcy whispered. There was little else she could say after Landon's confession.

"Remember, sub, I gave you three questions. What are they?"

"This guy from New York, he wants to kill you because you slept with his wife but he meant to kill you all along?"

"Yes, and I'm set to testify against him in her murder trial."

"When?" Marcy asked, probably unaware that she just wasted a question.

"I'm going back to New York in a few weeks, assuming we all survive."

"Am I in danger?"

"That's three," he told her smugly. "As long as you listen to us, stick close to one of us at all times, we should be able to keep you safe. I have to be honest with you: we've been on the run for a reason. In order to put Cap away for a very long time, I have to testify at his trial. We never dreamed Cap would follow us here but now that he's found us, it will get ugly. I'm sorry you're involved but now that you are, we'll do everything we can to keep you safe."

Marcy stared at his middle. "He'd do that to me if he ever got me alone, wouldn't he?"

Cort stood and Landon shook his head. "No, Marcy. What he did to me he did to the man who became his wife's only reason for existing. He knew that regardless of what he felt for her, she'd never love him and never respond to him the way she reacted to me. And that was something he couldn't accept."

"That's four," she told him quite defiantly.

"Cort," Landon said, motioning for him. "Get the paddle. She needs to learn what happens when she has a sassy mouth."

"Paddle?" she squawked.

"On your feet," Landon said, yanking her forward. When she stood, he said, "Grab your ankles, sub."

"No!"

"Marcy," he said sternly. "You'll take your punishment and then reap your rewards when they're earned."

She stood back, frowning. Then, much to his surprise, she complied, but mumbled something when she bent over.

"What's that? I don't think I heard you."

"Yes, sir," she said quickly, grabbing her ankles.

When Cort returned with the wooden paddle he stood behind her eyeing her gorgeous globes, the same ass Landon had been gawking at since she took the position. "Dear God, that's some tail."

Landon snickered and dragged the tip of the handle across her ass. Raring back to strike, he caught himself before he came all the way through and quickly swatted her butt.

"Ouch!" she screamed, practically falling forward.

"Don't be dramatic, sub. I can do better than that but I want you to enjoy it...some."

\* \* \* \*

He wanted her to like her spankings? Dear God, she wanted another and then another! Every time he struck her with that damn wooden slab, her pussy burned and the heat from her core seeped to her lips, coating her slick folds with the proof of her arousal.

She yelped another few times and then collapsed on the bed as Cort wrapped his arms around her. Unscrewing the lid on a pleasure enhancement product, Cort massaged her throbbing skin. The scent of honey-vanilla filled the air as he gave her a deep tissue massage. The way he caressed her was so sensual, Marcy decided it was imperative to find as much trouble as possible so she could enjoy the pampering that followed her spankings.

When Cort finished spoiling her, he leaned over and kissed her. "Hurry up and get dressed. We have a lot to do."

"Like what?" She searched the room for Landon and felt quite disappointed he wasn't there, too.

"I thought Landon told you how you're supposed to address us."

"You really expect me to call you 'sir' all the time?"

Cort rose from the bed. "Yeah, Marcy. I do."

## Chapter Fourteen

Marcy was a new woman. She had an extra spring in her step and a new attitude. She was somebody's sub and while she expected that to take its toll, truth be told, she found a strong sense of empowerment in the notion.

She sped through the barn, dumping grain in the eighteen feeders and even took the time to pet her old dappled-gray mare. The animal always needed more attention than she had to offer. "Cupcake, we have a slight problem here."

Only she didn't get to finish.

"I'll say," Melissa said, causing Marcy to almost swallow her tongue.

Marcy wheeled around to face her neighbor. "Well, I can't say I'm surprised. Did Pete send you over?"

"No. I'm here on my own accord," the little spitfire announced, trying to make her five-foot-two form seem a few inches taller.

"What do you want, Melissa?"

"I want to know if you fucked Pete when he stopped by yesterday."

Marcy arched a brow. "Oh, so you knew your husband came over to play, did you?" Marcy would've loved to have deviled her some but about the time she was really ready to rev things up, she spotted Mason at the end of the barn, quietly observing her with those sea blue eyes that made her melt.

"Woman to woman, Marcy. Let the past go and tell me the truth. If you were married, wouldn't you want to know if your husband was screwing around on you?"

"Woman to woman?" Marcy asked. "No, Melissa, I wouldn't. But I'm not you and Lord knows, I'd never think like you do. Hell, if I did, I wouldn't have wanted Pete."

"Did you fuck him or not?" Melissa bellowed.

Mason tossed a metal bucket to the wayside and was marching their way by the time Marcy decided to give the woman a break. "No, Melissa. I didn't. But it wasn't for the lack of trying."

"You seduced Pete?" she yelped, acting like the very idea was just too much to process.

"Ah hell, Melissa," Marcy said, resting her hand on her hip. "You know what they always said about me back in school. I'm not a woman who turns down an able man."

Melissa stared at Mason and then gawked something awful when Mason leaned over and kissed Marcy on the lips. "Mason, this here is Melissa. She's Pete's wife."

He brought Melissa's hand to his lips when she extended her arm. "Nice to meet you."

"Oh my," she said, holding one hand to her chest.

"Melissa," Marcy began, "Go on home now and love Pete real well. Like I said, it wasn't for the lack of trying. I am who I am. Pete loves you and he told me so. You're a lucky woman. Be glad you married the man of your dreams."

Marcy sure was glad Pete wasn't in hers.

Melissa looked a bit confused when she started to walk away. When she stopped abruptly, Marcy braced for fighting words.

"You always were one to whore around with the taken ones." Melissa pointed at Mason. "Look at what you've got, why don't cha? You end up with the cream of the crop and you're still looking to sow wild oats. Marcy, I'll never understand you, woman. One of these days, you're gonna wish you had what Pete and I have."

And with that she was gone.

Marcy sighed. "No, Melissa, that's one thing I hope I never have. I don't want a man like Pete."

Mason studied her. "How come you didn't tell her the truth?"

"What was the truth?"

"You tell me," he said, stepping into her.

"The truth is something she doesn't need to know."

"Which is?" Mason pressed for answers.

"That her husband will go to his grave loving her and craving me."

"Cocky little thing, aren't you?"

"I'm being honest. We were young lovers, Mason. And sometimes it's hard to forget the wild and careless ways young lovers play. Pete doesn't want me. Pete wanted what we once had and I can't give him that. No one can. Why tell Melissa that I almost took him back to relive the past when nothing happened and the past doesn't exist anymore? Why ruin their marriage? That's not who I am now."

"Were you at one time?"

"Sure," she replied, shrugging. "And a lot of good it did me. The women feared me and the men wanted me but look where it got me? I'm all alone."

"You're not alone, sweetheart," Mason assured her, his lips smothering hers. When their kiss broke, he said, "But you are in trouble. I'm afraid I need to punish you."

"What?"

"You didn't call me sir and, well, the fellows said during your training there are no exceptions. You have to learn to show us some respect."

"Are you kidding me?"

"No, subbie. I'm not." He picked her up and carried her to the office. Once there, he stuck her in a corner and let her sniff the cobwebs for a while.

"How long do I have to stand here?"

"Until you tell me everything that happened between you and Pete."

"When, years ago?"

"Yes."

"What's it matter?"

"I need to decide whether or not he's allowed at the grand opening of Deliberation Plantation."

Marcy turned around. "Of course he'll come. Melissa and Pete were always here back in the day."

Mason used his forefinger and middle finger in a circular rotation. "Corner, Marcy. We can talk like this until you've learned your lesson."

"Yes, sir!"

Mason laughed. "Okay, I'll accept that. Turn around here and tell me about Pete."

"What would you like to know, sir?"

"You can drop the sir until we're done. Just confess everything. Don't leave anything out."

"I fucked him."

"I got that part," Mason said, his cheeks turning redder by the second.

"That was before I knew you and besides, why are you so jealous all of a sudden? I thought you could take me or leave me."

Mason grabbed her and pulled her against him. "You're growing on me."

She felt his heavy erection puncturing the space between her thighs. "Oh yeah?"

"Yeah," he said, smoothing his lips across hers. "Quickly."

"What do you say we find a better place to plant that long stem of yours?"

He snickered. "I'd say okay if the others were here."

"You mean you won't fuck me unless they're around?"

"You have to ask for their permission."

"What?"

"You heard me, Marcy. It's the way things are now. Go find the others and see if they agree. Oh and before you get a wild hair and decide to forget about it or maybe redirect your focus and go jump one of the others, we've all made that agreement today. If you fuck one of us, permission must be granted first and if you don't seek permission after you've been told to find it, you'll be punished."

"Now, run on along and find the guys. After you get their consent, come find me. I'll be waiting, so hurry."



## Chapter Fifteen

Marcy stomped inside. She was insane for going along with this. She should've been concentrating on getting the ranch ready for her grand opening. Instead, she was playing house with four cocky cowboys who wanted nothing more than to deliberately drive her crazy. She rushed through the foyer and climbed the stairs.

She'd show them. She'd show them exactly what it meant to take control in her home.

She marched past the bathroom and caught a glimpse of Kemper shaving. "Where are you off to?"

"I'm busy," she grumbled.

"Marcy?" he called out.

She stopped, turned, and glared at Kemper. "What?"

He made this clucking sound. "I think you mean, 'what can I do for you, sir,' isn't that about right?"

Marcy narrowed her eyes and pursed her lips. "What do you need, sir?" And she was tired of this game.

"Don't you want to ask me something?"

"No, sir. I don't."

"You can, you know. All you have to do is ask."

"Okay, fine. Can I have permission to fuck you and Mason?"

Kemper's lips curved in a smile. "Why sure, hon. Who goes first?"

"At this point, believe me, I don't care," she muttered, thinking this little trick of requesting permission was equivalent to personal torture rather than foreplay. Shit, she should've gone into her room and retrieved her vibrator. An adult toy at least delivered on contact and so far she'd encountered two men who were determined to send her on a wild goose chase.

On the steps she met Landon. "Sir," she said, starting to pass.

"Something on your mind, sub?" Landon grabbed her arm.

Marcy's gaze held at the light shining from his shirt pocket. "You have a text message. Let me guess who it's from."

"Go ahead."

"That's easy. Kemper or Mason."

"And yes, you have my approval."

"To fuck you?"

His lips trembled. "Sure, you can add my name to the list, too."

Marcy leaned over his arm and whispered in his ear, "You're the one I can't wait to get a hold of, Landon."

Taken aback, he grabbed the banister with one hand and whipped his free arm around her waist and drew her to him. "And why's that, sub?"

"Because I think you'll be pure pleasure when properly inspired, sir."

"Do you?"

"Yes, sir," she crooned, grabbing his front bulge and giving him a squeeze.

"I'll spank you right here if you do that again."

"Promise?"

A dry laugh fell from his lips. "Go find Cort, sub. He's waiting for you on the back porch."

Marcy bounced down the steps. Maybe assuming the role of willing submissive wasn't such a bad thing. The men were taking care of getting the ranch ready. All she had to do was seek permission to fuck, screw around a while, and then tuck everyone in

bed and say goodnight. She'd awake the next morning and everything would be ready to go. Easy peasy.

She walked outside, humming. "Cort, I've been looking all over for you. Landon said —

A hand clasped over her mouth and a hard body drug her around the corner out of sight. There, in front of her stood the scariest creature she'd ever seen.

\* \* \* \*

Cort fought to free himself. "Let me go, you sorry asshole!"

"Well, well, well, who have we here? This is the missus, right? Mrs. Cort Campbell?" The man who called himself Cap smelled of strong brandy and cigar smoke.

Cap grabbed her hips and ground his pudgy erection against her center. "Miss Mahoney likes baloney, isn't that what the whole town used to say about you?"

Two goons held her arms while Cap groped her.

"You'd have to ask them," she spat. "I've been a little busy lately."

"Planning that grand opening of yours, huh?"

She bit her lip, refusing to answer.

Cap shoved his hand down the dip of her shirt. He twirled his short fingers around the outline of her bra until she felt his fingernails above her left nipple. "Cort!" she gasped.

Cort struggled, trying his best to break free of the three men confining him. "Leave her alone, Cap."

"Give me Landon and I'll give you Miss Mahoney." He looked over his shoulder. "By the way, where is that lad?"

Marcy tried not to stare at the movement in the small shed behind the barn. Mason was in that shed. That's where he'd been most of the morning and he had a bird's eye

view of what was going on there. If she and Cort could move out of his way, maybe he'd fire a gun and blow these men to kingdom come.

She'd been watching too many movies. Mason probably didn't own a gun. Did he?

She silently cursed herself. Hell, what did she really know about these men? She understood they were trained in some kind of guerilla warfare but had they brought their weapons to her property? Were they prepared to fight or had they only come to Tennessee for the purpose of hiding?

"Miss Mahoney?" Cap snapped his fingers in front of her face. "Landon? Where is he?"

"I don't know a Landon!" she screamed, terrified.

Cap wrapped both hands around her neck.

"Let her go, Cap!" Cort bellowed.

Marcy stretched her neck, trying to be brave. She decided Cap probably wouldn't kill her, but then changed her mind when she thought of Landon's horrifying story. Cap might destroy her, mutilate her beyond recognition. He'd killed one person, a woman he must've loved at some point if she'd been his wife. "I...I...don't...know...him!"

Cap grinned still wider, a diabolical smile shaping his lips. "Ralph," he said, addressing the scary man beside him. "Did you or did you not hear Miss Mahoney say something about Landon when she rounded this corner?"

"Sure did, boss," the mob puppet replied.

"I thought so, too," Cap agreed. "Miss Mahoney, would you like a minute to reconsider your answer?"

"Tell him where he is, Marcy!" Cort demanded, straining to break away from his captors.

Marcy gasped, choking from the tremendous pressure applied to her thin neck. "I... I'll...tell...you."

Cap completely released her. "Take a minute. Be sure when you supply your answer, you tell me exactly where I can find Landon or I will kill you. But first," he

turned toward Cort, drew a pistol from his belt, and aimed. "First, I'll make you watch him die."

Marcy squeezed her eyes shut. This was her worst nightmare. She didn't want to give up Landon. She couldn't. How could she live with herself if one of her men were harmed?

*Her men?*

For years she'd longed for a man—or men—to call her own. Now she seemingly had the opportunity and this peon was there trying to mess up her goals and her dreams.

"Just who the hell do you think you are?" she asked, shoving him a good distance and quite startled to discover she possessed the strength to move him in the first place.

Cap snarled. He balled his fists, baring his teeth like an animal might. She held her head high, awaiting the blow. "Go ahead. Hit me. Kill me if you must but get one thing straight, asshole—I will not give you the information you want. I don't have the first inclination to help save a murderous bastard who was so incapable of servicing his wife that she had to go to another man for comfort, another man for love. And your wife loved Landon, make no mistake about that."

"You have no idea what you're talking about, bitch."

"Really? You think that's so, do you? I've been the other woman. I've been the one men came to when they couldn't find comfort in the arms of the person they vowed to love and I've seen their pain. Hell, I probably even caused them more, at least on some level, but I know one thing. It takes two to break up a home, especially when a woman is married to someone who is only faithful to his career—and in your case it's the mob!"

"Kill her," Cap ordered, backing away all at once like he'd just been fired upon himself. "And leave the man like we left Landon." She wasn't surprised. Men like Cap always handed over their dirty work. They rarely wanted blood on their hands.

Marcy stared at Cort. Was this really the end? If so, she wanted him to be the last thing she saw before her life ended.

Cort strained harder, fighting for the freedom he wouldn't gain. "No!"

And then the world went dark.

## Chapter Sixteen

"Marcy, baby, wake up," Cort pleaded. "Come on, honey. Talk to me, now."

Marcy felt like she was wrapped in a thick thermal coverlet. She couldn't move to the left or the right. The blankets moved with her whichever way she turned.

It only took her a few minutes to realize the comforters were men and the men she was sandwiched between were positioned at her head, feet and on either side of her body.

"Did we all die?" she asked, trying to regain consciousness and focusing on the first face she saw – Mason's.

"No, sweetheart, you're too brave to die. And we all made it out alive."

"We did? That's such a relief."

"Yes, babe," Cort assured her. "You're okay."

"Yes," she agreed, trying to sit and having too many hands there to help position her back against a fluffy mound of pillows tossed about the moment she moved. "What happened?"

"You mean outside of you being a stubborn woman bound and determined to conceal information?" Landon asked.

Marcy didn't care if he liked the fact she'd protected him. She'd saved him, guarded him even. "You're okay."

"I'm fine," Landon snapped. "What I want to know is how far you were willing to push Cap before he pulled the damn trigger himself, hmm?"

"Not now, Landon," Cort warned.

"Stay out of this, Cort," Kemper told him. "He's right. Marcy could've gotten herself killed."

"*Marcy* is in this room and doesn't appreciate being talked around like a small child!" she bellowed, throwing her legs over the side of the bed. "What the hell happened?"

"You were suicidal. That's the only way to describe what went on out there." Landon ran his fingers through his short brown hair. Marcy was surprised he could even manage. As much gel as he had in his hair, they should've gotten stuck.

"I was protecting you!"

"I don't need a woman to look out for me! I had one who did that and look where it got her...and me!"

Cort shook his head. Kemper arched a brow and Mason stared out the window. "They'll be back soon," Mason announced.

"Will one of you tell me what happened?"

"Well, GI Jane," Landon began. "You fainted as soon as Cap told his guy to kill you. Mason saved us all by firing off the world's largest round of fireworks all at one time. Apparently we lucked out because the boys from New York had one gun and three bullets. They wasted them when they returned fire on bottle rockets."

Marcy laughed. "You're serious?"

"This is no laughing matter, Marcy," Mason said.

"You're telling me," she said quietly. "Where, by chance, did you get the fireworks?"

"I'll replace them."

"You'll replace them? Do you realize those were for tomorrow night's grand opening? I spent months trying to get all of that together. Surely you didn't set them all off at one time!"

"He did and you're insane, woman," Kemper said. "You're worried about some fireworks when you almost lost your life!"



"I wasn't scared," she reported, smiling sweetly at Cort. "Cort was there to protect me."

Landon grunted. "Cort was otherwise engaged, in case you failed to notice the big guys holding him down."

She looked at the men one by one. "I knew the four of you had my back."

"Which explains why you decided to nap while the rest of us took care of Cap and his guys, right?" Landon asked.

"Exactly," she said saucily, studying her fingernails and ready to move on to the next subject. "I'm hungry."

The guys exchanged a round of peculiar glances. Finally, Cort said, "Well don't just stand there. She's been traumatized. Someone get downstairs and fix her something to eat."

Landon grabbed her by the hand and pulled her from the mattress. "That sounds like a great idea. In the meantime, I'm starving and I'm not hungry for meat and potatoes. I need some time alone with Marcy and by the time I'm done with our little woman, she'll know her place."

Marcy's feet pitter-pattered against the hardwood floor as Landon pulled her alongside him. "What are you doing?"

"Something I should've done the day I arrived here."

"What?" she squealed, irritated when he dragged her out to the small porch. Once there, he picked her up and flipped her over his shoulder.

"You'll see," he said, stomping toward the bunkhouse.

Minutes later, he set her down on the cot located just inside the cabin door. Watching her with those piercing hot chocolate eyes, he undressed. He didn't say a word as he removed his shirt, jeans and boots. He yanked her from the thin mattress and helped her out of her clothes without a minute to spare.

"So I guess you're first in line tonight, huh?"

"Depends on how you look at it. After what I watched yesterday, I feel like I'm late for a fancy four-course meal."

Marcy grinned. "Want me, do you?"

"Shut up, Marcy," he said, grabbing her around the waist and kissing her like crazy.

His tongue guided him. He kissed her like it was his first kiss and his last, making every second count as his hands propelled across her shoulders, advancing down her back. "It's just me and you, now. No one else. Just me and you."

\* \* \* \*

Marcy thrust her hands through his hair. He lowered his mouth to her breasts, thinking he should be shot for what he was doing. He was the one who'd insisted they train her for submission. He was the one who warned the others. He'd told them they couldn't take her without restraint and yet he didn't have any.

"I thought you were dead," he said, kissing his way across her chest and locking his lips over her swollen nipple.

"I'm good," she moaned. "Really good."

His hard length pressed against her when she reassured him. He needed to test that for himself. Wrapping his arms around her lower body, he drew her to him, lifting her into his arms and kissing her wildly, ravaging her. He swept across her lips like a sudden storm without any direction while weighing the pros and cons of where he intended to take her.

"I can't wait," he breathed, wrapping her legs around him, penetrating her the second he pressed her back against the wall. "I...God...damn you, Marcy!" He pushed the weight of his cock inside her, thrusting into her vagina.

She gripped his shoulders, tracing the hard lines of scarring. She rode his cock, crying out as he took her, screaming for more. And he had plenty in store.

"Landon, slow down," she breathed.

"Let me love you, Marcy. Right now. Just let me..." He thrust harder.

Her hot pussy closed around him and her body submitted to his. "You can love me, Landon. You can have me anyway you want me."

"Shit!" he screamed, withdrawing suddenly and letting her slip from his arms. He stormed across the room like a madman, knelt beside his pants and pulled out a strip of condoms. Sheathing himself, he watched her. Hell and damnation, why was he falling for this woman? Was it because he saw her strength and recognized something in her that he'd never had in the past? Was she a challenge, a woman he feared he couldn't control but yet longed to contain all the same?

"There are several beds here," she pointed out, striking a pose.

"You want a bed?"

"I want to please you."

Her words were like the first lines to a Dom's favorite poem. He grabbed her hand and led her to the cot. He sat down, his back against the wall behind him.

Marcy straddled him, taking him inside her sleek channel and guiding him. He laved one nipple and then another. "That's it," he mumbled against her swollen breast. "Show me what you've got."

Marcy pressed her palms to the back of her head and worked her body around him, seducing him, grinding against him and swaying back and forth like a ballet dancer finding a graceful but oh so sexy move.

Landon clutched her hips, encouraging her to move with him, stroking inside her harder, thumping her pussy as deliberately as he could strike at her soft, sweet flesh. "Shit!" he shouted out once again, tossing her off him and mounting her like a savage.

Once he penetrated her again, he clasped her hands and forced them high above her head. He fucked her like a machine, mechanically moving inside her, grinding up and down, in and out, side to side, and repeating again.

Deliberately. Continually. Oh God, he couldn't stop.

He didn't even slow down until she was crying out his name, gasping from pleasure, whispering his name. He stroked in and out so rapidly he damn near lost his mind. And through it all he discovered one thing.

He was going to love Marcy Mahoney the way he'd once loved another man's wife. Only this time, he'd fallen for a woman he could have. Now, he'd chosen a woman he

could love. Today, nothing could stop him from having the one thing he wanted most in the world – a family, a lover and a beautiful woman to call his own.

## Chapter Seventeen

They strolled toward the house, hand in hand. "That was something else," she said softly.

"Yes," Landon agreed, bringing her palm to his lips and gently placing a kiss there.

"You uh..." she stopped. She didn't quite know what to say and the last thing she wanted was to push him away.

"I'm what?" he asked, halting and pulling her back when she kept walking.

"Nothing," she replied, forcing a smile.

He tilted her chin toward his and gave her a quick peck. "I'm what, sub?"

And there it was. The answer to the question she didn't need to ask.

"I'm still a man with certain expectations, Marcy," he said, staring into her eyes. "Those men inside are the same men they were before Cap and his fellows arrived here. We each have certain needs, dark desires, and you know that now. Never doubt that, even when one of us takes you on a little rendezvous and loves away the afternoon. Know this—we'll still collar that dainty little neck of yours and let the world see that you belong to a Dom—Doms—men who know what they have in you and you who will always understand what you have in us."

"But you were different with me back there."

"How do you know?" he asked. "That was the first time we'd made love."

Marcy touched his cheek. "Is that what we did?"

He turned his cheek toward her hand and traced the lines of her palm with his tongue. "Never doubt that."

Marcy's nipples spiked. They were hard little beads the moment his tongue connected with her flesh. Her eyelids felt heavy and she was focused on the dampness between her thighs all over again. Maybe she should've just planned on spending the next decade in bed.

Landon looked down. He slid his hand under her shirt and moaned when he pinched her nipple. "This is why I told you to leave the bra back at the cabin. I want access, Marcy. And soon you'll see why my request allows you more pleasure than you can possibly contemplate."

"I'm opening for business tomorrow night. I can't exactly run around without my bra."

His left hand joined his right and he squeezed her breasts. "I don't see why not."

"Please, Landon, this town talks about me enough as it is."

"And you care so much that you're opening a lifestyle club?"

She shrugged. "I want people to view my club as a legitimate establishment."

Landon quit playing and took her hand again, leading her to the house. "Honey, if you wanted an upstanding business, you should've opened a bakery and put on an apron. After tomorrow night, the only thing anyone will ever see when they look at you again will be the business you represent."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"They'll look at you and see what I see."

"Which is?"

He held her hand against his erection. "Sex—hard core, raw explicit sex with no boundaries—just rough and rowdy sex. And I'll have to get used to that because my woman will be the hottest commodity in town after that grand opening."

\* \* \* \*

"I should've sent a search party," Cort said, glaring at their joined hands when they walked inside. His fears were put to rest when Marcy slid a kiss on his cheek. She gave the other two men smooches too, but she aggressively approached him like she'd been popping kisses on his face since he'd arrived there.

"You wouldn't have had far to go. We were in the bunkhouse," Marcy told him, as if she owed him some sort of explanation. "Look at this feast!"

"Hope you're still hungry," Kemper teased, slapping Landon on the back. "Or did this one give you all the beef you can stand?"

Marcy rolled her eyes. "That was crude."

"Get used to it, sub," Kemper said, grinning. "By the way, I have your dinner outfit laid out for you upstairs. Go change and wash up for supper."

Marcy studied the smiles on each man's face. They were up to something and she couldn't wait to see what. She practically tripped over her feet as she scurried upstairs on the hunt for her new wardrobe.

She entered her room and stood at the end of the bed gaping at her attire. "Are you serious?" she called out, unaware that anyone was behind her until she heard the creaking in the hardwood floor.

"Very," Kemper supplied an answer, wrapping his tan arms around her waist. He kissed her ear and lost his fingers under her shirt, playing with her nipples. One hand disappeared and then quickly returned, a cool chain drifting down her belly.

She gasped when he clamped one nipple and then another.

"I didn't know you had it in you, Kemper," she commented, cupping his nape, twirling his curls.

He pinched the clamps a little tighter, rubbing his thumb over the portion of her exposed nipple. "You have no idea what I'm like, Marcy. You haven't spent enough time alone with me. But I aim to change that."

Skimming his hands down her sides, he gave her a sharp shove toward the bed. "Now get over there and get dressed, pretty lady. Supper is gettin' cold."

“Maybe, but I can promise you one thing. By the time our meal is over, dessert will be smokin’ hot.”



## Chapter Eighteen

"The woman didn't lie, boys," Kemper announced when all heads turned to check out the sexy creature joining them.

Landon's cock throbbed, straining against his zipper again. For a passing second, he wished like hell he and Marcy were somewhere all alone and completely away from the looming danger.

She wore an open-breasted black leather teddy, thigh-high dark zipper-style boots, and an adjustable collar. She might as well get used to that collar because Landon intended to put one on her before Deliberation Plantation opened their doors for business.

"How the hell am I supposed to ask someone to pass the potatoes when all I'm thinking about are those delectable melons?" Cort asked, rising to hold out her chair.

Marcy paraded around the kitchen. She stopped in front of Landon and before he had the chance to stop her, she straddled him, leaving her legs wide and open so he could have a nice reminder of what he'd enjoyed earlier.

Gaining some smidgen of control, he said, "Sub, did I ask you to have a seat on my lap?"

"No, sir," she drawled. "But I know where and how all of you like me." She ground against him, threw her leg high and garnered a few whistles when she strutted over to her high-back chair and took her seat.

"You got that right," Mason muttered, putting in his two cents.

Cort politely scooted her chair under the table and then like a man was expected to do in a situation like this, caressed her arms for a few indulgent seconds and then grabbed a hand full, toying with the chain dangling between her cleavage. "I don't know if I can make it through dinner."

Mason's jaw dropped when he looked across the table. "I've never seen anything sexier."

Marcy grinned, eying the open space down the middle of the long table and thinking to herself that she sure could make dinner an unforgettable activity. If she had permission, she'd climb on the dinette and let them feast on her body.

"Thank you, Mason, sir," she said, smiling.

Cort sat next to her and reached under the table. A moment later, he set a gift bag in front of her. "Open it."

Kemper stood, as if he were going to the pantry. Marcy peered in the bag and when she saw the small toy in the foil packaging, laughed.

"Something funny, sub?" Landon asked, placing his fork next to his dinner plate.

"Tell me you don't plan to make me use this during dinner."

Kemper grabbed the oblong box and ripped the end open with a kitchen knife. He pulled out a few batteries from his pocket, inserted them in the end, and then hit the button. All the men focused on the slight jerking of the penis-shaped end.

"Why Marcy, I think that's an excellent idea," Kemper said, taking her hand. "Follow me and we'll get you all fixed up."

Like a woman born for this role, she placed her fingers in his splayed hand and allowed him to lead her to the laundry room. Once there, he lifted her to the counter and gently forced her legs apart. Smoothing his palms up and down her inner thighs, he grunted once.

"Damn, my control is all to hell whenever we're together."

She tilted her head from side to side. "Then what do you say we do something about that, hmm?"

He chuckled. "Can't do it, baby. They'd kill me for sure."

Marcy smacked her lips. "Then why don't you let me get a taste of what I have to look forward to after dinner."

Kemper ran his hand across the swell of a very visible erection.

"I'll make it worth your while."

"I'm sure you would, subbie."

"It's just me and you. No one has to know."

"They'll know. They probably suspect already. It doesn't take but a minute to put this little gadget in a nice warm place."

Marcy spread her legs wider and moved the crotch of her outfit to the side. "Then do your job, sir." She tilted her head toward the vibrator. "By the looks of things, you're the one missing out here. Not me."

"Fuck," Kemper muttered, unhooking his belt and loosening his jeans. When he reached inside his briefs and started stroking, Marcy moaned, drifting away from her perched position and taking his shorts and denim to the floor. She nuzzled his cock and grabbed his ass, pressing her lips against the taut mushroom head. "That's it, Kemper. Let's have some fun together. Dinner can't possibly taste this good."

Kemper's cock was huge, quite possibly too big for sucking but Marcy made an art out of stuffing him in her mouth. She licked the shaft up and down, whipped her tongue around the crest and sucked as much as she could take. Even when the head tapped her throat, he still hadn't fully penetrated her.

She mumbled against his dick, savoring his salty taste. She rubbed the small slit with her tongue, massaging the little opening in a circular fashion. He pulled at the chain attached to the clamps and then released them without warning, helping her to her feet and suckling her breasts like a man losing his mind.

Again, he lifted her to the smooth ceramic counter. Without warning, he unsnapped the crotch of her outfit and stuffed his cock inside her. "Oh God bless!" he yelled, licking one nipple while raking his fingertips over the other.

"Oh yes," Marcy whispered. "This is what I wanted."

"Take me," he moaned, screwing himself tighter into her channel.

He wanted to rush things. She wanted to take things slow. She slid against the backplash, her hips settling against the tile.

"Damn you, I said take me!" He grabbed her hips and encouraged her to slide forward. Planting his hands on either side of her body, he fucked her.

She looped her arms around his neck and maintained the pace they set together.

"All of me, Marcy. Damn you! All of me!"

Marcy rode his length, giving in and meeting his carnal demands. She locked her ankles behind his back and screwed him, placing one hand behind her, rising and falling, trying to keep up.

Kemper was the young gun, the one with a high sex drive and an insatiable appetite. She'd known it from the first time they were together. Hell, getting him to come could take all night.

Kemper stared down at their bodies, watching as he entered her. His facial expression twisted into one of pure pleasure. He rocked to and fro, claiming her, stamping her with his cock as he surged forward, forging through her canal, grabbing hold of her and lapping at one breast and then another.

"Shit! I could eat you alive," he moaned, grabbing her and holding her to him, fucking her as he carried her to a nearby chair. Once there, he sat erect, leaving her to take the lead.

His restraint was unheard of but she wasn't complaining. He drove his cock deeper. Marcy screamed out, riding her orgasm, her vocal affects only minimized when he smothered her mouth with his. "That's it baby, ah yeah, that's my girl. Fuck me, sweets. Ah sugar, do me dirty all night long."

## Chapter Nineteen

When they returned to the table an hour later, the dishes had been cleared. Their meals were covered with aluminum foil and placed in the refrigerator. A note on the table left clear instructions.

“Marcy is punished for her actions. When you finish eating, tuck her in bed and leave her with this.”

The ‘this’ in question was a cold stone butt plug.

“Are they serious?” she squawked.

Kemper winked. “Don’t complain, sub. I’ll be forced to spank you.”

“Trust me when I tell you—I’ve already been paddled well with what you have hanging between your legs.”

He pressed his lips against hers. “Behave during dinner and I’ll let you take a hot bath with me later.”

“Be nice to me while I eat and I might let you bathe me.”

Kemper chuckled. “Sweets, in case you forgot, you do what you’re told. I’ll be bathing with you. Don’t go and worry your pretty little head about the things you’re missing when you’re sure to gain more than you’ll ever lose.”

Marcy felt her skin heat. Was this the way her life would be from here forward? Would she always have a man at her side, one in her tub, and another waiting in her bed? Would she inevitably spend more time with one than the others?

As she waited for the meals to heat in the microwave, Kemper lit a few candles in the kitchen. He turned off the overhead lights and slipped a kiss on her forehead. "Are you happy?"

Marcy thought about that for a second. Was she happy? Had any man cared enough to ask her if she were satisfied or more precisely, happy?

"Well?" he asked again, frowning now.

"Yes," she said, acknowledging the ding of the timer. "I'm very happy."

"Good," he whispered at her ear. "Because it's only going to get better."

\* \* \* \*

Later that evening, Marcy was asking herself why in the hell she was lying there with a toy in her pussy and a cold stone shoved between her globes when she could've had one to four hard men keeping her company. Talk about the pits.

Now she wasn't too thrilled. Oh no, she was quite agitated.

She'd let herself orgasm a few times—even though she'd been asked to try to use restraint—and thanks to the inspiration found reading a dirty book, the vigilant vibrator performed any man's job. Finally, she'd tossed and turned for the last time. She'd had enough taunting for one day.

Time to get some sleep.

Sliding her hands under the cover, she raked her fingers over her nipples. The highly sensitized buds made her long for her men, the boys who'd stormed into her life and somehow won her heart. She wondered then, what she meant to each of them.

Practically unaware, she played with her nipples, caressing herself and becoming aroused again. The outer rim of her bottom puckered. She felt the flesh give and take around the toy and she reached down the length of her body, thrusting the vibrator in and out of her pussy, imagining herself in the throes of passionate love making with Cort and Landon, Mason and Kemper.

Tossing the sheets back, she really started pleasuring herself, cupping one breast, plucking her nipple until she was moaning, her head tossing about against the plush pillow behind her. The dildo danced inside her, thrumming against her walls, wreaking havoc on her womb and driving her right to the brink.

"Oh Landon!" she cried. "More, Cort! Mason! Kemper!" She writhed at her own hand, reaching that climax and falling, drifting, sweeping down...down...down...and *oh God!*

She saw their faces, their bare chests, their hard bodies, and rigid lengths. They towered over her, all of them there together, and then her fantasies became more vivid.

"Someone has been a very naughty girl," Cort said, sucking her wet fingers between his soft lips.

"This is a dream," she whispered.

"A dream?" Landon asked, cradling her head when he moved behind her.

"Yes," she moaned, realizing she was shaking, trembling under the many hands caressing her.

"Then dream on, baby," Kemper told her, spreading her legs and removing the dildo.

Kemper's mouth stole her control, invading her pussy with a soft, reverent tongue. He thrust inside her, eating her alive while Mason's lips took hers, kissing her slowly, nipping at her until she was arching, reaching for him, dying to have all of them inside her.

"More," she breathed against Mason's chin.

"More?" Mason asked. "Haven't you had enough yet?"

"No," she shook her head vehemently. "Never."

"Say please, sub," Landon said, coaxing her further when he played with her nipple. "And tell us what you want. We'll give it to you, Marcy. But you have to explain what you need."

Kemper stopped his pursuits, lightly tapping her clit as he rubbed her mound with a firm hand, rotating the heel against her folds until she wanted—no, *needed*—full penetration, hard steely flesh deeply embedded inside her body.

“Marcy, tell us your fantasies,” Cort instructed, pumping his cock, allowing the tip to touch her lips.

Marcy closed her eyes, her head tossing from side to side. “I need all of you inside me, somewhere deep inside me, fucking me, loving me!”

Oh God, what had she said? What had she invited?

“Well then, boys,” Cort said, grinning. “Let’s reward our sub and give her what she asked for.”



## Chapter Twenty

Marcy had never seen cowboys move any faster. Sheathed, lubed, and raring to go, Landon pulled her body across his and tucked his cock between her globes. His dick brushed against her puckered hole and she moaned with the initial penetration.

Cort was the only one without a condom and his hand fell against her forehead, smoothing away the fallen strands of hair. Mason and Kemper aimed their penises like they were ready to fire off several rounds of ammunition, lowering themselves to her body at the same time.

What had she been thinking? Was she out of her mind?

Starting to protest, Marcy opened her mouth, but she never uttered a word. Cort probably saw the objection coming. He took the opportunity and made the opening his own, sinking between her cheeks and staring into her eyes like he saw his future there. And maybe he did. Looking at Cort certainly made Marcy aware of the glorious days ahead.

Aware of the others, she spread her legs and raised her hips, trying to prepare for the double stuffing from the front and the penetration from behind. Landon's hands covered her breasts and when he squeezed her gently, she relaxed under his touch, whipping her tongue across the crest of Cort's cock and getting into the moment, leaving behind the apprehensions she shouldn't have had.

Kemper cleared his throat and she wondered if his vocal expression was their group cue. Mason, Kemper, and Landon thrust inside her with one even jolt.

Marcy jerked violently under them but it wasn't from pain so much as the shot of pure arousal that made her aware of her predicament.

"Easy, baby," Cort crooned. "Are you okay?"

She nodded, for replying then, particularly with a cock in her cheek would've been quite a chore. And she took him to her throat, mumbling the answer she might've given had she not been so delighted by the moment.

Kemper and Mason stretched her, thrusting inside her at the same time, using identical gaits to claim their space. Landon pressed his fingers into her skin, finding the leverage he needed to guide them, fucking her ass like a man with control, a lover certain of the place he'd long since earned.

Cort's confidence was shattering. He gripped the base of his cock and fucked her mouth like Kemper and Mason screwed her pussy.

Marcy felt like a goddess, wild and free, sexy and sensual, and more beautiful than she'd ever felt in her life.

She wrapped her arm around Landon's neck, encouraging him to nuzzle her and dying to feel his hot breath against her ear. Still, she sucked and coddled Cort, taking his cock to her throat and gaining the rewards she'd long since expected to reap.

"Shit!" Cort cried out, pumping faster, gripping her head tighter.

Landon's hands gravitated to her sides. He rocked her toward the other two, supporting her as they took her pussy and filled her, fucking her into one orgasm and then another.

Cort released inside her mouth with hot jets of semen erupting from his slit. She savored his taste, writhing under their bodies, creaming around their shafts. And that's when the world stopped and everything stood still for one final moment of resistance.

Then, it was like Armageddon.

She saw stars. They aimed and fired. And Marcy could've sworn the two on the front lines shot off more than just a couple of rounds.

\* \* \* \*

Marcy awoke to an empty bed. Tossing her arms over her head, she stretched. She felt like a jelly filled donut. Her body was sore, probably battered and bruised but she certainly didn't feel abused. In fact, for the first time in her life, Marcy felt nurtured.

She stared at the alarm clock.

"Oh shit!" The red numbers announced the day already in progress. It was two o'clock. Panicking, she hurried to the shower. What the hell? Why hadn't one of the guys awakened her?

Grabbing a bottle of shampoo, she doused her hair with the liquid and scrubbed the suds into her scalp, digging deep and giving herself a good head massage. The spigot released an even stream of hot water over her neck and shoulders and she looked down the length of her body, noticing the love mark on her right breast.

Marcy took a short breath. There was something wrong with her. She'd been screwed one way and then another all night long and still became very aroused just thinking about the previous night.

Marcy had missed her calling. She should've been a hooker and then she could've been paid well to play hard and wouldn't be worried about opening a new club. Smiling to herself, she immediately dismissed the idea.

If she'd been a prostitute, she wouldn't have met and fallen in love with four well-rounded handsome men. Stilling in the shower, she slowly reached for the soap. She was in love?

She closed her eyes and lathered. "Yes, siree. I'm in love."

"Well I certainly hope so," Cort said, entering the shower.

His full cock pressed against her hip and he wrapped his arms around her waist, pulling her against his solid chest. "Good afternoon, beautiful."

"I didn't hear you come in, sir."

"Probably not," he said, grinding against her rear. "I try to sneak up on pretty women making confessions."

"I wasn't."

"Oh yes you were, sub-baby," he whispered, nipping her lobe.

"Cort, you let me oversleep. I have a ton of stuff to do before tonight."

He rubbed his palms over her breasts and twirled her around to face him. "You can add me to that list."

"Cort..."

He stopped what could've been an outright protest with a hot, ravenous kiss. A low, hungry growl of pure desire slipped from his throat as he lapped at her mouth.

Her defenses shattered as he ate at her lips, sipped at them. Pampering her with his large hands, his fingers drifted across her nipples and he walked them around the curve of her waist, tugging her closer still until his cock impaled her.

Lifting her to him, he fucked her without foreplay, without giving her time to adjust to his size. He rammed inside her like a man who'd waited a century to give a woman her due and by the way Cort's body moved, she had a lot coming to her.

"Cort!" she exclaimed as he held her against the cold wet wall. He slid over her like a morning dew, his love-making more refreshing and hypnotic than ever before. Cupping her bottom, he forged his fingers inside her tight hole and held them there, casually lingering inside her, long enough to drive her wild.

"God yeah, Marcy, feel me baby. Feel me loving you."

Marcy gasped with what soon became rapid penetration. "Cort!"

"Say my name again, baby," he growled, entering her, pounding deeper. "Let me hear you say it!"

"Right there, Cort. Oh God, yeah. Don't stop!"

"Never baby," he promised, nudging his fingers inside her forbidden hole while stamping her with his release. "I'll never stop loving you. That's a solemn promise."

## Chapter Twenty-One

Unfortunately, promises were made to be broken and kept. Like a man in love, Cort had spent the rest of the day doing things for Marcy, making sure everything was ready for the grand opening. Since the first patrons would soon pour through the gates, Cort's lovemaking had been cut short. Then again, Marcy wasn't one to complain about a quickie.

"It's six o'clock. Two more hours and our guests will start arriving," Marcy announced when she entered the kitchen. She stopped abruptly when she noticed the worried expressions on the faces of the four men seated at her kitchen table.

"Sit down, sub-honey," Cort said, directing her to a chair.

"I think I'll stand."

Landon arched a brow. "You'll sit sub, or you'll be asked to kneel."

"Yes, sir," she bit out, taking a seat.

"We have to go over some ground rules before tonight," Landon said, retrieving a small pistol from under the table. "First, do you know how to use a weapon or not?"

Marcy glared at the firearm slapped against the tabletop. She gulped.

"Don't act like you're afraid of wielding a gun. I recall someone making one of us dance when you fired that rifle of yours," Cort reminded her.

"I can use the damn thing," she stated dryly. "But why do you think I'll need to? Do you believe those guys from New York will be here tonight?"

"It's not a matter of whether or not they'll be here," Mason explained. "It's only a matter of what time they'll arrive."

She swallowed hard. She assumed they hadn't seen the last of the mob guys from the city and sure, she considered the possibility that they might show up for the grand opening. Only, she'd been so busy trying to get last minute details sorted out that she really hadn't thought about what she'd do if they came to her debut.

"Marcy, you'll stay close to one of us at all times. Is that clear?" Landon asked, pushing the gun in her direction.

"I don't have a problem with that," she replied, settling against Kemper's chest as he draped his long, muscular arm around her shoulders. "But if you plan to be around, why do I need a weapon?"

"I always want you well protected," Landon said, cupping her hand over the small firearm. "If I check for this tonight, I'd better discover what I'm looking for under your skirt."

"You'll always find what you want under my dress," she teased.

Kemper kissed the top of her head. "No funny stuff, Marcy. These guys mean business."

Landon locked eyes with Marcy and in that moment, she saw his pain again. Remembering the jagged pattern of a multitude of scars marking his body from front to back, she felt a stabbing sensation in the center of her chest. "I don't want any trouble. This may be a job to you but this is my life here. I bought this place with every intention of turning it into the hottest nightspot around."

Mason folded his arms across his chest and nodded toward Cort. The others exchanged glances. Landon leaned forward and said, "Do you honestly think this is just a job to us now?"

Marcy shook her head before she thought better of it.

"Don't you know how we feel about you?" Kemper asked, tilting her chin toward his.

She smiled. Her heart fluttered so rapidly she felt like a schoolgirl. "Maybe you should tell me."

Kemper brushed his lips past hers and then addressed Cort. "Maybe we should show her."

Squeezing her legs together, Marcy shifted, scooting away from Kemper. "I think I've been shown enough for one day."

They all laughed. When the room fell silent again, Landon said, "Marcy we're not here for a passing second. You said when you hired us that you were interested in something more permanent. You also pointed out in your employee information that those asked to stay on would have the opportunity to hold some form of ownership in this place.

"We don't want a stake in this property. We're more interested in staking a claim in you."

Cort left the table. When he returned, he held something in his hand—a thick black leather band—and something quite exquisite and very beautiful, not to mention intimidating as all hell.

"What's that?"

The men rose from their chairs and stood next to Cort. Marcy watched how their expressions changed. Only then did she realize they were all dressed alike—something she should've noticed from the start. Dressed in black cowboy hats, snazzy snakeskin boots, dark denim jeans and white button down shirts, each man looked like a cowboy made to order. For the first time, she paid attention to something else as well.

They each looked positively devoted to her. If she spared a guess, she was about to learn of their intentions. They acted as if they were one hundred percent committed to professing their love.

Cort cleared his throat. "Have you ever wondered why you chose the four of us?"

She smiled. "Looking at you now, I think that's pretty obvious, don't you?"

Kemper winked. "You do have great taste in men, don't 'cha?"

"I think so."

"You don't think it was ironic that you picked all four men who were working on this case together?"

"Yes, I've wondered about that. I figured you had a plan B though."

"Our plan B would've been getting rid of the others you kept and telling you that we were taking over anyway," Cort said. "We needed this ranch for our cover. Now, that said, we didn't expect Landon's past to catch up with him so quickly but he's never been able to hide out in the open. His family always gives him up for enough money. We haven't been able to trust anyone. Until now."

"It's fate, Marcy," Landon said. "The chemistry between you and each of us has been too strong to deny. And we trust that you will be here for us as much as we plan to be here for you."

"You trust me?" Marcy asked.

"Yes," they all said, practically in unison.

"Then you have to trust me to do what you tell me," she said, noticing the spark of added light flickering in their eyes. "I won't let you down but I don't want you to let me down either."

"This club is my life. When you're finished here, you'll move on with your work and I'll have the business but what else will I have?" Marcy was fishing and hoped she didn't sound too desperate. Of course, Cort was still sporting that collar which continued to dangle from his fingertips.

Cort pulled her to her feet. Clearing his throat, he said sternly, "Sub, present yourself to us. You haven't listened to a damn thing we're trying to tell you."

Marcy studied the lust-filled expressions settling on each of their faces. Marcy knelt before them, resting her hands on her knees, palms up. So this was it. She was about to find out everything she'd ever wanted to know about the lifestyle. More importantly, she was about to learn what it meant to be one hundred percent committed to Doms in love.

\* \* \* \*



A guttural growl fell from Cort's lips. He couldn't help it. He'd never seen a more spectacular woman. "I love you," he said, unhooking the small buckle on the neckband. "We all do. And we want to make it official, Marcy. Before those gates open to your first guests tonight, we want to know that you belong to us in every way that matters."

Marcy's hands trembled when she raised her hand to her neck, raking her fingers over her collarbone. "You want me to wear a collar? Like a real submissive?"

Landon stepped forward. "Marcy, you can't play this both ways. You should know that. You're opening a lifestyle club. Those who frequent your barn parties will come here fully prepared to enjoy a good time with those who are familiar with the lifestyle. And it seems only appropriate that you would be living the life you're not only profiting from but also promoting."

"That's not good enough," she said. "I don't want to wear that collar unless the men giving it to me are my men—in all the ways that matter, too."

"Do we look like we'd ever let you down?" Cort asked, touched by the passion he heard in her voice.

"I believe you'll love me for a little while but I'm older than you." She looked over his shoulder. "I'm older than all of you. What happens when I'm sixty and you're forty something or I'm seventy-five and you're not even at retirement age? What then?"

Landon knelt beside her, taking her hand and bringing her fingertips to his lips. "Marcy, I'm speaking for all of us when I tell you that we're going to love you more than we do today."

Her eyes widened. "Maybe you will, but you don't know. You don't have any way of predicting how you'll feel in the future."

"True," Landon said. "But I know my heart. When I look at you, I see more than what you want me to see. I see more than the sexual creature I crave from sun up to sundown. I see a woman with heart and soul. I see a woman who was willing to die for a man she'd come to care about but probably hadn't admitted to herself that she loved. I see you as a person, Marcy, not just as a lover. And I love what I see."

Marcy's eyes filled with tears and Cort handed the collar to Landon who showed her the four platinum hearts dangling from circular pendants. Each had a diamond in the center. Each perfect, flawless diamond represented a heart filled with love.

As Landon explained that to Marcy, Cort peered out the window and said a silent prayer. He prayed that they could protect her. He prayed that the danger just on the other side of the gates could wait, but he knew the trouble they all faced and while he was terrified, he wasn't scared for himself. He feared they'd come there to Tennessee and brought their problems from the city to a woman who didn't choose this life, a woman he would die protecting, if needed.

Jerking, that realization forced him to look at Marcy and ask her something none of them had considered. "Are you afraid of us, Marcy?"

"No," she quickly answered. "Why?"

Kemper frowned and Mason arched a brow, apparently following his train of thought. "Let me rephrase that. Are you afraid the life we live could somehow endanger you? Are you scared we won't be able to protect you? Are you frightened of anything we're offering you because you don't know everything there is to know about the men in front of you professing their love?"

Marcy's expression softened. She looked like an angel—an angel with eclectic taste in clothing given the fact she was dressed in a sultry fitted dress. The outfit hugged her curves, the lavender ribbon crisscrossed down the front, holding the material in place but showcasing those luscious mounds without giving a spectator too much to view.

Then again, Cort would probably choke the life out of anyone who gaped too much.

Several tears rolled down her cheeks and Landon swiped them away as Cort's heart filled with joy. He understood what she was feeling. This was a big step for all of them.

"We love you, Marcy," Kemper said. "Never doubt that."

"And believe me, this is not what I had in mind when I came here," Mason confessed.

Cort shot him a stern glare. "Romantic, Mason. Remember, we're proposing."

Marcy's head jerked. "Proposing?"

Landon cupped her face. "We're proposing as much as four men can offer in terms of commitment. We can't marry you, unless we each take you to a different country and make it legal but even then, there are probably laws in place to prevent that. But we're giving you a promise. We will love you. We will protect and honor you until death parts us."

"Amen," Kemper said.

"Agreed," Mason added.

"Without any reservations," Cort assured her. "But you have to be sure you want us, too. And if we frighten you, or if the lives we lead make you uncomfortable then you need to express your feelings and tell us."

Marcy used the back of her hand and wiped her cheeks clean. Snubbing, she said, "I am afraid."

Landon frowned. "Why?"

"I'm scared to death of losing one of you, of letting myself love freely and waking up tomorrow and facing the day without you."

"Oh, honey," Cort said, falling to his knees and gathering her in his arms. "You have us. As long as you want us, you have us all."

Holding her against him, he stroked her back. His eyes met Landon's and Landon shook his head. So maybe he hadn't told her the whole truth. There would be time for that later.

"I think there's something you aren't telling her," Mason said.

Then again, somebody had too much of a conscience to let the small details work themselves out at a later date.

## Chapter Twenty-Two

There were some things a woman just didn't need to know. For instance, most women wouldn't want to know when her lover, or lovers, worked for a private corporation known to bury their employees before they were ever eligible to draw retirement.

"Are you kidding me? You chose right now to explain what we do?" Cort asked, firing his words at Mason. "I mean this could've waited."

"Oh really? Just when *were* you going to tell me what you do for a living?" Marcy bellowed, pacing around them as they sat at her table with their heads bowed.

"She's not acting like a submissive now," Kemper pointed out, looking at Landon and probably hoping he could do something with her.

"Submissive?" Marcy asked, arching a brow.

"Careful, baby," Cort said, taunting her. "As tight as that dress is, you're liable to pop a few threads and tempt a couple of cowboys."

She glared at him. Oh what she'd give to wipe that smug grin straight off his face and show him how submissive she was when she was enraged.

"Why don't you sit down?" Landon suggested. "Let's talk about this."

Humph, even Landon wasn't pushing the Dom-sub relationship right then. He was smarter than he looked. She paused, studying him. Then again, he looked pretty smart. She paced. That was the whole problem. They thought she was some kind of ditz, a woman who'd do as she was told and not ask any questions.

She circled the table again. "You're cold-blooded killers."

"You knew we were in guerilla warfare. What did you think we did for a living?"

"I thought—" She stalled, thinking about that for a second before she replied. "What I thought doesn't matter!"

"Yes it does, sub," Landon said, further provoking her.

"Okay, that's it. That is it! For the time being, I am no man's sub. Do you understand me? I'm of sound mind and willful body and—"

"You don't have to tell me about that body, baby," Cort said, chuckling and immediately gathering group support in the form of laughter from everyone present.

"What I meant was..." She sneered. "What I meant was I have my own mind and I'm strong enough to use it."

"That's not what you said," Mason pointed out. "Maybe it was a Freudian slip."

Probably. That was the story of her life since she'd met up with this crew. "Put aside everything for a minute. And I do mean everything. How would you feel if you were in my shoes?"

"We're not," Mason pointed out.

"Of course you aren't so you couldn't possibly know how I feel."

"Marcy, it's not as bad as it sounds. Think about it. When we're called away, you'll always have one of us here with you."

"That's not entirely true either, Kemper," Mason said. "On rare occasions we're all summoned and sometimes Marcy will be left alone."

The word 'alone' made her feel empty inside. What would she do when they left her to fend for herself? How would she survive? "When you're called out all at the same time, how long will you be gone?"

Landon shifted in his chair. He studied Cort and they both looked at Mason as if they were willing him to remain silent.

She swung her gaze at Mason, apparently the only straightforward man sitting in her kitchen. "Well, the good news is we're rarely called out together. The bad news is

when we're out on a large group assignment, there's really no way to estimate how long we could be gone."

"You can do better than that, Mason. What's the average time you're away?" Marcy asked, thinking she'd better brace for the worst.

"Well, it could be for a few weeks, maybe a few months."

"Months?"

"Yes, Marcy, months," he said. "And once, I was away for a year."

"A year!" she gasped. "A *year*?"

"It happens."

"How in the hell am I supposed to survive without —"

"Sex?" Landon's gaze ripped through her like daggers, as if he wanted her to know that the very notion of throwing sex out on the table for discussion when they were talking about a serious long-term commitment was nearly absurd.

She settled her hand in the curve of her waist and said, "Yes, since you mentioned it. Okay, yes. Sex. What do you do for sex when you're away that long?"

Cort smirked. "I hired call girls to service me in the past."

Marcy gritted her teeth.

"You asked, baby."

"Call girls? Are you serious?"

"They can blow a man's troubles away."

Marcy paced again. She felt like a true cougar then, stalking her prey, contained in a small den that felt like it was closing in.

Rather than show her jealous tendencies, which she'd never had until that moment, she played a game of reverse psychology. Cocking her hip, she slapped her hip and said, "Well you know, I guess we could work out a little arrangement in the event I'm left by myself. Since I have the club, there will be lots of Doms coming in and out of here, guys I've known in the past. We could agree that when you're out of town, you're free to play and I'm permitted to explore my options."

Cort snarled. Kemper protested. Mason sneered and Landon said, "What options?"

"I can find a few. What works for the bulls is acceptable for the heifers!"

"Is that right?" Cort asked.

"It is," she said, tossing her head back. "If you're going to hire whores, the least I can do is act like one when you're not here taking care of your woman!"

Cort was on his feet, tight cords lined his throat, his veins pumping with rage. "Oh baby, that's where we have a problem. Because see, when we slip this collar around your pretty fragile neck, there's one thing you can be certain of – we'll take care of what belongs to us. And anyone who dares to lay one finger on you will risk losing it from the second it's placed where a man's hand doesn't belong!"

Marcy gulped. "I don't share."

Cort snarled. "This coming from a woman who expects all of us to do exactly that?"

He had a point.

"It's not negotiable."

Cort smiled. He nodded toward the others and then said, "Now, we're getting somewhere."

## Chapter Twenty-Three

The grandfather clock in the hallway chimed with seven strikes, announcing the lateness of the hour. The lovely collar Marcy was dying to slip around her neck lay in the center of the table, the four hearts glittering with spectacular beauty.

"I guess we could work something out," she finally said after the echo subsided from the seventh toll. She bowed her head. "Truth is, I hate being alone. I guess that's why I've always had such a promiscuous reputation."

"You don't have to be alone. Even when we aren't here," Landon said casually, that hard look of lust coating his face and lingering in his eyes. "You could have children."

"Kids? Are you kidding?"

"Why not?" Landon asked. "You're not too old, Marcy. We can afford the best health care in the world and if you can't have children then we'll adopt."

"Or impregnate someone else," she suggested, turning up her nose.

"Not an option," Kemper assured her, collecting her in his arms. "We'll make you a happy woman, but when you become ours, we're yours and infidelity isn't an option."

"And what do I have to do in order to put that on?" she asked, pointing at the collar.

"Promise to love us," Kemper said, kissing the tip of her nose.

"Swear to give us everything we need without reservations," Cort suggested.

"Trust us," Mason said. "And be trustworthy. Let us know we can depend on you."



"And honor us," Landon added, picking up the collar and holding it out for her. "Be our submissive, our shared bride. Be our woman, Marcy Mahoney. Be our lady because you love us and because you can't imagine your life without us."

"I can't," she said.

"Good," Landon said, encircling her neck with the leather. "Because we can't imagine our lives without you."

Marcy fingered the tiny ornaments dangling from her neck. She mouthed the words *I love you*.

"Of course you do," Landon said. "Because I couldn't love you as much as I do without that love returned."

"I love you all," she said, pausing at each man, taking in her good fortune while summing up the qualities of each man.

Glancing out the window, Marcy noticed the line of cars waiting at the gate. "Oh my goodness. Look!"

Kemper winked. "You had your doubts about whether or not this grand opening would be a success, didn't you?"

Marcy giggled. "Are you kiddin' me? Hell no! Every woman within fifty miles of this place has heard about you guys and every man around wants to come here and check out the competition. Little did anyone know, I've already locked up the biggest score in town!"

"We didn't do too bad ourselves," Cort told her.

Marcy smiled. Even though she was a gal with a well known reputation, she couldn't help but agree. She had a lot to offer these men and with the love she held for each of them, she felt lucky, indeed.

\* \* \* \*

"Well Tommy Doyle!" Marcy exclaimed when she spotted the one man in Bristol every woman fancied. She'd been there and done that and she had to agree with the

general consensus in town—he was something special. But he was also the bad boy no woman would ever tame and now Marcy counted her lucky stars—four of them to be exact—that she never landed the most eligible bachelor in the state.

“Look at you, Princess,” he said, twirling her around. When he released her he stared at her neck.

Marcy became instantly self-conscious. She fingered one of the hearts dangling from the thin band and reached for Cort’s hand because he slid beside her about the time Tommy lifted her up and spun her around.

“Tommy Doyle, this is Cort Campbell. Cort, this is Tommy, an old friend of mine, and a customer we can certainly count on seeing from time to time.”

Tommy studied him. “You’re—”

“Her lover,” Cort interjected gleefully, placing a possessive arm around her hips and cupping her thigh.

Tommy grinned. “I see she has a few more, too, huh man?”

“That she does,” Cort grated out. “Tell you what, let’s you and I take a hike and I’ll introduce you to Marcy’s other men. I’m sure they’d like a chance to get to know someone who will be frequenting Marcy’s club.”

“Cort,” Marcy snapped under her breath.

“No worries,” he whispered, slipping a kiss on her cheek. “Just want to get to know all your old friends, sub-honey.”

Tommy snorted at that and followed Cort toward the back of the barn where he was immediately introduced to the others, now tugging kegs toward the front bar area. Before Marcy could worry herself silly, Mason was at her side. “I met your old boyfriend. He’s all right.”

She released a weighted sigh of a relief. If they knew the truth about Tommy, they probably wouldn’t be so willing to welcome him into their newly formed good old boys club. Tommy had been the one weakness Marcy had after the Evans brothers settled down. He was a wild man in the sack, a skilled lover, and the only Dom she’d ever considered for a Dom/sub relationship.

At one point in her life, Marcy could've had Tommy wrapped around her little finger, but Tommy had a dark side. He and his brother scared her sometimes because they didn't just want a submissive woman, they wanted a slave, a woman dedicated to serving and servicing them...and their friends.

"So you two have a torrid history?" Mason asked, prying.

"Maybe I'll tell you about it sometime."

Mason stood in front of her. He toyed with the ornaments on her neckband. "Maybe you'll tell me about it now."

"Mason, I'm welcoming my guests!"

He narrowed his eyes on her nipples. She could feel his heated gaze washing over her about as deliberately as his lips might. He was attentive, and far too aware. And he was most definitely up to something. "Come here," he said, dragging her alongside him.

As if she could refuse him.

He hurriedly led her to the office and slammed the door. He pushed her against the door and kissed her, bathing her lips with the kind of affection she longed for, cradling her head in his hands as he swept her off her feet with one kiss and then another, licking at her lips, sucking the fullness between his teeth and teasing her.

She looped her arms around his neck. "To what do I owe the pleasure?"

He grinned. "Since you asked," he said, sliding two clasps and a gold chain from his pocket. "I want you to wear these."

"Mason," she whined. "Not tonight. I can't be thinking about sex while I'm playing hostess."

"Why not? That's all your guests will be thinking about when they come here. You might as well join the party."

She groaned. "Please, sir."

He chuckled and then ignoring her pleas, he untied the top bustier and slipped his hand over her nipple, tweaking the bud until she felt arousal whipping around her like a maddening hurricane. "Good Lord, woman, you're always so damn responsive."

She stared at him, amazed by the sudden thrill, the enjoyment he seemed to take in touching her. "I'd like to see how responsive you are if I slide my hand down the front of your pants. Bet you'd rise to the occasion, too."

He fingered her erect point again. "That's a given."

He clasped one nipple and she moaned. He pinched the other one tightly between two fingers, rolling it back and forth as he bumped against her, teasing her. When the claw-like contraption closed around the other taunt point, he hooked the gold chain between the two and looped the strand around her neck, carefully affixing it to the collar.

"What are you doing?"

He winked. "I'll let the boys know all they have to do is reach under your collar and pull. We'll keep you in line tonight, my lovely sub."

"Thank you," she said, starting back outside. "You are loved."

"I know I am. And you're adored."

She had an extra spring in her step when she returned to the greeting line, watching at a safe distance as Cort and Landon shook hands with the patrons. Marcy had to congratulate her fellas; they sure put together one hell of a country BDSM club. She studied the various stalls. Fascinating sex acts were already underway in some of the designated areas. The noisy eroticism of the place filled the breezeway and she couldn't wait to go and observe from the loft.

Glancing upstairs, she noticed about eight cowboys pacing back and forth over the walkway, eyeing the stalls below like studs waiting for a high strung filly. She'd be happy to entertain some of her guests there but fearing she'd be perceived as fresh meat, she decided she'd better keep her feet on the lower level. Besides, there'd be plenty of opportunity to view those rooms, later. Each stall was equipped with video surveillance and those who entered the enclosed chambers knew they were recorded.

She'd created a haven for the exhibitionist. Every fetish had its place. Bondage, spankings, and toys were acceptable there and she'd supplied plenty of equipment for

those who wanted to indulge but they all came at a price. Marcy had noticed a lot of folks purchasing the extras scattered about.

Cocktail waitresses were on staff, too, and as Marcy had requested, they all wore open-breasted vests, translucent tank tops and short black leather skirts. Complimented by thigh high boots with spike heels, the girls on her payroll were adorable and Marcy appreciated the fact that her men didn't seem overly interested in flirting with the hired help.

If they'd shown too much interest on their special night, she'd have begun to doubt her commitment choices. About that time, Landon approached her. She turned her entire attention toward him. His smile lit up the room and that was nice to see. Landon rarely smiled and she couldn't say that she blamed him.

He looped his arms around her waist and whispered at her ear, "Are you happy, subbie?"

"Very, sir," she said, brushing her lips across his.

He twirled her around like he meant to lead her to the dance floor but instead he stopped, stilled against her. His expression changed to one of dark passion. "You look good enough to fuck."

"I hope so," she said sweetly. "Because I have plans for you."

"Hey Landon!" Cort called out. "Give me a hand with another keg, will ya?"

"Hold that thought," Landon said, strolling toward Cort and grabbing a handle.

Her men walked toward her and she studied them intently, watching how they deliberately carried on a conversation while giving her a good head to toe evaluation. She'd just started to turn away from her grinning cowboys when two bodies darted behind a large partition at the end of the barn.

Marcy felt all the blood in her body run cold, chillingly so. But that wasn't her only warning.

"Hello, doll. You're looking lovely tonight. What'd you say you and I go find a dark place and get to know one another?"

Marcy felt the cold revolver at her lower back, pressed against the open scoop revealing her bare skin. Marcy glanced over her shoulder. She didn't recognize the nice-looking young man but naturally, she wouldn't. She seldom kept company with thugs.

She focused on Landon and Cort. They were still carrying the keg, taking a cowboy's sweet time hauling the barrel to the bar, unaware of the looming danger. Marcy quickly scanned the area for Mason and Kemper. She didn't see them.

Then, she looked toward the loft. There, in all his pride and glory, she spotted Tommy looking directly at them.

"Marcy!"

"Walk!" the stranger said. "Oh and you'd better pray those cowboy friends of yours don't follow us."

Marcy started walking. Tommy's outburst was enough to alert Landon and Cort. By the time she saw Tommy again, he was pushing through the crowd, trying to make his way to the steps. She was certain her men would've been running through the breezeway trying to catch up to them, too.

When Marcy saw the black SUV idling right outside the barn, she realized whoever came to her rescue would be about a minute too late. It was safe to say, Marcy was about to face the devil. And she'd face him all alone.

## Chapter Twenty-Four

"Which way did they go?" Mason yelled from the pick-up, ignoring the crowd of people gathering near the barn's entrance.

Tommy stepped away from the group. "They took off toward the lower fields. They're in a SUV. Who are those guys, anyway?"

Mason pursed his lips. Great, Tommy was the last thing they needed.

Landon and Kemper hurriedly tossed a large tack trunk on the bed of the truck and Cort hopped on back and started unloading the weapons inside. Glaring at Tommy, Mason asked, "What do you know about the property that adjoins this one?"

"A lot—it's mine."

"Get in," Mason instructed him. "Kemper! Stay back here and handle business. We'll be back in a flash."

"You need me!"

"We have an extra man and he looks like he can fire a gun. Stay here and call the local authorities. Tell them to hurry or just to go ahead and send someone from the coroner's office if they can't get their asses out here in time."

"Coroner's office?" Tommy asked as Mason laid his foot to the pedal. "Who were those men who took Marcy?"

Mason gave the truck a lot of gas and they plowed through the lower fields. "Let's just say they ain't the friendliest bunch of northerners you'll ever meet."

"Then I hope you've got an extra gun."

"I thought you'd never ask," Mason said, tilting his head toward the glove box. "I hope you're a good shot."

"When I'm pissed, I don't miss."

"Then get pissed. Get good and damn furious. Because the guys we're up against are mad as hell."

"You think *they* are? I was about to join a hot little number and her twin sister in stall one."

Mason should've told him stall one was full of Dominatrix gear but he'd let him find that out for himself later. Right now, he had more important things on his mind — like saving Marcy from a fate too horrific to contemplate.

\* \* \* \*

Marcy was surprisingly calm, considering she was about to die. She was tossed back and forth between men. The large vehicle weathered rough terrain crossing over large rocks and shallow creeks in an effort to make it off her property onto the adjoining farm.

Maybe that's why Marcy felt a little less apprehensive. She had a feeling these wise guys were taking her to Tommy's deserted cabin in the woods. Humph, if they only knew what that cabin stored.

Perhaps all those years she spent sneaking around with Tommy Doyle weren't a complete waste. He had one love, one passion—other than sex—and that was hunting. And he was a real paranoid fuck too when it came to hiding his guns. His five-room cabin was filled to the brim with ammunition and weapons, deeply embedded in the walls and flooring of what looked like a well-appointed hunter's hideaway.

A few minutes later, they pulled to a stop in front of the log home. Cap Dante was seated on the front porch, smoking a cigar and chatting with a few other fellows she recognized from her unpleasant meeting before.



"Well done, guys," Cap said, not addressing her at all. "Take her into the main bedroom. I'll join her there in a minute."

Marcy realized what was about to transpire. They were setting a trap for her men and unless Marcy did something drastic to stop Cap and his goons, her lovers would meet their demise there.

The cabin was open and airy. There were too many windows. As she walked into the familiar house, she noticed the armed men surrounding it.

She hadn't forgotten her gun, the weapon Landon told her he wanted her wearing at all times. Her pulse raced as she thought of the way Kemper had carefully strapped the small pistol to her thigh. His fingers had caressed her flesh as he'd placed the weapon there. He'd reassured her she wouldn't need it but then again, they all knew what kind of trouble existed beyond the front gates.

The club had opened its doors without a visible hitch. Things ran smoothly for a few hours. And then terror struck. They never even saw it coming because Cap hadn't waltzed inside the place. He didn't have the balls. He'd sent the kind of men who fit in there: strong and dominant men, guys who blended with the crowd.

The man who'd ushered her into the SUV earlier shoved her down on the bed. He let out a loud whistle when she fell against the mattress. "Hot hell, look at that ass." He ran his hands over her hips and bottom.

*Oh God. Please don't let him find the gun.*

When his hands closed around her ankles, she fought to turn over, realizing she might stand a chance of going for her weapon first if she were flat on her back. "You get off on women you can't look in the eye, big stud?" she taunted him. "I was always told men with little dicks want to take a woman from behind because they're not man enough to look them in the eye."

The Italian swiftly turned her to look at him. He was easy enough on the eyes but he had the look of a killer. Wild and untamed, cruelty lingered in his expression. If Marcy was certain of anything, she was sure of this—he would kill her if Cap gave the order.

Marcy quickly assessed her bleak predicament. She had one thing going for her and only one. She stared at the bulge in his pants and smacked her lips.

"He'll tell you to kill me, won't he?"

"Ain't gonna matter what he tells me. I'll fuck you before or after the job is done."

Marcy gasped. "Morbid little asshole, aren't you?"

"You got no idea, lady."

She had some.

"So what do you say we have some fun together?"

Oh this would be tough. After he said he'd fuck her dead body, it was all she could do to look at the creep.

How the hell was she going to try and seduce him when he'd admitted such an atrocious possibility?

"Dante said you were nothing but a whore."

Marcy seethed. She'd been called a whore before and it never really bothered her but coming from this soulless creature, the word sounded dirtier.

"Is that what you are, woman? Are you a whore?"

Marcy cleared her throat, trying to remind herself of the life or death circumstances in her very near future. Trying to calm down, she rose to her knees. She could see the headlights in the field, racing closer. She was out of time. She had to act fast.

About that time, something shot by the far window. She could've sworn it was a man on a horse.

Cap's goon grabbed her by the hair and pulled her to him. "I said, is that what you are, honey? Are you a worthless whore?" He bit at her bottom lip, trying to drag her into a wet, sloppy kiss.

"No, tiger," she drawled, rubbing her hands up and down his arms. "Didn't your momma ever tell you that a whore charges for a fuck and blow whereas a slut enjoys both so much she gives them away for free?"

He released a wicked hiss. "This is gonna be fun, huh?"

“Oh yes,” she said, patting his erection and reaching for her gun. “I plan on having a ball.”

## Chapter Twenty-Five

"Look!" Tommy pointed toward the house. "That's my bedroom. A gun was just fired. Did you see that flashing light?"

"No," Mason winced, driving still faster. "But I heard the shots."

Landon leaned in the cab of the truck. "Let me out here."

Mason slammed on his brakes. Landon jumped off with camouflaged bags swung over his shoulders. "Tell Cort he needs to be ready."

About another two hundred feet and Cort hopped off the back end of the truck. "That leaves me and you. Unfortunately, we have plenty of ammo but only two weapons left. There's a switchblade under the seat. You have four rounds in that pistol and a box of bullets in the console."

"I ain't worried about it," Tommy said as Mason slowed the truck down to another stop. "This is my land. My cabin. Oh, and I forgot to tell you. If you make it inside, the walls and floor are filled with guns and ammunition. I've got enough weapons out here to start a small war. Get Marcy out of there and then leave the rest to me."

Mason grunted. "Uh, yeah, I'll do that." Country boys. They were all the same. They thought they were ten feet tall, living forever and existing as a new breed, the superior race.

"Oh yeah, and by the way, I'm pissed for another couple of reasons, too."

Mason didn't have time for this shit. "What's that?"

"Your friends from New York are trespassing. There are signs all over this property. They were warned. They should've paid attention."

"And what's the other reason you're pissed?"

"You can figure that one out." Tommy shot him a grin. "What'd you say we go save our girl?"

Mason snarled. "I'd say you'd better save her because if you don't, after that comment, I may just kill you."

Mason pulled around to the back of the house and dimmed the lights, he could see Marcy through the bedroom window. She aimed her weapon –

*Oh my God, it couldn't be. Hell and damnation!*

He picked up his cell and called Landon. "Marcy's in the main bedroom at the north end of the house. She's holding Cap at gunpoint." About that time a man on horseback flew by him. "What the fuck?"

"What? Are you sure?" Landon asked.

"Positive. And Landon? Hurry. Kemper just rode up on horseback and he looks like he's ready to pick a fight."

"Shit!" Landon cursed. "This isn't good. Don't worry about Kemper. He can take care of himself but you'd better listen to me. If I know Cap, he probably told his men he was going to have his way with Marcy. When he's in there a little longer than he should be, his fellows will wonder what's going on."

"This doesn't make sense," Mason said, picking up a pair of binoculars.

"Talk to me," Landon said, breathless, apparently running.

"When we were approaching the house, Tommy saw the sparks from a gun being fired and I heard three shots. If I heard them, then you know Cap and his men did too."

"Maybe," Landon said. "But I doubt he realized the gunfire came from the inside. A couple of his men have been out back drinking and shooting. They're on the south end of the house. I'll take care of them on the way in. Be there in a second."

"Take your time," Mason said sarcastically, tossing aside the field glasses and stuffing the clip in the butt of his gun.

Rushing the house, Mason stayed low, crawling at various points and then sneaking up to the bedroom window. By then, Cort should've taken care of the men on the porch, surprising them before they knew what hit them. It was up to him to save Marcy.

\* \* \* \*

"I should've figured you were one of them," Cap said, stuffing his hands in his pockets and acting as if he hadn't noticed one of his men sprawled across Tommy's bed lying in a pool of blood.

Marcy pursed her lips. She held the gun with both hands. She'd already shot one man – self-defense she'd later claim – but she didn't think she could kill another.

About the time she'd decided she didn't want any more blood on her hands, she recalled Landon's battered body. Her eyes blurred. She was beginning to feel confused, disoriented. She gripped the gun tighter.

Cap grinned, showcasing a wide smile of capped teeth. "You're *his*, aren't you?"

"His?" she asked, trying to steady her nerves, reminding herself if she gave up her weapon, if she relinquished control, she could very well end up chopped up like Landon or dead like the man behind her.

Cap moistened his lips. He took a step in her direction. She backed up a couple of inches. "Don't come any closer."

"Tell me something, sweets. Did you know your honey had a thing for married women? He uh...obviously has eclectic taste in women. You're – how shall I say this politely – quite a bit more mature than my Melinda was when they met. She was twenty-one. Did he tell you that?" He shut his eyes and made a crude noise, grabbing his front bulge. "And she could fuck a man like she had nowhere to be tomorrow."

"You killed her," Marcy said, shaking off the blurred vision, trying to stay focused, fighting to remain in control. "And you made Landon watch!"

"Made him?" he chuckled. "Is that what he told you?"

She wasn't going to answer him. Watching for a slight aggressive movement, she tried her best to stay out Cap's reach, even when he charged her, which he did several times. She pointed the gun in his direction, cocked it once, which was the only way to keep an animal from attacking.

"I didn't make him watch. He was a dead man. He shouldn't have been able to hold his head up much less open either of his eyes. If he saw what happened to Melinda, then he watched because he wanted to see her suffer. He was just as guilty as I was. He wanted her to pay for betrayal. He'd punished her even. Did he tell you that?"

"She was his sub. He was her Master."

"Like hell he was. Melinda belonged to me. I was her husband!"

"And you obviously failed somewhere if she sought comfort in another man's arms!"

He charged her. The gun went off as if by accident. They rolled to the floor. Another shot was fired. Marcy held her breath, unable to breathe, unwilling to move.

Gasping, she pushed the dying man away from her body, trembling all over when she saw the blood staining his chest. "Why did you have to come at me?" she screamed, grabbing his collar.

He choked out a spurt of blood. "And I...loved...her. Did he tell...you...that?"

Cap Dante's eyes set then. All Marcy could think about was the fact that justice had been served.

There wasn't a judge he could buy or a jury he could intimidate into seeing things his way, and she didn't think St. Peter would accept his bribes at heaven's gates. A killer was dead. A murderer had been laid to rest.

His blood was all over her hands.

## Chapter Twenty-Six

Shots were ringing out all around her. Rather than scrambling to her feet, Marcy stared down at her hands. She released the gun she'd been clutching and screamed out her anguish, the agony of having ended two lives splitting her heart in a million pieces. She'd been a promiscuous woman, a woman without morals, a gal who took what she wanted, but what she hadn't been – what she hadn't been but had easily become – was a murderer.

Glancing around the room at nothing in particular, she tried to gather her senses. *Keep it together, Marcy*, she told herself, reminding herself the men enduring gunfire beyond the bedroom door might need her assistance. She tried to psych herself up to face whatever awaited her and just about found a final straw of strength when Landon burst through the door and gathered her in his arms.

Staring at Cap's lifeless form, he rocked her back and forth. "You're okay, Marcy. Let me help you."

"Landon!" She held him, clutching him to her until she smothered her face in his chest and sobbed uncontrollably. "I...killed...him."

"I know baby. I know," he said, cradling her against him and getting her out of there. "Bring the truck around!" he shouted out to whoever was there to listen.



Marcy couldn't look up. She heard a door open and a truck rev to a start. Mason kissed the top of her head. "We've got ya, Marcy. You're a survivor. You're gonna be just fine."

Tommy poked his head in the cab of the truck before they took off. "Is she okay?"

"Yeah," Mason said. "Thanks for your help out here."

"No problem. You take care of our girl."

Mason's body went rigid beside her. "We'll do it."

Marcy looked up and smiled weakly at Tommy. If it hadn't been for him, she wondered how quickly her men would've arrived.

Cort and Kemper ran toward them, sprinting like they were running away from something. Marcy knew better. They were rushing toward something—someone. They were headed fast for the woman they cared for and she was lucky to be the one woman they promised to love.

The door flung open and Cort snatched her right out of Landon's arms. "Oh God, baby, I thought you were dead." He smothered her with kisses, pecking her face and lips, her hair and cheek. "Don't ever scare me like that again."

Kemper stood back, but only for a minute. He looked like a man fighting inner demons, internal wars. When Cort moved out of the way, he collected her in his arms and carried her to the rear of the truck.

"What the hell are you doing?" Mason yelled, turning the ignition off.

"Give me a minute," Kemper said, grabbing a flashlight from the toolbox. He shone the light in her face, held up each arm, flipping her palm upward and straight down before looking at her legs and ankles.

"I'm fine, Kemper," she rasped.

He framed her face. "I'm not," he confessed, kissing her, sucking her bottom lip between his moist lips. "So help me, God, Marcy. I'm not."

\* \* \* \*

Strangely enough, neither Cort nor Landon held her all the way home. When Cort saw the bright lights of Deliberation Plantation in the distance, he said, "Kemper is in a bad place, Mason. I want you to request an evaluation."

"Why because he wanted to hold Marcy all the way back to the ranch?"

Cort stared off in the distance. "That's not it."

"What happened?" Landon asked.

Cort shook his head. "He was a like a machine, a fucking robot. He killed so many men so quickly that I was afraid he'd lost it right there—maybe forgot who was on his team and who wasn't. He picked off Dante's men quicker than I could spot them and they died painful deaths. He wasn't just fighting a battle out there, he was on a mission to destroy, a killer's journey, and an assassin like I've never seen in action before."

"He loves her," Mason said, grinning. "We all love differently and at various stages in life, we love stronger, maybe with more passion. That's all you saw. You saw a man in action, determined to save the life of the one woman he's promised to love."

Cort considered that possibility. He glanced over his shoulder, peering in to the back of the truck. "Do you think that's all it is?"

"Yeah, I do," Mason grumbled, taking a left and turning down the driveway.

A large stallion with his bridle thrown haphazardly over his withers darted out in front of them as they started for the house. Landon chuckled. "Kemper wouldn't be all cuddled up with Marcy if something had happened to that prized stud."

"Now I know Kemper needs to talk to someone. He rode that damn stallion out to the cabin and left him there? Marcy will chew his ass out for that one."

"She'll forgive him," Mason said, throwing the gearshift into park position and watching Kemper in the rearview mirror as he carried Marcy from the back of the truck.

Cort shook his head. "Now I know he's not in his right mind. No one has ever been on that damn crazy stud's back."

"What?" Landon asked, copping a smile.

"He's right," Mason said. "We couldn't break him."

Landon slid out of the truck and Cort followed him. "Well maybe the damn horse took pity on a man desperately seeking love."

Cort, Mason, and Landon stood on the sidewalk watching from a distance as Kemper carried Marcy up the front steps and into the house. Cort wondered then if that's what was so special about Marcy. Had she needed them as much as they'd needed her?

If so, he had a feeling she'd get more than she'd bargained for as soon as she was up to it again. He also suspected they wouldn't be kept waiting long.

## Chapter Twenty-Seven

Marcy fell against the bed and presented her bottom like she was awarding them a flashy trophy. Cort stepped behind her. "So help me, I'm going to whip your ass raw after that comment."

Marcy wiggled her butt. "I was just asking how you'd feel about Tommy joining us. I didn't say I thought we should...ouch!"

Cort smacked her ass and grinned. "How's this for an answer?" He smacked and smacked again.

Landon moved behind him. Cort scooted over and let him have his way. He slapped her damp skin and said, "No, no way in hell. Not in this lifetime. Forgetaboutit."

"Well why didn't the four of you just say so?" She moaned and rolled her head around in a saucy little fashion.

"I think we just drove home our point," Kemper told her, stretching out beside her and pulling her over him. As soon as her body brushed against his, he penetrated her, locking his cock inside her vagina and fucking her with quick thrusts. "Good God, I was afraid I wouldn't have the chance to do this again."

Marcy felt Landon's long fingers run down the seam of her ass. He was inside her seconds later, screwing her like a man who wouldn't take but a minute. She'd finally stripped his control.

Kemper fed from her body, lavishing her nipples with a reverent tongue while fucking her like a woman wants to be fucked—hard and fast, wild and free, unrestrained and in a hurry. He was totally into her.

Towering over Kemper, she glanced to the side for just a moment and caught a glimpse of Cort. He was sitting on the window seat, legs splayed, hooded eyes, and completely hard. He didn't touch himself though she imagined he wanted to, but instead he watched, waited, and seduced her from a distance.

Mason tilted her chin and kissed her, tweaking the nipple Kemper wasn't occupying, twisting the bud until she winced in pain and pleasure. "Oh, Mason."

Tears swelled in her eyes and she gave herself over to the passion, bucking against Landon and falling atop Kemper, coming to her knees and savoring the slaps Landon issued as he screwed her. Ah yes, she loved a good erotic spanking and no one did it better than Landon.

"Come, sub," he told her.

And as if she'd been trained to respond on command, she screamed out in pure delight. "Yes, sir!"

"That's my darling sub," he said, wedging his cock tighter inside her and resting there, allowing her to feel the weight of his penis stretching her while Kemper fucked until he finished.

Then, Landon withdrew, shifted, and waited to start again when Mason was under her. Mason, typically flaccid until the point of entry, was rigid. He tucked his cock inside her and she bucked wildly as soon as he found his space, still watching Cort from the corner of her eye, wondering what he was thinking, wanting to be inside his head for just a little while.

When Landon's calloused hands smoothed over her bottom, she cried out with the pleasure, ready to climax again. "Not yet," Mason ordered, pounding inside her wet channel. "I'm not ready yet."

"Too...bad," Landon said, slapping her ass and threading his fingers through her hair.

His guttural voice caught in his throat and Marcy heard the compassion there. "Come, sub. Come for me like I know you'll always come for me."

"Always," she whispered, dropping her mouth over Mason's and sealing their love with a heated kiss. When the kiss broke, she moaned as her climax shook through her. "I'll always come for all of you."

\* \* \* \*

Cort wanted her alone. After Mason, Kemper, and Landon had loved her for most of the afternoon, he was about ready to explode. Instead, he lifted her tired body from the mattress, carried her to the bath he'd drawn and stepped into the large garden tub. Submerged in bubbles, he let her lie against him in the hot water, stroking her back, remembering the day he first saw her and understanding then why he'd been so drawn to her.

"I love you, Marcy."

She looked up at him with a hint of surprise lighting her eyes. "I love you, too."

He kissed the top of her head and held her. He just wanted to hold on and never let go. "You scared me yesterday. I was never more terrified than I was last night."

"I'm sorry."

"No," he said, pushing her away so he could look at her. "You have nothing to be sorry for, baby. I'm the one who let you down."

"No you didn't," she assured him, pressing her palms to her cheek. "We're a family, Cort."

He eyed the pretty collar around her neck and the diamonds winked back at him, the water allowing the gems to glisten more than usual thanks in part to the bathroom's fluorescent lighting. "Cort?"

"Hmm?"

"I thought I was going to die."

A sob tore from his throat and he looked away. To think the little thing was out there in the woods with the kind of monsters who planned on killing her and she'd recognized death was within her grasp. What kind of man was he? How could he have allowed such a threat to move so close to the woman he promised to love, vowed to protect?

"Cort, listen to me. If I had died out there, I want you to know how I would've died."

"What?"

"Hear what I'm saying," she insisted, tugging on his arm. "If Cap had killed me I want you to know that I would have died with one thought."

He studied her then and noticed a significant change in her. She was softer, more beautiful than he ever recalled seeing her. He held her close, resting his head on her breasts, listening to her heartbeat and preparing for the words he felt certain would be those of a man's undoing.

"I would've died knowing I was well loved."

## Epilogue

"Where's Marcy?" Cort asked, rushing inside the barn.

"She's not feeling well," Landon informed him.

"What, don't tell me," Cort growled. "You fucked her again, didn't you?"

"Uh, no," Mason replied. "I think she's had enough, at least for a while, don't you, Kemper?"

Cort swung his gaze at Kemper.

"Believe so."

Cort chuckled. "So none of you could keep your hands off her, huh?"

"Can't blame me for this, big boy," Mason said, laughing.

"Who can I blame, then?" Cort asked pointing toward the gates. "In about ten minutes this place will be swarming with patrons. Everyone will want to see Marcy."

Kemper grinned. "He has a point. The locals think we've kept her tied and chained to the bed since we brought her back from New York."

Cort smiled at the mention of New York. When they returned there for Landon's court date, they'd all gone along for the sightseeing. Landon and the others spent their days in front of a stuffy judge. Cort made the most out of his time alone with Marcy.

He could only count a handful of places where he hadn't had his way with his sexy little siren. The others had been pretty sore about that since they'd discovered he'd fucked her pretty much in every place a man could think about.



"You can wipe that grin off your face there, Daddy," Mason said. "The way I look at this, it's your fault she's hovered over a commode right now rather than dressed in one of the slinky numbers I bought for her when we visited that fetish shop in the city."

"Huh?" Cort was lost. "Marcy's sick?"

"She's in a bad way, all right," Kemper said, grabbing hold of his belt buckle and parting his feet. "And since you're the cause of it, I think it's only fair that you get to deal with this guy."

About that time, Tommy and his brother, Mark, walked up and shook hands with the four men. After a little catching up, someone mentioned Marcy. Tommy searched the barn quickly and then inquired, "Say, where is the red-headed spitfire anyway?"

Mason grinned. "She's sick."

"Really? Got the flu?" Mark asked.

"Don't think so," Kemper said, stroking his chin.

"What's wrong with her?" Tommy asked.

Mason smirked and pointed toward Cort. "Why don't you ask him?"

"Me?" Cort asked, standing taller. "How come everything around here is always my fault?"

Landon laughed. "Oh this is definitely your fault, friend. You're the only one here who refused to suit up when you played and that means you're the likely candidate for Marcy's baby's daddy."

"You're saying Marcy is pregnant?" Cort asked.

About that time, Marcy entered the barn in one of those sexy outfits Mason mentioned. She looked a little pale but the fitted material slipped over her shapely body and she wore the design well.

"Damn," Mark growled, not hiding his approval. "I'll tell you one thing. I'd like to have a baby momma who looked like that."

Marcy stalked Cort. She winked at the others and then pursued him like he was the only man in the room. From the corner of her mouth, she said, "Mark Doyle, let me remind you that you had a baby momma who looked like this."

"I must've been a fool to let that go then."

"You were, and I'm glad," Cort snapped, bracketing his arms around her waist.

"Are you really pregnant?"

She batted her eyelashes and held up a pregnancy test stick. Then she whispered in his ear, "Looks like you were right all along. I've been loved well, Cort Campbell."

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