

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

MEN IN LOVE

COMPLETING
• THE
Circle

CAROL LYNNE

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Completing the Circle

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MEN IN LOVE:

COMPLETING THE CIRCLE

Carol Lynne

Dedication

To Kitten. You're the best thing to see in San Diego.

Author Note

"Don't ask, don't tell" is the common term for the U.S. military policy which implements Pub.L. 103-160 (10 U.S.C. 654). The policy prohibits anyone who "demonstrate(s) a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts" from serving in the armed forces of the United States, because it "would create an unacceptable risk to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion that are the essence of military capability". This policy forbids any homosexual person from disclosing his or her sexual orientation, or from speaking about any homosexual relationships, while serving in the United States armed forces. It also keeps commanders from investigating a soldier's sexual orientation. All of the SEALs in this series are portrayed long after they have been discharged from the U.S. military and therefore aren't restricted or held accountable to this policy.

Chapter One

Remy wiped the bar down with a rag as a customer approached. "Tell Remy what he do for y', podna."

The man smiled and took off his panama hat and set it on the bar. "Whatever light beer you have on tap will be fine."

Remy nodded and drew the man a glass of beer. "Dat be three and fifty."

The man smiled and handed over a five. "Keep the change."

Remy stuck the five into the register and pulled out a dollar fifty. He dropped the change into the tip jar. "Thanks, podna. Tell Remy what y' do now in Key West."

The man's eyebrows rose. "Excuse me?"

"He's asking what you're doing in Key West," Cory said, coming up behind Remy.

The man smiled and pointed to the bar name on the coaster under his beer. "You must be the Crazy Cajun the bar's named after."

Remy smiled and nodded. "Dat be me."

The man finished gulping his beer and set the empty glass on the bar. "I'm on vacation with my wife. She's just down the street shopping again. I told her I needed a beer if I was going to spend all day running from store to store. I'm going to have to bring her in while we're here. She's always had a thing for the way your people talk."

"Oh, she likes Americans, does she?" Cory turned and walked back into the kitchen.

The man glanced at Remy with a sheepish look. "Didn't mean to offend."

Remy smiled and waved him off. "Dat okay. Remy don't mind, podna. Bring y' wife back anytime. Remy buys de first beer for all de beautiful women."

Now it was the man's turn to smile. He rose off the barstool and put his hat back on. "So what you're telling me is that I'm gonna have to buy my wife her own beer?"

"Ah...no, no, no. All women beautiful ta Remy."

The man was laughing as he left the bar.

Remy took the man's glass and washed it out in the bar sink. Cory came back through the door as he was drying it.

"Why do you do that?" Cory asked, her fists propped on her hips.

Remy looked over at her. Her waist-length black hair was pulled away from her face in a barrette, but even it couldn't contain the thick mass of corkscrew curls. "Do what?"

Cory rolled her light green eyes. The movement accentuated her long black lashes. "Talk like that to people. Remington Boudreaux, you grew up four houses down from me and your father was a judge. So why do you lead people to believe you grew up in the swamps?"

Remy smiled and pulled one of her curls. "It's expected. The minute I left Acadia Parish everyone I met expected me to talk like the stereotype. I've found it's easier to give people what they want. Besides, with a bar called 'The Crazy Cajun' our customers would be upset if they knew I was from a boring upper-class family. It's all part of the fantasy for them."

Cory grabbed the bucket of peanuts and started filling the bar bowls. "It's dishonest. Why do people pretend to be something they're not? It just makes fools out of the people around them. The people who believed they were who they said they were." Cory dropped the bucket of peanuts at Remy's feet. She looked at him for a moment and ran out through the kitchen door.

Remy bent over and picked up the discarded bucket. "What the hell just happened?" Remy looked around the bar. He was grateful it was empty. He strode to the kitchen and hollered for Lester.

Lester appeared through the pantry door carrying two giant cans of tomato sauce. "What's up, boss?"

"I need you to watch the bar for a couple minutes." At Lester's puzzled nod, Remy followed Corrine out the back door.

He couldn't figure out what their whole argument had been about. He'd talked that way since he and Anton started the bar.

Why was he hearing for the first time today how much it pissed Cory off?

Remy walked toward the beach. Cory was a creature of habit and she always picked the same spot on when she was having a bad day. As he rounded a cluster of palm trees, he spotted her. She was sitting on top of a rock she called her thinking rock. Remy's breath caught in his chest. She'd taken her hair out of its restraint and let it blow free and wild in the wind. Sitting there she looked like a mermaid. Her firm, fit body was on display to any and everyone. God, he loved that woman. Not a day went by that he didn't long to hold her in his arms.

Remy shook his head as he walked toward her. For some reason after Anton died, Cory had taken to wearing revealing clothing. Growing up, Cory had dressed like the rest of the teenagers in town, simple jeans and t-shirts. But after she'd married Anton she switched to wearing "grown-up clothes", usually slacks and a nice silky blouse with sensible shoes. After Anton's death she slowly shed the slacks and blouses and started wearing short-shorts and halter tops. Remy still remembered the first day Cory had shown up to work in one of her new outfits. He was sure someone was going to have to call 9-1-1 for him. The pain in his chest had spread slowly to his cock and then back up to his chest again.

He remembered staring in awe as she walked into the bar. Her breasts had tried their best to spill out of the tiny Hawaiian-print scrap of material she called a top. When the searing pain in his chest had finally subsided enough for him to breathe, he'd asked her what the hell she was wearing. Cory had just looked at him and shrugged. "The old me is back and better than ever," she'd said. At that moment Remy had thought he would finally have a chance with her again. He'd loved her since they'd been in high school. What he thought and what actually happened, however, were two different things.

Cory had turned into the sexiest woman ever but her heart had become encased in ice. On the few occasions Remy had brought up his thoughts of going out on a date she'd shut him down, fast. Cory told him in no uncertain terms that she would never again allow a man to have control over her.

That's when Remy started to question whether her marriage to Anton had been a happy one. Although he'd been partners with Anton from the beginning, Remy was often away on side jobs. One of his best friends, Nicco, owned a protection agency with his best friend, Mac. Occasionally Remy would take a protection job and be gone for a couple months at a time.

Over the years he noticed the way Cory seemed to retreat further into herself. Whenever he'd ask her what was going on she'd just answer that nothing was going on, that she was fine.

Remy walked the last few feet to her. He wasn't sure what had upset Cory so much but he was determined to find out.

She didn't even look at him when he sat down beside her. Remy rested his arms on his knees and looked out to the ocean. "Sorry."

Cory still didn't bother looking at him but she did at least shrug her darkly tanned bare shoulders. "Don't worry about it. I'm just having a bad day."

Remy turned to face her. "Care to talk about it? I've heard I'm a pretty good listener. When we were growing up you always told me your troubles."

Finally looking at him, Cory sighed. "That was a lifetime ago, Remy. No matter how much I want to go back and be that person again I've realized it's never going to happen."

"What's different?" Remy asked as he pulled a flyaway curl into his hand. He wound the black strand around his finger and waited for her to answer. As he watched her, Remy could see the pain in her eyes. He'd give anything to be able to wipe that pain away.

"Me."

"What made you different, Cory?" Remy was so afraid to hear the answer that he put all his concentration on the lock of hair.

"Anton."

Remy felt the lump in his throat threaten to block his airway. He turned toward Cory. He chewed on his lips, willing his temper back down. "H-How did Anton make you different? Did he hurt you?"

A single tear slid down her sun-bronzed face. "Yes."

Remy took Cory's hand in his. "When did he hurt you, sweetheart?"

"Yearly, monthly, weekly, daily..."

Remy wiped the tear from her face with his fingertip. He was so angry it took him several minutes to speak. "How long did it go on?"

"It started on our honeymoon, just little things at first. He wanted me to change my style. He said I wore the clothes of a bayou rat. He took me shopping and picked out a whole new wardrobe for me." Cory barked out a rough laugh. "I had to buy them, of course. Anton had expensive tastes but no money to go with them. About a year after we were married, he came home early and found me in a pair of sweatpants doing the dishes. He didn't say a word, just came into the kitchen and grabbed me by the back of my head and pushed my face under the dishwater. When he finally let go, he demanded that I strip then and there. He took the sweats and threw them in the garbage can."

Cory seemed to be lost in thought as Remy took her hand and squeezed. "Over the next six years it got worse. I asked him one time after he'd blackened my eye exactly who he'd fallen in love with? I mean, it obviously wasn't me. Anton said he fell in love with the person he knew I could be with the proper training."

Remy turned her face toward him. "Why didn't you come to me?"

Cory gave him a ghostly smile. "I was ashamed. When someone tells you every day that you're worthless and that no one will ever love you, I guess you start to believe it. Anton had permanently alienated my family from our lives. I had no friends, no one to turn to for help."

"What the hell are you talking about? I was your friend. Why didn't I count?" Remy ran his fingers through his own black curls.

"You were my abuser's best friend. You were like brothers. How could I tell you that Anton wasn't who we both thought he was? It crushed me to discover the man behind the mask. I never really fell in love with Anton, but he was our best friend. I'd always loved him as a friend. How could I possibly have done that to you?" Cory stood and started to walk back down the beach.

Remy ran after her and pulled her up short. He spun her around and crushed her to his body. "Oh, sweetheart. You could've told me because I've always loved you." Cory snapped her head up to face him and Remy softly touched his lips to hers. "Why do you seem shocked by that? I've made it pretty clear since Anton died that I wanted another chance. When I was in the service, yours was the only face that kept me sane. I'd lie awake at night and wonder what you were doing, whether you were happy?" He closed his eyes and whispered against her lips, "I'm sorry, I wasn't here for you then, but I am now."

When Cory gasped, Remy took advantage of her open mouth and gently thrust his tongue inside. She stiffened in his arms for just a moment before melting against him. Cory lifted her arms and wrapped them around his neck as he took the kiss deeper. The passion soon overwhelmed them and Remy found himself slipping a hand under the front of her halter top to cup her breast. Just the feel of her soft skin under his hand was a dream come true. This woman was his life, how could she not have known that?

Remy broke away from her lips and started kissing his way down her neck. He sank to his knees and started to push her top up out of the way when a child's laughter brought him out of his sexual haze. His head snapped up to look at Cory's half-lidded eyes and slowly rose to his feet.

Remy cleared his throat and straightened her top. "Excuse me. I got lost in the moment and forgot we were on a public beach in broad daylight." Remy pulled her once again into his arms. "I love you, Cory. I've loved you since we were teenagers. I remember the day Anton wrote me a letter telling me the two of you were getting married. I was shocked." Remy stopped, and tried like hell to get himself together. Sixteen years worth of bottled-up emotions threatened to spill out on the beach. Taking a deep breath, he continued. "I'd just been home three months before and I thought we were finally finding each other. I thought the one night we'd spent together was special."

Remy shook his head. "I realize we were both drunk at the time but it meant everything to me. I'd had every intention of quitting the Navy as soon as my tour was over and asking you to marry me. I'd just come off SEAL maneuvers when I got Anton's letter. After I read it, I shredded it and ran to the bathroom. I threw up more in the next couple days than the rest of my life combined."

Cory closed her eyes as tears ran down her cheeks. "I wish you had told me you loved me before I married Anton. After you left to go back to the service, I didn't hear from you and Anton told me you said you didn't want to talk to me. That it was just one night and you were afraid I'd make something bigger out of it than it was."

Cory started to break away from Remy but he held her tightly. "No. Don't run away from me. I've waited years to have you back in my arms and I've no plans to let you go."

Cory stopped trying to squirm her way out of Remy's arms and put her head down on his broad chest. "You don't understand."

Remy kissed the top of her head and loosened his grip on her waist. "I don't understand what?"

Cory opened her mouth just as a couple of children came running past them. She seemed to cringe in his arms.

"I can't talk here. It's getting late anyway. Let's just head back to the bar. We can talk more later."

Remy looked into her eyes for another minute then nodded. He decided he'd give her a couple more hours before staking his claim. "Later."

Chapter Two

It was a good thing it was a slow night at the bar. Remy just couldn't keep his mind on business. Every time Cory purposely brushed up against him he lost all train of thought.

Remy watched her every move as she delivered drinks and food to a table of men. One of the men reached out and smacked her on the ass as she turned to leave their table. Remy was up and over the bar in a second. Towering over the man, Remy grabbed him by the front of the shirt. "Apologize to the lady."

The man raised his hands in surrender. "Sorry, dude." He looked at a fuming Cory. "Sorry, ma'am. I didn't mean to cause offense. We're just out to have a good time."

Remy leaned into the man's face. "I think it would be best if you found your good time elsewhere." He let go of the guy's shirt and stood guard in front of Cory while the men rose and went out the door, grumbling.

He turned back to Cory and wrapped his arms around her. "You okay?"

Cory rolled her eyes and slapped his chest. "Of course I'm okay, you numbskull. I've dealt with men like that since we first opened this joint. Funny how you never seemed to notice all the ass-slappin' before today."

Remy narrowed his eyes. "Oh, I noticed all right. I just didn't feel as territorial as I do now. Matter of fact, I feel so territorial I'm thinking about pissing around all the tables." Remy looked at her straight-faced but ruined the effect when he finally flashed his killer smile.

Cory laughed and kissed him. "If you do it, you'd better clean it up."

Remy held her tighter and took the kiss deeper. "It's dead in here. Why don't you knock off a little early tonight? I'll clean up." He kissed her again and grinned. "And I promise not to piss around the tables."

As if on cue, Cory yawned into Remy's chest. "I do believe I shall take you up on the offer, kind sir." Cory hugged him and broke away. "I'll see you tomorrow."

"You bet you will." He smiled and watched her go through the door in the hall that led to her upstairs apartment. He shook his head. How was he gonna work down here knowing she was upstairs in bed? A bed he very much wanted to be in.

* * * * *

Cory took off her sandals as soon as she stepped through the door and headed for the shower. She undressed quickly as the bathroom filled with steam. Sliding back the door, she entered and stood under the hot spray. "God, that feels good."

Soaping her hands, she ran them over her body. She looked down at herself as she washed. "Not bad for a thirty-year-old woman." Her breasts were still firm despite their large size and her stomach was perfectly toned. "It ought to be, as many stomach crunches as I do every morning," she commented to herself.

Cory let her hands wander down to her small patch of closely cropped pubic hair. She'd been thinking about having a complete wax job, but for now she soaped the small triangle just above her pussy.

Closing her eyes, Cory thought of Remy and the way he'd touched her on the beach. Her fingers slipped between the lips of her pussy and brushed her clit on the way to her core. She inserted two fingers and slowly pumped them in and out of her wetness. Picturing Remy standing in front of her, Cory used her other hand to squeeze and tweak her erect nipple. The pressure inside her body began to build but she needed more. She released her nipple and slid her hand down to her clit. Rubbing her clit in time to the thrust of her fingers deep inside her pussy, Cory threw her head back in ecstasy. With a slight squeeze to her clit, her body shook and drenched her fingers in a violent climax. She was so wiped out she slid down the wall of the shower to the floor.

Ten minutes later, Cory slipped into her short silk nightgown and made a cup of decaffeinated coffee. As she stretched out on the sofa to watch a little of the eleven o'clock news, she yawned. Cory decided to finish her coffee and call it a night. She didn't know what had taken more out of her, the scene with Remy on the beach or her self-induced climax in the shower.

Tomorrow, she promised herself. *Tomorrow, I have to tell Remy why I married Anton in the first place.* She yawned again and decided to forgo the rest of her coffee for bed. Cory took her cup into the kitchen and rinsed it out. As she was sitting it on the drain board, the phone rang. She glanced at the clock. "Who would be calling at eleven-twenty?" She suddenly smiled. "Remy."

She picked up the phone. "Goodnight, Remy."

"Bitch."

Cory pulled the phone away from her ear as the connection was suddenly cut off. She grabbed her chest and slid to the floor. "No. No it couldn't have been."

Once her breathing was under control she rushed to the bedroom and threw on her pink terrycloth robe. She opened her apartment door and ran down the stairs. She spotted Remy at the bar sink washing glasses. Coming up behind him, she threw her arms around him. "Remy."

Remy spun around and held Cory away from him enough to look into her face. "What's wrong, sweetheart?"

Cory broke down and sobbed into his chest. She was crying so hard she couldn't speak. Remy looked around at the bar. There was only one table with customers still at it. He tilted Cory's face up to his. "Sweetheart? I'm going to get rid of those customers over there and I'll be right back." He took her over to a barstool and sat her down. Leaning in, he kissed her tenderly. "Right back."

Remy explained his need to close the bar to the table of tourists. They all looked over at the distraught woman sitting at the bar and left easily. Remy locked the front door and put the closed sign up. He turned off the lights and returned to stand in front of Cory.

Picking her up, Remy carried her upstairs. "No, Remy. I can't go back up there right now. Take me home with you."

* * * * *

After settling Cory in his king-size bed, Remy went to the kitchen and made her a cup of tea. By the time he returned to the bedroom with the tea, Cory was almost asleep. Remy set the cup down on the bedside table and noticed Cory's robe on the floor beside the bed.

He smiled to himself and went around to the other side of the bed. He undressed quickly and completely and slid under the covers. Scooting his body up behind Cory's, he wrapped his arm around her and kissed her shoulder. "Want to tell me what happened?"

Cory reached down and took his hand. She brought Remy's hand up to her face and kissed his palm. "I got a phone call. I thought it was you, calling to tell me goodnight. The caller said one word and hung up."

Remy snuggled closer and kissed her neck. "What did he say?"

"Bitch. But that's not the thing that scared me. Remy, I could swear the voice was Anton's."

Remy froze. "What? You think someone's trying to spook you? Because, sweetheart, I don't think Anton would use the phone if he wanted to haunt you from the grave."

Cory flipped over onto her back so she could look at him. "It may sound crazy but I know his voice. And believe me, I've heard Anton call me a bitch enough in the past to know his voice when he says it."

"I'm sorry. I don't know what to say other than you're welcome to stay here as long as you want."

Cory nodded and ran her hand down the side of Remy's face. "You're so beautiful."

Remy answered by leaning in and attaching his lips to hers. He ran his tongue over the seam until she parted for him. Delving his tongue inside, Remy tasted coffee and mint. He slipped the shoulder strap of her nightgown down her arm as he continued to make love to her with his mouth.

Breaking the kiss, Remy sat up just enough to pull the gown over Cory's head. The room was washed in moonlight and it highlighted her bare body perfectly. "God, sweetheart. You're even sexier than I remembered."

He ran his hands from her neck down to her breast. With a reverent touch he ghosted his fingers over her pebbled tawny areolas. The more attention he paid them the harder they became. "So responsive."

He stretched out beside Cory and took one of the stiff peaks into his mouth. He swirled his tongue over first one nipple and then moved to the next. Remy suckled as his hand slid down her torso to her pussy. He stopped just above it to rub his fingers across the closely cropped small patch of hair.

Cory ran her fingers through Remy's hair and thrust her pelvis lightly against his hand. "More."

Remy smiled against her breast and continued his ministrations as he moved his hand lower and slipped his fingers between her lips. Encountering a flood of thick cream, Remy pulled his mouth off her nipple and slid down to her pussy. "You're so wet. I gotta taste you."

Replacing his fingers with his mouth, Remy ran his tongue up and down her channel. He thrust as deep inside her body as possible and lapped at her cream like a contented kitten. All the things he'd longed to do to Cory over the years played through his mind as he tasted her passion.

"Oh God." Cory fisted the sheets as she pushed her pussy against his face. "Make love to me."

Remy stopped and looked up her body into her eyes. "I've waited far too long to hear you say that." Giving her pussy one last lick, he moved up and took her mouth once again. He insinuated his body between her long legs and crossed his fingers that he wouldn't come before he buried himself inside her. Just being with her, like this, felt like he'd finally found home. The one place in the universe he truly belonged.

Cory wrapped her legs around him, effectively opening herself to his throbbing cock. When Remy positioned himself at her entrance and slid deep inside, they both gave a sigh of rapture. Remy buried himself as far as he could and looked down into Cory's eyes. "Mine."

A single tear escaped Cory's eye and she smiled. "Yes."

Remy began to move in and out of her tight heat. Slowly at first, then picking up speed as his cock took over for his brain. He repositioned her legs and draped them over his shoulders so he could get even deeper inside her. His hips pounded against her pelvis in a punishing rhythm.

"Yes. Oh Christ, yes." Cory's nails scraped down Remy's back as he continued to piston deep within her.

Looking deep into her green eyes, Remy leaned back a little and snaked his hand between them and gathered some of the juices escaping from her pussy. Dragging her juices farther back, he inserted his fingertip into her anus. The small puckered opening seemed to pull his finger farther inside by its own volition. The heat that surrounded him had his cock throbbing with need.

Cory seemed to enjoy having her back entrance breached so much he added a second finger. "God, sweetheart, you're so hot."

With the addition of the second finger Cory wailed as her entire body tensed. "Oh. Oh God."

The tightening of her muscles not only tried to snap his fingers off, but his cock as well. With a roar to make a lion blush, Remy shot his seed deep inside the woman he loved. He felt the sweat dripping off his forehead as he collapsed beside her.

Cory stroked the side of his face as his breathing slowly returned to normal. Remy turned his head and kissed her. "Never like that. I've never felt the utter need to crawl inside another person like that."

Sighing, Cory spooned tighter against his naked sweaty body. "It felt glorious to have you back inside me where you belong."

Remy kissed her and got out of bed. Wanting to take care of the woman he loved, he went into his bathroom, found and ran a soft washcloth under the warm water. Crawling back under the covers, he cleaned Cory as he kissed her passionately. Hoping she knew just what this second chance meant to him. When he was finished he tossed the cloth on the floor and pulled her into his embrace. He kissed the top of her head. "You're my entire world, Corrine. I've loved you for so long that you truly are a part of me." He hugged her. "Get some sleep. The way my libido is feeling, you're going to need it."

Chapter Three

Over the next several days, they made love constantly. It seemed neither of them could get enough of their newfound relationship.

Four days later, Remy walked into the bar after meeting with their accountant. He looked around for Cory. "Cory?"

Her head popped up over the bar. "I'm down here."

Remy walked behind the bar and looked down at her. "What are you doing?"

"Relining the shelves. I noticed the other day they were looking worn. I hated the thought of the drinking glasses sitting on them."

Remy took a step closer and ran his hand down her cheek. "How can a woman look so beautiful all the time? It doesn't matter what you're doing or what you're wearing." He shook his head.

Cory looked back up at Remy and ran her hand over the swollen ridge behind his jeans. With a wicked grin, she worked his button free and his zipper down. Pulling out his cock she licked her lips and smiled up at him. "You want me to reline this thing too?"

Remy laughed and guided his cock to her mouth. "Well, while you're down there..." When her lips willingly wrapped around his length, Remy moaned and leaned his forearms on the bar. "So good." He gently thrust his cock in and out of her lips. "Damn, someone's coming in. Just keep it up and they'll never know."

Cory happily continued sucking and licking Remy's huge cock while he waited on the customer. Cory held her breath when the man ordered a bottle of beer. The cooler was several feet away and no way could she stuff Remy's erection back into his jeans. As hard as he was she'd never get the zipper up. She paused in her sucking and glanced up at Remy.

He didn't even look down. He thrust his cock toward her mouth once again. He told the man that their beer cooler was on the fritz and the only thing they had cold was whatever was on tap, which he happened to be standing right beside. The man ordered a draw and Remy suggested he take it out to one of the outside tables and watch the sailboats as they made their way into the harbor.

When the man was gone Remy glanced down. "I'm glad he left because I'm about to come." He thrust his cock in and out of her mouth a few more times and came down her throat with a muffled groan.

Cory sucked him dry and stuffed his now-softening cock back into his jeans and underwear. She scooted over and out from under the bar. Remy had his head leaning on the smooth wooden surface. "You okay, stud?"

Remy shook his head but didn't raise it off the bar. "I think you sucked my brain out. All I want right now is a nap and your pussy." He opened his eyes and looked at her. "Unfortunately, in that order."

Cory laughed and swatted his ass. "You can go upstairs to my place and take a quick nap. There's a lull in business right now but we both know this place will be packed tonight. Hurricane warnings always bring out the crazies."

Remy stood and gave her a kiss. "I was going to ask your opinion on whether we should go ahead and close and board up the windows?"

Cory shrugged and went back to her shelf paper. "We never closed down before for a hurricane warning. Although I do think it would be a smart idea to board up the windows just in case."

"I'll get started." He kissed Cory once more and headed for the stairs. The storage room was across the hall from Cory's small one-bedroom apartment.

He started to open the door when something across the hall caught his eye. He walked over and retrieved the small yellow box. It was wrapped with a lavender ribbon. Remy looked at the gift in his hand. "This can't be good," he mumbled.

"What can't be good?" Cory came up behind him and peered over his shoulder.

Remy looked over his shoulder while trying to hide the small box at his side. "Hey, sweetheart, what are you doing up here?"

Cory gave him a puzzled look. "I came up to help you carry down the plywood. What's going on, Remy?"

Remy blew a deep breath out from between his teeth. He held the small gift up so she could see it. "I found this sitting against your door."

Cory snatched the box out of his hand. She looked at the size of the box and the packaging. She handed it back to him with a frightened look in her eyes. "Throw it away."

Remy narrowed his eyes at her. He could tell she was about to freak out on him. "What is it? Who sent you this gift?"

Cory looked him in the eye and turned and started walking back down the stairs. She answered over her shoulder. "It's the perfume Anton bought me every year for Christmas. I assume the ghost is back."

Remy stuck the box in his pocket and ran down the stairs after her. He caught her in the hallway. "Cory, stop."

She spun around and crossed her arms. "Why? So you can tell me I'm crazy again? No thank you. I know what I know. And that perfume could've only come from one person, Anton."

Remy closed his eyes and ran his fingers through his hair. "Hell, I don't know what to believe anymore. But I do know that you and I are getting out of Key West for a while. We'll close the bar and Lester can let us know if the hurricane washes it away. Right now, I don't give a fuck about the bar. I got a call from Gabe a couple days ago asking if I'd be interested in coming to his ranch to help build a rehabilitation center. I told him I couldn't right now because I refused to leave you."

Wrapping his arms around Cory, he placed his forehead against the top of her head. "I've changed my mind. I want us both to get away for a while." Remy tilted her chin up. "I love you, sweetheart. I don't know what's going on around here but I certainly don't think you're crazy."

Cory sighed and wrapped her arms around Remy's waist. "What kind of rehab center is your friend building?"

Remy smiled and kissed her. He knew that she'd go with him to Oklahoma and his heart soared. "An equestrian rehabilitation center for people in wheelchairs. Gabe figures they'll have mostly kids but it'll be open to anyone who needs it. Does this mean you'll go with me?"

"How can I say no? It sounds like a wonderful place. When do we leave?"

Remy looked around the empty bar. He walked over and locked the front door and put the closed sign out. "Right after we board up the windows and ready this place for a hurricane." Making his way back to Cory, he led her up the staircase. "I'll also need to swing by my place and get it ready but with my hurricane shutters it shouldn't take long. I'll call Gabe and tell him to expect us the day after tomorrow. By the time we get our work done we should have just enough time to catch a local flight to Tampa. We can spend the night there and try to get a flight to Oklahoma City. We'll have to rent a car from there to get to Quints."

"Why don't you start dragging the plywood out of the storage room? I'll call Lester and pack a suitcase. What's the weather like right now in west Oklahoma?"

Remy followed her up the stairs. "Hot enough for you to wear what you have on but I don't relish the thought of having to kill one of my friends for looking at you. Better pack some jeans and t-shirts."

Cory rolled her eyes as she unlocked her apartment door. "I'll do what you ask this time but don't expect me to change the way I dress ever again. I've already lived through that and I won't do it anymore."

Before she could enter her apartment, Remy spun her around and into his arms. He untied the top of her halter top and pushed the shirt down past her breasts. Without asking for permission, he latched on to one of her peaked nipples and sucked deeply.

Cory let out a moan and arched her back. Remy quickly unsnapped her short-shorts and pushed them down along with her underwear. "I need inside you, sweetheart."

Toeing off her sandals, Cory stepped out of her shorts and underwear. "Ready when you are, big guy."

Remy broke the suction on her nipple and pushed his jeans and underwear down far enough that his erection sprang free. He lifted Cory, placing his hands on her ass, and without preamble, impaled her on his cock. "Oh Jesus, you feel good."

Using her arms to support herself, she leaned back against the wall and started moving. "I need more."

With muscles flexed, Remy held her ass in his hands and backed away enough to give her the hard-and-fast action she enjoyed. Every time he sank into her depths her back hit the wall. It was a damn good thing they were the only ones in the building because it sounded like all hell was breaking loose. He continued his full driving assault and stretched his fingers out enough on her ass to slip two inside her back entrance.

"Yes. More. Oh God, Remy, more."

Remy smiled and moved his fingers as deep within her as they could go. "I'm gonna fuck this pretty ass tonight, sweetheart. Would you like that? Would you like the feel of my fat cock rammed so far up your ass you can't breathe?"

Cory's body tightened around him as she dropped her head back against the wall and came. Remy knew she loved it when he talked dirty. He shoved his cock as deep as it would go and erupted. His cock continued to spurt stream after stream of his cum deep inside her pussy as she took his mouth in a passionate kiss.

Breaking the kiss, Remy slowly released her enough to let her feet touch the ground. "I'll never get enough of your hot little body."

"Good. See that you don't." Cory bent over and retrieved her clothes. While she was down there she licked his cock clean. The combined tastes of her and him made her groan. "We taste good together."

Remy groaned too and pulled her back up to her feet. "As much as I could stand here and make love to you all day, we need to get a move on." Although the words he spoke didn't hold much meaning once he began to play with her breasts.

Cory slapped his hands away and retied her halter. "You get the plywood and I'll pack some clothes." She looked at him with mischief in her eyes. "Some jeans and some of my shorts. I'll feel out the crowd before I wear anything too revealing."

Remy swatted her ass. "The only person you'd better be feeling out is me. Let the rest of them get their own."

Chapter Four

With the rush of people trying to get out of the Keys before the hurricane hit, it was one o'clock in the morning before they arrived in Tampa. Remy was lucky enough to get a hotel room just down the street from the airport. By the time they'd checked in and got to their room in was almost two o'clock.

Remy could see that Cory was dead on her feet. He led her over to the bed and pulled off her shoes. "Get undressed, sweetheart, and go to sleep. I'm gonna take a quick shower before I join you."

Remy took a shower and was back sliding under the covers ten minutes later. He pulled an already-sleeping Cory into his chest. She curled against him even in sleep. Remy smiled and kissed the top of her head.

How the hell had he been fortunate enough to have another chance with this incredible woman?

As he stroked her back, Remy thought of Anton. He still didn't know why she'd married him. He had a pretty good idea why he'd married her though. Growing up, Remy and Anton had been inseparable even though Anton was what his father referred to as a swamp rat. It wasn't until Remy refused to go to college and joined the Navy that they'd had their first fight.

Remy remembered Anton screaming at him the night before he left for the Navy. "You have everything here. You could easily go to college and yet you'd rather play sailor boy. I'd love to go to school but it's not even an option for me."

Anton wrote him soon after and apologized for his behavior. He said he ranted like he did because he couldn't bear the thought of Remy not being around. When Anton called him to ask whether he'd be interested in going into a partnership in a bar, Remy somehow felt that he owed it to his friend. He'd never asked where Anton came up with the money for his half but now he was beginning to wonder.

Cory stirred and Remy wrapped her tighter in his arms. A little over nine years ago he'd come home on leave. He, Anton and Cory had all gone out to the local bar. They'd all been drunk when they dropped Anton off at his house. It was the one and only night he'd ever slept with Cory until now.

Remy had to leave early the next morning, but he told Anton before he left that he was thinking about leaving the Navy when his tour was up. He told him what happened with Cory the previous night after they'd dropped him off. Anton hugged him and told Remy he was happy for them.

He now knew that Anton was anything but happy for them. Barely three months later he'd married Remy's love. Remy's jaw tightened. Married and then abused her.

Remy was suddenly glad his old friend was dead. It would save Remy the trouble of killing him.

Cory kissed Remy's chest in her sleep. Remy ran his hands down her back. He had her now and nothing would take her away again. On that thought Remy drifted off to sleep.

* * * * *

They boarded a plane the next afternoon. Remy couldn't get a direct flight to Oklahoma City so they had to stop in Dallas for a layover. Remy called Gabe while they waited for their next flight. Gabe told him that Mac and Nicco were getting into Oklahoma City that night and had plans to rent a car and drive to the ranch the next morning.

After Remy disconnected the call, he turned to Cory. "Our flight gets in to Oklahoma City about four o'clock but I think we should make an easy evening of it and ride to the ranch with Nicco and Mac in the morning."

At Cory's nod of approval he flipped his phone back open and called Nicco.

"Hi, Remy."

"Hey. I just talked to Gabe and he said you were driving to the ranch from Oklahoma City in the morning."

"Yeah. We don't get in until about seven o'clock. I thought it'd be better to wait until morning to make the drive."

"Cory and I would like to hitch a ride with you in the morning. How 'bout you and Mac meet us for a late supper tonight?" Remy reached over and took Cory's hand.

"Sounds good. Where are you staying and we'll just plan to stay at the same place?"

Remy told Nicco the name of their hotel and Nicco agreed to meet them in the lobby about eight o'clock. The two men said their goodbyes and disconnected.

Leaning over, Remy gave Cory a quick kiss. "I hope you don't mind having dinner with Nicco and Mac."

"Not at all. I've heard about your friends for years. It's about time I met them."

* * * * *

Remy carried their luggage to their second-floor room. After letting themselves in, he collapsed on the bed. "Lord. I don't know what it is about flying but it wears me out every time."

Cory smiled and crawled up on the bed. She straddled his lap and sat on top of his hardening cock. She did a little wiggle with her ass and Remy moaned. "So what time did you say we had to meet your friends?"

Remy slowly unbuttoned her blouse. "Not until eight. We've got plenty of time for me to make love to this ass," he said, thrusting his pelvis against Cory.

Laughing, she climbed off him and stripped as he watched. When Cory was totally naked, she started in on Remy's shoes. As she unlaced his military-style boots, she looked up at him. "You know, I could get you naked faster if you were to switch to loafers."

"Yeah but then I wouldn't have the joy of watching your beautiful breasts sway back and forth while you're struggling with my laces."

Cory took his boots and socks off and stood up. Before she tackled his shirt and jeans she shimmied her shoulders, laughing as Remy's tongue came out to lick his lips.

"Oh, y' vixen. Why do dat ta Remy?"

Cory slapped his stomach as she began unbuttoning his shirt. "No Cajun from you, Remington. Unlike most of the girls you've fucked, I don't find it the least bit sexy."

Remy finally understood why she hated it so much when he talked that way. Anton spoke with a heavy Cajun accent. Hell, that was where Remy picked it up in the first place. He reached up and pulled Cory on top of him. "I'll never do it again, sweetheart. And by the way. I may have fucked a lot of women over the years but you're the first and only woman I've ever made love to."

"Good. Keep it that way. Now, are you going to take your jeans off or what?" She gave him a devilish grin and rubbed her bountiful chest against his.

Remy tossed her off him and jumped off the bed. "You're gonna get it now." He went to his suitcase and rifled around until he found his shaving kit. Taking the little brown bag into the bathroom, he returned seconds later with a tube of lubricant in one hand and his naked cock in the other.

He stroked his cock as he stood over her. "You sure you're ready for this, *chere*?"

"Bring it on," she said as she flipped her body over on the mattress. When she looked back over her shoulder Remy was standing there with his mouth open. Cory decided to shock him even further. She drew her knees up on the bed and presented him her naked ass in all its glory.

"Fuck. I'm gonna have to have a taste of that before I fuck it." Remy crawled onto the bed and bit her butt cheek. "I think this is the only pale part of your sweet body."

Cory laughed and wiggled her ass for him. "Dinner is served."

Not wasting any time, Remy ran his tongue up and down the crack of Cory's ass. He placed a kiss on her tight rosette before giving it a quick scrape of his teeth.

Shocked at the light nip, Cory let out a squeak of surprise. Remy's hands grabbed both pale globes and separated them. He stuck his finger in her wet pussy long enough to extract some of her essence and went about exploring her hole.

"Such a pretty sight you are, sweetheart. All open for me and everything. Your ass looks like it's just begging for my cock." Remy thrust first one then two fingers deep inside her. When Cory moaned and thrust her butt back into his hand, Remy added a third.

"More, Remy. Feels so good." Cory's back began to bow and Remy could tell she was getting close to coming.

He quickly grabbed the tube of lube and squirted a generous amount onto his fingers. He ran his fingers around and inside her nether hole as she thrust back. Remy reached for a condom and rolled it down his shaft.

Getting up on his knees behind Cory, he lined his cock up with her hole and slowly entered her. "Fuck. Fuck, you feel good."

Remy was trying his best to go slowly but Cory wasn't having it and impaled herself on his cock in one hard backward thrust.

"God, you feel good inside me." Cory gripped the comforter as the two of them quickly established a brutal rhythm.

Watching his cock disappear inside Cory's ass was the most erotic thing he'd ever witnessed. "I wish you could see how hot you look from my point of view."

He felt his balls draw up closer to his body as they slapped against Cory's upper thighs. Remy knew he was about to come so he reached under Cory and squeezed her clit between his thumb and forefinger.

Seconds later, Cory let out a scream that the reception desk probably heard. When her muscles tightened around his already-sensitive cock, Remy emptied everything he had deep within her.

They both collapsed to the bed. Nothing was said while the two of them tried to get their heart rates and breathing under control. Finally, Cory turned her head toward him. "Wow. That was...wow."

Remy couldn't talk yet so he just grunted his agreement.

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Remy sat on the bed, waiting for Cory to come out of the bathroom. She'd insisted on separate showers and had even taken her clothes into the bathroom with her. He looked at his watch. "Cory, sweetheart? It's five minutes 'til eight. We need to get downstairs to meet the guys."

The bathroom door opened and Cory stepped out. "No way. There's absolutely no way I'll let you around Nicco and Mac wearing that dress." Remy eyed the black jersey mini-dress. It barely covered her pussy at the bottom and was cut damn near to her belly button on top. Hell, he could see most of her gorgeous breasts and she definitely wasn't wearing a bra.

Cory stopped and raised her brow at him. "I told you I would dress more conservatively at the ranch but we're not at the ranch yet. Let me be sexy for you tonight."

Remy rose and stood in front of her. He cupped her face in his hands. "I understand what you're saying and believe me I appreciate the thought but Nicco isn't known as

the 'Latin Lover' for nothing. Besides, my damn slacks are going to be tented all night for the world to see."

Cory rose up and kissed him. "Don't worry, Remy. You're the only man I have eyes for. And the other problem can be solved by wearing your jacket. Now let's go meet your friends."

Remy groaned. "Hardheaded woman." He smacked her ass as she passed by heading for the door. "Wait just a damn minute." He walked over to her and smacked her ass again. Raising his brow this time, Remy lifted the bottom of her dress up. "Oh Christ, you're going to make me come in my pants. Why aren't you wearing underwear?"

Smiling, Cory opened the door. "To torment you, my dear man. Just like I'm taking the stairs instead of the elevator." With a wink she was out the door and headed for the stairs.

Muttering to himself, Remy grabbed his jacket and followed Cory.

Nicco and Mac were standing beside the lobby's fireplace. Remy waved and ushered Cory over to meet his two friends. He embraced Nicco first then Mac. "I'd like you both to meet my Corrine."

"Cory," she said and shook the men's hands. "I've heard a lot about both of you. It's nice to finally meet you both."

Nicco smiled and looked at Remy. "Now I know why Remy's never introduced us before. Might I say you're exceptionally beautiful?"

Remy growled and Cory laughed. "Thank you. Please don't pay any attention to my guard dog. He tends to be a little territorial."

Mac chimed in as he shook her hand. "I can see why."

Remy stepped up and wrapped his arm around Cory. "Shall we eat here in the hotel or would you prefer something else?"

Cory looked toward the hotel restaurant. "I say we eat in the restaurant and then go to the lounge for a few drinks. What do you think, Mac?"

Mac straightened his tie. "Sounds good to me. Nicco?"

Nicco nodded and the foursome entered the hotel restaurant.

* * * * *

After dinner they headed across the lobby to the hotel lounge. The music was a mix of top forty and country. They found a booth along the wall and ordered drinks.

"So tell us how the bar business is treating you?" Nicco asked as he took a drink of red wine.

Remy downed about half his beer before answering. "Okay for the most part. It gets a little boring in the off-season though." Remy put his hand on Cory's bare thigh.

"Luckily this year I'll have my Cory to keep things lively." He winked at her as he slid his hand up under her dress to her exposed pussy.

Cory choked a little on her margarita as he stuck two fingers deep inside her. She looked across the table at Nicco and Mac as she spread her legs a little wider under the table. "So what kinds of things do you guys do in the protection business?"

Nicco winked at Remy as if he knew exactly what was going on under the table. "It really depends on the client. Sometimes we're hired for visiting dignitaries or the occasional movie star who needs bodyguards while they're in New York. We've also been holding clinics for established bodyguards. We teach them the latest in weaponry and how to evade kidnapping attempts."

Nicco shrugged and looked over at Mac. "Mac does a lot of investigative work. I'm more of a hands-on kind of guy. Being cooped up in an office is hell for me."

Mac elbowed him in the ribs. "It's hell for me too but someone has to run the business side of things. We can't all be protecting rock stars and starlets."

While Nicco and Mac got into a discussion about work, Remy continued to finger Cory under the table. He leaned over and kissed her. Leaning close to her ear, he whispered. "I want to replace my fingers with either my tongue or my cock in the next ten minutes."

Cory smiled and ran her tongue up the side of his face. "We're not going back to the room until you dance with me." She gave him the "don't try to argue with me" look and Remy knew he was about to dance. He pulled his fingers out of her pussy and took her hand. "Sorry, guys, the lady needs a dance."

He slid out of the booth and helped Cory stand. He escorted her to the dance floor and pulled her tightly against his body.

When he had her attention he stuck the two fingers he'd had inside her moments ago into his mouth. "Mmm."

Cory blushed and lowered her head. When she looked back up into his eyes, Remy could see the heat rolling off her in waves. "How's your cock?"

Remy snorted. "It went numb about thirty minutes ago. I think it's permanently damaged, thanks to you."

Cory slid her lower stomach against Remy's tented slacks. "I think I can handle a little TLC."

Remy groaned and stepped off the dance floor, dragging her back to their table. He nodded to Nicco and Mac. "We'll meet you two in the lobby tomorrow morning at seven sharp."

He turned his back on the laughing Nicco and pulled Cory to the elevator. Luckily they only had to wait a couple of minutes before the elevator doors opened. Remy pulled Cory inside the elevator and into his arms. He took her mouth with his as the doors slid shut. "When I get you back to our room I'm gonna pump you so full of my seed you're not going to be able to help but to get pregnant."

The look on Cory's face told him he'd stepped into a deep pile of shit. The elevator doors slid open and Cory pulled away from him with tears in her eyes. He opened the room door and ushered her inside. She headed for the bathroom but he grabbed her hand. "I'm sorry, sweetheart. I'm not sure what I said to hurt you but I swear it wasn't intentional. I wasn't serious when I said I was going to get you pregnant if that's what you're upset about."

Remy sighed and ran his hand through his hair. "Talk to me. You're scaring me now."

Cory wrapped her arms around him and broke down. "There's some things I need to tell you but I don't want you to hate me."

Remy led her to the bed and sat her down. He took off her shoes and handed her a tissue. He stretched out on the bed after taking off his jacket and pulled Cory down beside him. Once they were wrapped around each other he kissed her forehead. "Talk to me. Nothing you can say will change the way I feel."

Cory shook her head. "You're wrong." She blew her nose and buried her head against his neck. "I married Anton because I was pregnant. I was afraid of my family and what they would say if they found out. I kept waiting for a letter or something from you but nothing came and I was so afraid. I thought maybe I'd misread you and it was just a one-time thing for you. I asked Anton to help me get a hold of you and he told me that you told him you'd made a mistake by sleeping with me."

Remy interrupted her. "No, I told Anton that I loved you and was going to come home as soon as my tour was up to marry you." It suddenly occurred to Remy what she'd said. "Was it my baby?"

Cory stroked his face without looking up. "Yes. Anton agreed to marry me to save my reputation. Three months after we were married we had an argument at the top of the stairs and he went to grab me and I pulled away from him and fell down them. I was six months pregnant at the time."

Cory blew her nose again. "I lost not only our baby but the ability to ever have another one. Something happened in the fall and my uterus wouldn't stop bleeding. The doctors were finally forced to remove it." She looked into Remy's eyes for the first time since she began. "I'm sorry, for everything. I can't give you a child. I know I don't deserve one for myself after what I did to our baby but you love kids. Maybe you need to be with someone who can give them to you."

Remy pulled her up and kissed her. He wiped her tears and then wiped his own. "I love you, Cory. You. Not for a child that you can or can't give me. And I don't in any way blame you for the death of our baby. It was an accident. Hell, I should get down on my knees and thank God that you weren't killed in the fall." He kissed her again.

"I'm just sorry that we both trusted Anton. We were both lied to and manipulated by someone we thought we could trust. But, sweetheart, you've paid the biggest price for all his lies. I'm sorry that he hurt you. I'm sorry that you felt you had to marry him."

Remy kissed her tear-dampened lashes. "Let's get undressed and get some sleep. We've got a big week ahead of us."

"I love you, Remy."

"I love you too."

Chapter Five

The four friends arrived at Gabe's the next day before noon. Remy was grateful that Mac had driven from Oklahoma City. He felt emotionally drained this morning and all he wanted to do was hold on to Cory.

Cory seemed to be doing a little better. She even laughed and joked with Mac and Nicco on the drive over.

They met Gabe and his newfound family. Cotton he already knew from Ben's wedding and Jake, Jenny and Cree's wedding. Boone he'd met briefly at Ben's house a couple of months ago. He had to hand it to Gabe. When he looked for love he did it properly. Remy had never seen him so happy.

After lunch they were all put to work doing different chores around the new rehabilitation center. Cory stayed inside with Ben's wife Kate and Cotton's mother Maggie. The women were going to be in charge of decorating the individual cabins and the main gathering building for the patients. Remy could tell by the light in Cory's eyes that she was happy here.

Remy was sent to work in the cabins putting toilets in. He was glad he had a chance to get Nicco alone for a while. "Hey, buddy, I need to talk to you about some weird things that have been happening to Cory."

Nicco nodded as he set the wax ring into place. "Go ahead. But first carry that toilet over here and sit it on top of this ring."

Remy rolled his eyes but did as he was told. Once he set it down Nicco tightened the bolts to hold the toilet to the floor.

"A week ago Cory got a phone call late at night that she swears was the voice of Anton. The only thing he said before hanging up was 'bitch'. Then a couple days ago I found a bottle of perfume against the door to her apartment. Cory said it was the same brand of perfume Anton bought her every year for Christmas."

"That does sound like there's something not quite right going on. Do you have any ideas about who could be doing it or why?"

Shaking his head, Remy blew out a frustrated breath. "I don't know who it could be but I think it's a little strange that these things started occurring on the very day that we finally got back together."

Nicco nodded his head. "Is there any possibility that Anton isn't dead? It sounds like either a jealous lover or someone else who's trying to make her think she's going crazy."

"Anton died in a boat explosion off the coast of Islamorada. He was a chain smoker and the Coast Guard suspect that he had a fuel leak and a carelessly thrown cigarette caused the explosion." Remy hooked the back of the toilet to the water line.

"I'd like to look into it a little, if you don't mind?"

"Don't mind at all. I'd appreciate anything you can do. It twists my gut when I see Cory upset."

Nicco smiled and slapped Remy on the back. "Ah. Another SEAL bites the dust."

* * * * *

Cory enjoyed watching the interplay between Remy and his friends. She remembered feeling sorry for him after his father, Judge Boudreaux, passed away. She didn't know Remy had all the family he needed in his friends. There was a real brotherly love between them all.

Well, except for Jake and Cree. Their love went way beyond the brotherly sort.

Kate was amazingly fun to be around as well. Cory was happy to see they had the same taste in clothing. When none of the men outwardly ogled her, except for Jake, of course, but then he was always horny, Cory decided it was all right to bring out her normal sexy clothes. The two women spent most of the day together. They shopped the entire area searching for decorative items and a few antiques. They'd come up with a dude ranch theme for the cabins and gathering rooms. Not very original, they knew, but they figured if people were going to come here from the city they'd get a kick out of a Western atmosphere in their surroundings. Ben had been very generous with his pocketbook and Kate bought what she liked without worrying so much about the cost.

It seemed Ben was a multimillionaire and refused to spend his money on himself. Kate confided to Cory that the decorating money was coming out of Ben's bank account and not the money set aside for the facility.

They were coming back from an antique mall three towns away when Kate noticed a car in her rearview mirror. "That's odd."

Cory looked up from the magazine she'd been sifting through. "What?"

"That car behind us was the one following us on the drive in to Arrow Bend." Kate looked at her speedometer and back to the rearview mirror. "I'm sure it's the same car. See how the windows are so darkly tinted. I remember earlier thinking it was strange to see a car like that in the middle of nowhere."

Cory turned and looked at the car. She tried her best to see through the tinted windshield. "I can't even make out who's driving. Maybe we should call Remy or Ben?"

Kate waved her away. "Have you ever seen that group of guys in full protective mode? It's not pretty, believe me. I say we wait until we get closer to the ranch. If they're still behind us when we pull in, it will be their funeral."

Cory bit her lip. She knew she was being paranoid, but the hair on the back of her neck was standing up and goose bumps had broken out on her skin. Finally, only two miles before they got to the ranch the car turned onto a little gravel road.

Kate let out a sigh of relief, but Cory still didn't like it. She decided to tell Remy later that night about the whole incident.

When Cory and Katie pulled up, Remy and Ben were both there to welcome them home. Remy opened her SUV door as soon as the engine was turned off. "Hey, sweetheart. I missed you today." He pulled her out of the vehicle and into his arms. "Did you buy anything?"

"Check out the back. We cleaned them out. We even bought three long farmhouse tables that need to be picked up." Cory wrapped her arms around Remy's neck and leaned in for a kiss. "Now kiss me and help me unload our treasures."

Remy seemed only too happy to oblige. He took her mouth like he hadn't seen her in a month. The kiss was so erotic and deep that the two of them forgot they were in the middle of the ranch yard. Remy's hands wandered to her gorgeous breasts and slipped under the tiny halter top. Squeezing a breast in each hand, Remy groaned and took the kiss even deeper as he began rubbing his proud erection against her lower stomach.

"Hey. We've got cabins for that. Stop torturing the rest of us."

Remy looked up to see Jake standing on the porch, rubbing his cock through his jeans like he was in pain. Remy was a little surprised and embarrassed to feel his own cock stir at the sight of Jake standing there watching them. Jake shook his head and headed for his cabin, cell phone in hand. Remy glanced over at Ben and Kate. The way the two of them looked it seemed that Remy wasn't the only one that got carried away.

As he watched Jake flip open his cell phone, Remy couldn't help but laugh. "Poor Jake is going to be useless for at least another half-hour. I hope they have free long-distance on those phones. It's just too bad Jenny is so close to delivering the twins that she and Cree couldn't have come along."

Ben nodded and righted Kate's clothes. "I think we'll have to head back home tomorrow. Jake isn't doing well without them. It's like separating an addict from his drug of choice and he's been looking at the rest of us a little too much, especially you and Cory."

* * * * *

That night, after dinner and several rounds of cards, Remy took Cory back to their little guest cabin. "You have a great group of friends. I wish I'd gotten to know Jake a little more though. He seems kind of grouchy but I'm sure you'd be the same if we were separated for a week."

"Damn right, I'd be grouchy." Remy locked the door and started undressing. He had his shirt off and was pulling off his boots and socks when he noticed Cory was just

sitting on the bed. He looked at her, eyebrow raised. "Am I the only one who can't wait to get in bed?"

Cory shook her head slightly as if coming out of a trance. She reached for the tie at the back of her neck. "Sorry. Something strange happened today when Kate and I went on our shopping trip. I guess it's still on my mind." She released the tie and the top of her halter slid down. Cory reached for the tie at her back and began undoing the knot.

By this time Remy was completely naked and knelt on the floor in between her thighs. He started unbuttoning and then unzipping her shorts. "What happened today?"

Even though he'd asked the question, his mind was on her body. He lifted her enough to slide the shorts down and off. She'd decided against underwear today so that wasn't a problem.

"I think maybe a car was following us," Cory finally said.

That snapped him out of his lust-filled haze just as he'd taken a nipple into his mouth. His head shot up, releasing her tight bud. "What do you mean a car was following you?"

Cory shrugged her shoulders. "I don't know if it was really following us or not. All I know is the same car was behind us all the way to Broken Arrow and then the same car was behind us coming home. It turned onto a gravel road about two miles from the ranch entrance. I can't explain it but I got a very weird feeling. Like I knew the person in the car. The windows were tinted very dark and I couldn't even make out the shape of the driver, let alone an actual face." Cory shuddered visibly. "Just kinda freaked me out."

Remy stood and ran his fingers through his hair. He pulled the covers back on the bed and motioned for Cory to join him. When she snuggled up next to him, Remy wrapped his arms around her and held her. He ran his hand down her naked body and drew circles over her butt cheeks.

Cory could tell he was deep in thought. She waited for him to say something. When nothing came she started exploring on her own. Circling his nipples with her tongue, she let her hand wander to his hardened shaft. Tracing the veins up and down the length of his shaft, she suddenly bit his nipple.

"Hey. What was that for?" Remy rubbed his chest with one hand and squeezed her ass with the other.

"Just making sure your head was in the game." Cory slid her hand up and down on his cock.

Remy flipped her so fast it didn't register until she was under him. He thrust his cock against her wet pussy. "Oh, this is no game." The kiss that followed was all teeth and tongue. Remy nipped her lips and thrust his tongue deep into the recesses of her mouth. He positioned his cock between the wet lips of her pussy and slid back and forth.

"Stop teasing me." Cory was burning up with love for this man. She wanted him inside her, a part of her. She thrust up a few times and wrapped her legs higher around his body. No way could he not get that hint.

"I'm trying to decide whether to make love to your pussy or your ass, so don't rush me." Remy looked down at her and smiled. "Do you have a preference?"

Cory groaned. "Put your cock in my pussy and a dildo in my ass." She motioned toward her suitcase. "There's one in the inside pocket."

Remy reared back. "You've been holding out on me, sweetheart." He levered himself off the bed and retrieved the dildo. "Damn." Remy looked at the size of the realistic-looking dildo.

"No wonder you took my cock so easily. How long have you had this thing?" Remy crawled back under the covers and reached for the tube of lube.

"Since Anton died. I always fantasized about getting fucked in the ass, but not with Anton. Sex with him was more like an expected duty. He didn't believe in foreplay and he was never gentle. He even asked me to service a few of his business associates."

"You've got to be fucking kidding me. What kind of business associates did Anton have? As far as I knew his only business was the bar and I was his associate. He never offered you to me." Remy lubed the dildo up as he talked to her.

"I don't know what kind of business he did with them. I just know I walked into the bar on several occasions to find him at a table with a bunch of men who spoke Spanish. They rarely talked in English and when they did their accents were so thick I could barely understand them." Cory shrugged her shoulders. "Needless to say I paid dearly for not agreeing to service his guests."

"Bastard." Remy was still holding the lubed dildo in his fist. He was squeezing it so tight his knuckles were white. "What kind of sick fuck offers to share his wife? I can't believe this is the same Anton I grew up with. What happened to him along the way?"

"I think it was the desire to have everything you did. You were always the most popular guy in school. Your dad was the judge. In Anton's eyes you had everything and he had nothing. All he had was an alcoholic mother and no father. I think something snapped in him and he decided to do whatever was necessary to get the money and influence he'd envied all his life."

Cory fanned her hair out on the pillow behind her in a nervous gesture. "When my parents were killed four years ago, Anton was livid that all their money went into a trust. The trust pays me a set figure per month and no more as long as I remained married to Anton. I remember him going crazy after the funeral when we found out. My parents knew that Anton would blow every cent if he ever got his hands on it. This was their way of protecting me from that."

Remy leaned over and kissed her. "Can we go back to where we were before we started talking about Anton? Back to the point where you were begging me to fill both

your beautiful holes." Remy set the dildo on the side of the bed. "Come here, you sweet thing."

Cory smiled and curled up against him. Remy kissed her lips and moved down her neck, licking and nipping. He swirled his tongue around her nipple and latched on. His cheeks hollowed out as he continued to suck deeply on her already-sensitive nipples. Cory arched her back and buried her hands in his hair. "Yes."

Remy's hand slid down her stomach to her thrusting pelvis. "Damn, you're wet." He pinched her clit lightly and slid down to thrust three fingers deep inside her.

Body tight as a bow, Cory came around his fingers. Not wanting to miss a drop, Remy slid down her body and lapped up her cream. "You taste good too," he said in between licks to her pussy.

Reaching for the already-lubricated dildo, he looked up at her. "Hand me that tube, sweetheart." Cory handed him the lube and he squeezed a generous dollop onto his fingers. Remy went back to eating her pussy while he slicked her sensitive pucker.

Still reeling from her previous orgasm, the combination of Remy licking her pussy and pushing his fingers in her ass set her off again. By the time her breathing returned to normal, he had her stretched.

Remy sat up on his knees. "Hold your legs up to your chest for me." Cory complied gratefully. Remy held the dildo at her back entrance and pushed slowly.

"Oh. Oh. Deeper." Cory writhed on the bed.

Remy's cock throbbed and he knew he had to get inside her. He pushed the dildo in as far as he could and quickly crawled over her. Lining his cock up with her dripping pussy, he pushed in to the hilt.

Once again, Cory's body erupted around his cock. Remy began thinking about anything he could to keep his body in check. When Cory looked up at him through her heavily lashed eyes he couldn't hold back any longer. Remy pulled back until just the crown of his cock was still trapped inside her and plunged in hard. He set a punishing rhythm of charge and retreat. Finally his overexcited body couldn't take any more and he ground his pelvis against hers, burying himself to the hilt. His cock throbbed and shot what seemed like a lifetime of cum deep inside her pussy. In the throes of passion he inadvertently bit her breast. Cory's squeal of pain brought him out of his lust-fueled trance.

"Ow. Ow. Remy, stop." Cory tried to push his head off her chest.

Remy released her and shook his head. He collapsed to the side of Cory and pulled her into his arms. "Oh God. Oh God. I'm so sorry, sweetheart. I didn't mean to hurt you."

Cory saw the pain of what he'd done in his eyes. That look more than anything else proved to her that he was nothing like Anton. "Shh. It's okay. I know you didn't mean to hurt me."

As Remy tried his best to apologize with kisses, Cory squirmed around. "Um...could you do me a little favor and take the dildo out before you get too comfortable?"

"I'm sorry. Yeah. I wasn't thinking." He carefully removed the dildo and went to the sink. He rinsed the toy and ran warm water over a washcloth. After cleaning himself up he rinsed the cloth again and returned to bed. He gently cleaned between Cory's legs. "I don't think I've ever done that before. I mean, lose my sanity like that. I've always been at keeping in control during sex. I completely lost myself inside your body. I've got no excuse as to why I bit you."

Remy rose up enough to turn on the bedside lamp. He wanted to get a look at the bite mark. "Fuck." He rose from the bed again and got out a clean washcloth. He wet the cloth down and added a little bit of antibacterial soap. Remy returned to the bed, cursing himself the entire way. He gently wiped the blood away and cleaned the wound with the soapy cloth. When it was washed to his satisfaction he got up and rinsed the cloth one more. He cleaned the soapy residue off her skin and placed a clean wet cloth over the wound until the bleeding stopped.

Cory could tell he was emotionally distancing himself. She couldn't believe how much this was affecting him. Cory pulled the cloth out of his hand and threw it on the floor. The bleeding had stopped for the most part anyway. She pulled his face down until their noses were barely touching. "Don't. I know you didn't mean to hurt me, Remington Boudreaux. There's nothing wrong with losing yourself in passion occasionally. I won't allow you to blame yourself for something that happened during the best sex of my life."

She felt a drop of moisture land on her face and it broke her heart. Cory drew his head closer and licked away his tears. "I love you. I always have. Even when I was the gangly preteen in braces following you around the neighborhood. That night nine years ago was a culmination of all my hopes and dreams." She kissed his lips. "I finally get a chance at that dream and I won't let you pull away from me."

Remy cleared his throat and nodded. "You've no idea how much I love you. That's why I stayed away so much after you married Anton. It killed me to be around you and not be able to tell you how much you meant to me." Remy looked down at the bite mark he'd inflicted. "Promise me you'll have Rex look at that tomorrow. He's not a doctor but he's been treating animal wounds most of his life. He'll know what to do so infection doesn't set in."

Cory's brow rose as she looked up at him. "Are you telling me it's okay to have Rex look at my breast?"

Remy finally smiled. "Only for medicinal purposes and only because big, gigantic boobs don't turn him on."

Scooting down a little in the bed, Cory snuggled up to him. "Sleep, sweet prince."

* * * * *

The next morning they all met for their last breakfast together before Kate, Ben and Jake left for home. Cory thought Jake was so cute. He was smiling more this morning than in the whole week she'd been around him. He couldn't stop talking about Jenny and Cree. It was comforting to see a man so at ease with his own sexuality that he loved both a man and a woman so openly.

Cory looked around the breakfast table. She was completely surrounded by people in love. She smiled to herself. Including she and Remy. She could tell Remy still felt guilty about the bite he'd inflicted last night. He kept glancing at her over his breakfast plate with remorse in his eyes. She smiled at him every time she caught him. Cory had seen him take Rex into the living room earlier. She supposed it was concerning her bite.

After breakfast Rex approached her. He bent close to her ear as she was finishing up the morning dishes. "Could I see you for a minute?"

Cory blushed but nodded and dried her hands. Rex led her into the master bathroom. She sat down on the side of the garden tub while he dug around in the medicine cabinet.

Rex pulled out a first-aid box and knelt in front of her. "I'm sorry. I know this is embarrassing but Remy's right. That wound needs to be kept clean or you'll no doubt get an infection."

Cory bit her lip and nodded. She untied her halter top and slid one side down enough so he could doctor her wound. She was still embarrassed enough that she held the top over her nipple though.

Rex whistled. "Damn. I've never seen anything like it."

"Well, of course not. Number one you're gay, and number two my Cory has the prettiest breasts in the world," Remy said from the doorway. She could tell by the way he held himself that he was trying not to look worried.

Cory blushed even more and Rex gave him a narrowed-eye look. "When you told me this morning that you lost your mind and bit her I had no idea she'd have a complete dental impression carved into her chest. Looks like you damn near tore a chunk out of her breast."

Cory could feel a lecture coming. She put her hand on Rex's arm. "Don't. He feels bad enough as it is." She'd spent an hour talking to him this morning, trying to help alleviate his guilt.

Rex looked into her light green eyes and then back over to Remy's down-turned head. He nodded and got out a bottle of peroxide. "I'm going to pour this over the bite mark first to clean it out." He held a towel under her wound with one hand while he poured the peroxide over her breast. The peroxide bubbled and he kept pouring until it stopped. Next he pulled out an alcohol wipe. He opened the package and held it up. "I'm sorry, Cory, but this is going to burn. Remy, make yourself useful and come over here and blow on her skin after I swab it down."

Remy entered the bathroom and knelt on the other side of Rex. "Okay," he said softly.

Rex swabbed the wound and Cory's inhalation told Remy that it was indeed painful. As he blew on her wound to help take the sting away, he inwardly continued kicking himself.

What kind of monster am I? Am I more like Anton than I was ever aware of?

Rex put on a plastic glove and applied some prescription antibiotic ointment. He noticed Remy looking at the tube. "It's from the fire when Boone cut his forehead. It's strong stuff." He looked at Cory as he opened a gauze pad. "As long as you keep this on the wound for the next couple days and keep the area clean, you should be just fine."

Taping down the gauze pad, Rex looked over at Remy. "It happens, buddy. We all get lost once in a while. As long as Cory doesn't hold you responsible you shouldn't either."

Remy thought about what Rex had said. He gave a short nod and cleared his throat. "Thanks for this, Rex."

Rex nodded and took off the plastic glove. He handed the first-aid kit to Remy. "Take this back to your cabin. That wound will need to be cleaned at least twice a day. More if she does anything to make her sweat." He started to leave and turned back around. "And for God's sake don't get any saliva on it. No kissing it better. Understand?"

Remy smiled and pulled Cory up into his arms. "Yes, Dad."

Rex walked out of the room. "Smartass."

Chapter Six

A week later, Remy and Cory were on a plane headed back to Key West. Cory leafed through a magazine while Remy read the information packet about the equestrian rehabilitation center that Boone had given him. Cory glanced over and smiled. "I can tell by the way you're squinting that you need reading glasses."

Shocked, Remy looked over at her. "No way. I'm not nearly old enough for those. The print on this information sheet is just too small and squiggly." He chuckled. "Maybe you're right. Have you read this?" He held up the packet in his hand.

"Yes. I find the whole idea of the center fascinating. I have to be honest and tell you that I was very tempted to stay and help out."

"Really? What about the bar?" Remy had never even considered that she'd want to do anything but run the bar.

"The bar was Anton's dream, not mine. After he died I just kinda slipped into the role of bar owner." Cory winked at him. "Besides, it was the only way to guarantee that you wouldn't disappear from my life completely."

Remy rubbed his chin. "I felt the exact same way. That's why I quit working for Nicco and Mac after Anton died. Tell me what you would do if you could do anything in the world?"

Cory closed her eyes and sighed. "I'd adopt a child. I'd like to be a stay-at-home mom. Maybe volunteer at a place like Boone's occasionally. I'd like a real house with a real dog named Fred." She yawned, her voice getting softer as she drifted off to sleep.

Remy continued to watch her as she slept. Her long black eyelashes fanned over her high cheekbones.

Adoption? He'd never even thought about adoption before. The picture of a little girl running around the house in pigtails and dresses made him smile. Boys running around chasing their sister with a lizard made him chuckle. Cory would make an excellent mother, and if that was what it took to make a family with her, then he was all for it.

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They got back to the bar a little over two hours later. Unlocking the front door he was thankful the hurricane had moved south at the last minute. It seemed all Key West got was a hell of a lot of rain. Remy flipped on the bar lights as he ushered Cory inside. "Well, at least there doesn't appear to be any water damage. Why don't we go up and check out the upstairs? If the roof leaked at all that's where we'll see it."

"Okay. I'm going to grab a bottle of water. Would you care for one?" Cory strode over and opened the cooler.

"Yeah, sounds good." He walked over and took the bottle from Cory. He leaned in and kissed her. "Thank you."

They headed upstairs to check for water damage. When they opened the door to the storage room, they both gasped. "What the hell?" Remy took in the mess of the room. Boxes were overturned and old files littered the floor.

Remy stepped farther into the room. He turned to Cory. "Give me your apartment key and stay here."

Cory shook her head. "If my home looks like this room I need to know. I'm a big girl. I can handle it."

Looking into her eyes for a long moment, he finally nodded. "Let's go." He led the way to Cory's apartment and held out his hand for the key. Cory placed it in his palm and stepped back.

With a deep breath, he unlocked the door. Her apartment looked even worse than the storage room. Remy looked down at the lock. "Does anyone else have a key to the bar?"

"Yes, Lester."

"What about a key to your apartment? Because, sweetheart, someone used a key to get in and whoever it broke in was obviously looking for something. Do you have any idea what?"

"No. As far as I know no one else has a key." She looked Remy in the eyes. "Except Anton, of course."

"Well, there has got to be another key floating around someplace. What about money? Do you have a safe?"

"I don't keep money or anything in here. It's too risky with the bar right downstairs. I've got a large safety deposit box at the bank that I use for everything," Cory said as she looked around at her apartment.

Remy wrapped an arm around her. "What about Anton? Did he keep anything of importance here?"

"Yeah. I didn't move anything to the bank until after he died. I felt safe enough with a man in the house."

"What did you put in the box?" Remy wrapped his other arm around her and held her to his chest.

"Important papers. The deed to the bar. My marriage license and birth certificate. Stuff like that."

"What about Anton's stuff? What did you do with that?" Remy cleared a spot on the couch and sat her down on his lap.

"All his clothes and stuff I donated to charity. His personal papers from his desk and family bible I put in the box." Cory looked around once again at the devastation. "I guess I'll be bunking at your house for a while. If you'll have me, that is?" Cory looked back into Remy's eyes.

"Of course I'll have you. I was going to suggest it once we arrived back home anyway. Why don't you go pack up the rest of your clothes and stuff? I'll get a couple of boxes out of the storage room and you can take whatever else you want that isn't broken. First though, I'd like you to go back down to the bar. We need to get the police over here to dust for fingerprints."

After Cory headed downstairs, Remy pulled out his phone and called the police. They promised to send someone right over. Next he called Nicco.

"Hello."

"Hey, Nicco. We just arrived home and Cory's apartment and the storage room above the bar have been trashed. It appears someone was looking for something and not too subtly."

"Did you call the police?"

"Yeah, they're sending someone over. I asked Cory what they could be looking for and she had no idea. My guess is that it involves Anton. Cory confided that he was involved some pretty rough-looking characters. They spoke Spanish so she never knew what they were talking about. I had no idea that Anton was involved in any other business besides the bar. Now this has happened along with the things I already told you about. I don't think Cory is safe living here anymore. I'm taking her home with me."

"Sounds like the right thing to do. I'll get started first thing in the morning looking into Anton. If he was into something dirty, I'll find it."

"Thanks."

"You're welcome, buddy. Your main job right now is to protect Cory."

"With my life."

Remy went down to the bar with Cory to wait for the police. He looked around the bar. It was a nice place. Cory had done a great job of decorating it in a southern Louisiana style. "What would you think about putting the bar up for sale?"

Cory spun around and looked at him. "What?" She put down the rag she had been using to wipe the tables down. "Just like that?"

Remy pulled her into his arms. "No. Not just like that. I told you on the plane that I didn't enjoy working in the bar. Now is the perfect time for us to start a new life. It might take a little while to sell this place but I think we should talk about it and about what we want to do. We can move anywhere you want. As long as you're with me I don't care where I live."

Wrapping her arms around his neck, she pulled his head down and kissed him. "I love you, Remy, and I would love to sell this bar. It holds a lot of bad memories for me."

Holding her even tighter, Remy took their kiss deeper. They were startled apart by the banging on the front door. Remy looked at the door and saw a uniformed policeman standing there. "Right after we wrap this up we'll pack up your things and go to my house. We can talk more there." Cory nodded and Remy opened the door.

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The investigative team didn't finish with Cory's apartment until the early hours of the morning. Remy quickly helped Cory throw the rest of her clothes into a couple garbage bags and they headed to his house.

"We'll go through the rest of your things when we wake up." He yawned and rubbed his jaw as he drove. "I'm pooped and the sun will be up in a couple of hours." He held her hand as he pulled into his driveway. Remy unloaded a couple of the garbage bags and handed Cory her suitcase. He ushered her to the front door and unlocked it. Just as he opened the door, he noticed a slight hesitation and then seconds too late he saw the small wire connected to the door snap.

Remy's training took over in that split second and he turned and pushed Cory's body as far off the porch as he could. He launched himself toward her just as the house behind him exploded.

Debris rained down on the two of them for what seemed like hours. Remy tried his best to cover Cory with his body. When the falling debris ended Remy opened his eyes and looked at Cory. "You okay?"

"Yeah, I think so. You?" Cory looked at Remy with a dazed expression in her eyes.

Remy shook his head. "I don't think so, sweetheart. See if you can reach the cell phone in my pocket and call 9-1-1."

Cory looked into his face and reached for the phone. "What's wrong?" She struggled out from under him. Once she was free of him she flipped his phone open and called for help. It was then that she noticed the long piece of wood embedded in his back. The back of his head was also bleeding along with a few bleeding scratches on his arms and legs where he tried to cover her. "Oh God." She was afraid to touch him but spoke quickly to the 9-1-1 operator. The operator informed Cory that apparently one of the neighbors had already called and help was on the way. Looking up, Cory spotted the elderly woman on the porch next door. She was clutching at the front of her bathrobe and Cory could tell she was scared to death.

Cory ran to Remy's car, which was covered with burning debris, and managed to get inside and pull the latch to the trunk. She rifled through the trunk and came up with a small blanket. Running back over to Remy, Cory prayed that the ambulance would hurry. She knelt beside him and spread the blanket out over his legs up to the injury to his back.

Stretching out beside him, Cory smoothed the black curls off his face. Blood was running down his cheek and neck. "Hold on, baby. An ambulance is on the way. You have to hold on. You can't leave me on this earth without you."

Remy was unconscious by now but she kept talking to him in a soothing voice until the ambulance arrived. They quickly assessed his damage and loaded him onto a gurney. They allowed Cory to ride up front in the ambulance to the hospital. The fire

department was already trying to put out the house fire. Cory noticed as they drove away that the house wasn't in as bad a shape as she'd have thought.

When the ambulance pulled up to the emergency room entrance, the technicians quickly unloaded Remy and rushed him inside. A policeman was there to meet Cory and escorted her into the waiting room. She barely remembered answering his questions. He asked if there was anyone she could call to sit with her and the only name that popped into her head was Nicco.

Cory pulled Remy's cell phone out of her pocket and found Nicco's number. In a daze, Cory walked out the emergency room doors and called Nicco.

"Hello? Remy, is that you?"

Cory was crying so hard she couldn't speak for a few seconds. "No, Nicco, it's C-Cory."

"What's happened? Where's Remy?"

She could hear sheets rustling as Nicco talked. "Cory? Where's Remy?"

"There was an explosion. His house. He's—I mean, we're—at the hospital. I think it's bad, Nicco. The back of his head was bleeding and he had a pretty big piece of wood sticking out of his back. They have him in the emergency room working on him. I'm all alone and I didn't know who else to call."

"You did the right thing calling me, Cory. I'll be on the next flight out. In the meantime you call Mac or Jake if you need someone to talk to. Okay?"

"Thanks."

After Nicco disconnected, Cory walked back inside and took her seat. She sat and stared at the floor until one of the nurses came over to ask some insurance questions. Evidently Cory didn't look so good, so the nurse took her back into an exam room. "This isn't necessary. I don't have a scratch on me. Help Remy."

The nurse shook her head and helped Cory to one of the beds. "Your friend is being taken care of. Right now I'm worried about you. I'm going to have a doctor come in and check you out, dear. You just get comfortable."

Cory didn't have it in her to fight the woman. She toed off her shoes and stretched out on the narrow bed. "Will they know where to find me? About Remy, I mean?"

Patting her hand, the nurse took a blanket out of the cupboard and covered her up. "It'll be okay. I'll make sure you get word of his condition as soon as possible."

A doctor came in a few minutes later and talked to her. He shone a light in her eyes and asked if any of the debris hit her head. Cory shook her head. "I think I might've hit it when Remy pushed me off the porch. I don't remember. It all happened so fast."

The doctor determined that she had a slight concussion and was in mild shock. He ordered her to rest awhile while he found out about Remy's condition.

Cory was asleep before he even left the room. She opened her eyes when a hand touched her arm.

"Your friend's in surgery. The doctors are optimistic but there seems to be some internal damage from the impalement. We're moving you to a private room. We want you to get some sleep but the nurses will be in to wake you and check your vital signs every few hours."

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Later that day, Cory woke to find Remy in a bed beside hers. He was on his stomach with an IV running out of his arms. "Remy?"

"Shh. He needs to sleep," Nicco said from the other side of her bed.

Turning her head, Cory saw a disheveled Nicco sitting in a not-too-comfortable-looking chair. "I'm glad you came." She looked back at Remy. "How is he?"

Nicco stood and walked over to Remy's bedside. "He's holding his own. The doctors think he'll make a full recovery. They think they repaired all the damage. His head needed stitches as well as a few cuts on his arms and legs." He turned back to Cory and sat on the side of her bed. He took her hand in his and rubbed her knuckles with his thumb. "It took a lot of negotiating to get the two of you into the same room, but I told them that's where you'd end up anyway. Of course, I think a lot of flirting and there were no other free rooms also had something to do with it," he winked. "How're you feeling?"

"I'm fine. Tired. The nurses woke me every two hours. How long has Remy been in the room?"

"Only about forty minutes or so. They had him in post-op for quite a while monitoring him closely. I sat with him. He woke long enough to tell me he loved you and he asked me to protect you. I gave him my word as a SEAL and as a friend."

Nicco bent down and kissed Cory's cheek. "I called the rest of the guys and told them what's going on. Cree said to send both of you to the Triple Spur once Remy was cleared to travel. I'm going to be doing a little investigating while I'm down here."

Cory smiled and squeezed his hand. "Remy's house?"

"Pretty much a total loss although the explosion was a small one. It seemed to have been rigged to blow outward when the door was opened. The rest of the damage to the house was because of the fire and water damage." Nicco stood and looked down at her. "I'm going to run over there now, as a matter of fact. Do you need anything while I'm out?"

"See if my suitcase was salvaged or one of the bags of clothes. I'll need something else to put on once they let me out of this bed." She gestured toward her hospital gown. "Later, when they release me, I'd like you to take me back to the bar. I need to get the key to my safe deposit box. I've got a feeling whatever someone was looking for in my apartment is in there. I'd just have you stop and get the key but it's pretty well hidden so cross your fingers it wasn't found. I also need to call Lester. I guess we'll just close up the bar for the time being. He's too old to manage the whole thing by himself."

Nicco nodded and stopped again at Remy's bed. "Call me if he wakes up or if you need anything. And I'd expect a call from Cree or Jake if I were you." Waving goodbye, Nicco left.

She got out of bed and wrapped the blanket around herself because the hospital-issued gown didn't afford much privacy. Cory scooted the chair over to Remy's bedside. She put the side rail down so she could get closer to the man she loved. She sat down and carefully brushed his hair off his beautiful face, tucking it behind his ears. "Hi, baby. Don't you worry about anything but getting better. I'll sit right here and guard you while you sleep."

Cory yawned as she watched Remy. She took his hand in hers and laid her head down on the bed beside his pillow. Despite what everyone else believed, she knew Anton was behind everything. She just couldn't figure out how to prove it or how to make anyone believe her. She drifted off to sleep still trying her best to watch over him.

* * * * *

Remy opened his eyes. It took a few minutes for him to focus enough to see Cory asleep in the chair with her head beside his pillow. Her small finely boned hand rested in his. He gave a gentle squeeze. Her eyes opened and she smiled at him.

"Hey. How're you feeling?" Cory sat up a little straighter so she could look into his eyes better.

"Like a house exploded around me. How're you?" Remy's voice was scratchy.

"I'm fine now that I know you're going to be okay. Nicco's over at your house talking with the investigators. He's going to take me to the bank if we can get there by five o'clock. I want to get the papers out of the safe deposit box."

Remy watched her mouth as she spoke. "Kiss me."

Cory smiled and leaned over the bed. She softly put her lips to his. Remy squeezed her hand and took the kiss deeper. "I love you."

A tear slid down Cory's face. "I love you too. I thought I was going to lose you. I was so scared I didn't know who else to call so I called Nicco. I hope that's okay?"

"He's like a brother to me. Of course, it's okay. I don't want you going anywhere without him. Not even within the hospital. Do you understand?"

"Yes. Jake and Cree want us to come to the Triple Spur for a while once you're able to travel." Cory reached out and brushed his hair off his face once again. "You should let me cut your hair, Remy. You already have a nice bald spot in the back where they had to shave you to put your stitches in."

"Please don't tell me they shaved the back of my head. I love my hair." Remy tried to reach his hand to the back of his head and winced in pain. He lowered his arm back to the bed in defeat.

"I love your hair too but it'll grow back in no time. The important thing is you're alive."

Remy took her hand again. "I want you to have Nicco take you to the Triple Spur. Cree and Jake can protect you. I can't do anything for you while I'm in this bed."

Cory leaned closer to his face. "No, absolutely not. I'm staying right here until you're released and we go to the Triple Spur together."

The look on her face told Remy he wouldn't win this argument with her. He'd just have to figure something else out. "Go find a doctor and ask them how long I'm going to be in here."

* * * * *

Nicco and Cory barely made it to the bank before it closed. Cory quickly gathered everything from her box and put it into a brown paper bag. She didn't bother to look through it at the bank, there were plenty of empty hours at the hospital for that.

They entered Remy's hospital room to find him lying on his back. "Well, that's a good sign." Cory went over and kissed him.

"Yeah, I convinced them it doesn't hurt any worse to be on my back than on my stomach. At least this way I can see around the room a little better. I even watched a bit of the news. My house is toast, isn't it?"

"Yes. The fire investigators think the actual explosion did little damage but the resulting fire and, of course, the water damage pretty much destroyed everything. I'm sorry."

Remy shrugged his shoulder and winced. "It was just stuff." He looked at Cory and held out his hand. "Come over here and sit with me."

Cory sat on the side of the bed. "Are you trying to get me in trouble with the nurses?"

"Ah, don't worry about them. I've got those ladies eating out of my hand." Remy flashed her a smile.

"Oh, so you've been busy since Nicco and I have been gone? Did the doctor ever come in?"

Remy ran his hand up her bare thigh. Nicco had managed to salvage her suitcase but the plastic bags had melted in the intense heat of the fire. "Doc says if I follow directions I should be out of here in a few days. A week at the most. I took the liberty of calling Jake and told him we'd be there by next weekend."

Cory looked over at Nicco. "Are you going with us or are you going back to New York?"

"I'm not sure. Right now there's some digging I need to do around here. What I find will determine where I head to next." Nicco stretched out in the chair beside the bed. "Speaking of digging around. Why don't we go through the papers from the safe deposit box? Then later we'll go to the hotel where I booked us a room."

When Remy growled at his friend, Nicco laughed. "Relax, Remy. I booked a two-bedroom suite. I'd just feel better if Cory was within protecting distance."

The three of them dug into the bag of papers Cory had brought from the bank. They made three piles, Cory's papers, Cory and Anton's mutual papers and Anton's personal papers.

Cory went through her papers and came across the one envelope she didn't want Remy to see. She slowly tucked the envelope back into the sack and continued to go through the rest of the papers.

Remy was sifting through the stack that belonged to both her and Anton. She could tell by his indrawn breath when he came to their marriage license.

She grabbed the paper out of his hand and shoved it into the sack. She looked at him with sorrow in her eyes. "Don't, Remy. Why don't you rest awhile? Nicco and I can look through the rest of these. We'll let you know if we find anything."

"Not until you let me see what else you tucked back inside that sack." He held out his hand. "What are you trying to hide from me, Cory? I want to see it."

Cory looked over at Nicco for help. She pleaded with him with her eyes. Nicco ran a hand over his face. "I think it must be something else that will upset you, buddy. You take a nap and I'll look at it. If it's anything of importance I'll let you know when you wake up."

Remy started to argue but the day had already been too much for him. He yawned as he started to protest. "Fine."

Cory could tell he wasn't happy with her but he closed his eyes and in a matter of minutes was fast asleep.

Nicco didn't say a word. He just held out his hand and Cory handed him the envelope she'd hidden. Nicco opened the envelope and withdrew the papers and photographs. The papers were copies of hospital bills and the pictures were ones she'd taken of her injuries after the beatings Anton had administered.

Nicco looked at every paper and every photograph. Each picture had a date on the back. When he was finished he put the pictures back into the envelope and handed it back to her. He stood and motioned to the door. "Let's go get some coffee in the cafeteria."

Cory's face went red but she stood and followed him out of the room.

Nicco said nothing until they were both seated at a corner table in the cafeteria. He took a sip of his coffee and looked at her. "Is that all of them or do you have more?"

"No. I didn't start taking the pictures until two years before he died. The abuse started soon after we were married, just verbal at first, but it eventually moved to physical."

Cory took a sip of her coffee. She knew she had to tell Nicco all of it. She'd carried the burdens for so long it was time to confide in someone. "I married Anton because I became pregnant with Remy's child." Cory told him the story of Remy's being home on leave and what had happened afterward. "What I'm about to tell you isn't the same story I told Remy. I don't think Remy could have handled the whole truth of what

happened to me and to his baby. When I was about six months pregnant, Anton pushed me down the stairs in a fit of rage. He said he wouldn't raise Remy's bastard child. Because of the fall I can no longer have children of my own."

Nicco handed her a tissue. Cory took it, not even aware she'd been crying. "He beat me in one degree or another for the next six and a half years. I finally got smart enough to start taking pictures."

Nicco took her hand. His jaw muscles were working overtime in his cheeks. "Why didn't you leave him?"

"Several reasons. He used my love for Remy against me. He told me that if I ever left him he would run to Remy and tell him I aborted his baby. And...God, I don't know how to explain this to somebody. When someone tells you every day for seven years that you're a stupid piece of shit you start to believe it. I know it doesn't make sense to someone who's never been through it but it's a kind of brainwashing, I think."

She wiped at her tears and blew her nose. "I think I stayed in the beginning because I was afraid that he'd tell Remy about the baby. But after a while I think I stayed because I felt...guilty. God entrusted me with Remy's child and I didn't protect it. Anton may have pushed me down the stairs but I knew I shouldn't have been there in the first place. I didn't love him. I loved Remy but Remy left me and I was scared so I took the easy way out and our child paid the price."

Nicco drank the rest of his coffee. "Why don't you give me the pictures for safekeeping? You never know when they might be needed but you can't let Remy see them, ever. If you were my woman and I saw pictures like the ones I just saw I think I might go crazy. The fact that you're still alive is pretty amazing, considering some of the injuries I saw in those pictures."

"What are you going to tell Remy?" Cory bit her lip.

"Well, I can't lie to him. I'll tell him what was in the envelope but no way would I ever let him see them. Knowing about it and seeing it are two entirely different things." Nicco stood and held out his hand. "As for the rest of what you told me. Does Remy know about the baby?"

Cory stood and took his hand. "Yes. I told him when we first got together." She shook her head. "Funny thing that. He took it very well. It was hard for me to believe I'd spent seven years living with abuse because I was afraid he'd find out. I know it hurt him but he doesn't hate me for it at least."

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They ended up taking the rest of the papers back to their hotel suite. Remy woke up long enough to give Cory a kiss and make Nicco promise to take care of her.

Nicco opened the door to their rooms and ushered her inside the sitting room. Cory put the bag of takeout Chinese food on the small dining table. Nicco dug out the papers that hadn't been gone through yet and set them beside the food.

As they ate their dinner they both plunged back into the paperwork. "I think I've got it!" Nicco jumped out of his chair as it went crashing back onto the floor.

Cory looked at him with her hand on her chest.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you." He held out the small spiral notebook. "I think this is what whoever trashed your place was looking for."

Cory took the notebook from him. "It's just Anton's phone numbers and a bunch of scribbling and stuff. Why would anyone care about it?"

Nicco took back the notebook and began flipping through it. "It's not just scribbling. There are dates listed with dollar amounts next to them. And if I'm not mistaken I recognize a few of the names listed in the phone number section. I'm going to overnight this to Mac in the morning. He's a whiz at figuring this stuff out." Nicco smiled and flipped open his phone. He looked at Cory while it was ringing. "Don't worry, we'll get to the bottom of this."

Chapter Seven

One Week Later

Arriving at the Triple Spur, Cory pulled the rental car in front of the stone and timber house. "Wow. This place is gorgeous."

Remy reached for her hand. "That it is. Cree designed it for him, Jake and Jenny. He also designed Gabe's house, which you saw in the process of being built and Ben's house is still under construction. I'll have to take you over sometime. Now, enough about the house and lean over here and give me a kiss. It's been over two hours since my last one and I'm feeling a bit deprived."

Cory obliged him and leaned in for a nice deep kiss. A loud sound at their window made them both jump and pull apart. Cree stood at the passenger-side window all smiles. He opened Remy's car door and held out his hand.

"It's about time you two got here. We were getting ready to send out a search party." Cree helped Remy out of the car. "How ya doing, old friend?"

Remy smiled and looked down at his bulging jeans. "Horny. I've been around this pretty lady all week and haven't gotten anything but kisses. How about you?"

Cree rolled his eyes. "Don't even get me started on untouchable gorgeous females. Jenny's due to pop almost any day and Jake and I are about to go crazy. We spend more time in the barn lately and in his office than we do in the bedroom. We're used to each having two other partners to help satisfy our sexual cravings but with Jenny out of commission we're both getting double-timed." Cree must have suddenly realized Cory was standing right behind him.

"Um...Sorry about that. Hi, Cory. I'm Cree Sommers. I don't normally go on about my sex life like this but it's a crazy time in the Sommers' house."

Cory grinned and waved away his apology. "I'm used to it. You forget I spent a week with Jake at Gabe's place. Besides, Remy's almost as bad. He had to whine in my ear the entire way here about how horny he was."

"Is," Remy added.

Cree and Cory each took a suitcase and walked on either side of Remy into the house. It was slow going up the stairs but they finally made it into the living room.

Jenny was sitting in one of the deep leather chairs. She smiled at them as they walked in. "Hi, guys. Sorry I didn't come out to meet you but I can't seem to lever myself up and out of this damn chair." She rubbed her rounded belly.

Remy walked over to Jenny and bent over to give her a kiss on the cheek. Damn, even pregnant she was the prettiest woman next to Cory that he'd ever known. "Hi,

Jenny. I'm glad to see you're doing well." Remy held out his hand to Cory. "I'd like you to meet the love of my life. Cory, this is Jenny."

"It's very nice to meet you, Jenny. I've heard a lot about you." Cory shook Jenny's hand and helped Remy to the couch.

Remy sat down and looked back at Jenny. She was staring at him with her mouth open. He looked down at himself and then back up to her. "What?"

"What have you done with my 'Crazy Cajun'?"

Remy looked over at Cory sheepishly and then back to Jenny. "Well...uh...actually that accent thing was not really me. I mean, I grew up in the bayou but...well, my dad was the town judge and he would have killed me if I'd ever spoken like that at home." Remy nodded his head in Cory's direction. "Cory hates it too. It was just always expected of me after I left home for the service. I simply gave the people what they wanted." He chuckled and winked. "It's kinda fun too."

Jenny shook her head and looked over at Cory and rolled her eyes. "Men."

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Kate and Ben, who'd been living in the foreman's house, came over for dinner. Remy could easily see that the newlyweds couldn't get enough of each other. Ben doted on his newly pregnant wife. After dinner they retired to the front porch for a beer. Jenny pleaded fatigue, saying goodnight to everyone and went upstairs. Ben also made their excuses and took Kate back to their little house on the other side of the barn. Cree and Jake took their usual place on the porch swing. Remy sat in one of the comfortable rattan chairs and patted his lap when Cory started to sit in the other one. "Sit here, sweetheart."

Cory shook her head. "You know you're not up to that right now, Remy. I'll just sit over here."

Looking at the woman he loved, he knew she was right but he really needed to be close to her.

Finally Cree came up with the best solution. "If you don't mind a few dog hairs," he said as he scowled at Jake, "I can pull up the loveseat." At Remy's nod of approval, Cree pulled the loveseat closer to the swing and flipped the cushion over. Cory found a pillow and put it behind his back for extra padding.

Getting comfortable, Remy opened his arms and Cory smiled and sat down. Cree went inside and came back with two blankets. "It's getting a little chilly out here." He handed one of the blankets to Remy and winked.

Sitting back down on the porch swing, he quickly covered himself and Jake. Remy watched as Cree lifted his bottle of beer off the little side table and took a long pull. He noticed Cree's long neck, funny how Remy had never noticed the long line of Cree's throat before, graceful almost. He was snapped out of his daze when Cree looked right

into his eyes. After several moments he spoke, "So tell me the latest on your house, Remy. Do they have any suspects?"

Damn, what was happening to him? He'd always noticed how good-looking Jake and Cree were, but he'd never been turned on just by the sight of another man's neck. Remy held his beer in one hand and stroked Cory's inner thigh with the other. When Cory started to protest he noticed her looking at Jake and Cree. When the unmistakable sound of a zipper lowering filled the quiet night, she blushed and opened her legs a little wider. It seemed they weren't the only ones who needed to touch. Remy winked at Cree. "Thanks for the blanket, man."

Cree smiled, his hand visibly working Jake's cock under the blanket. "So you didn't answer my question. You'd better do it quick before I lose my thought process." When the sound of another zipper split the air Remy knew Cree was right. He was lucky enough to have changed into sweats so Cory's silent wandering went unnoticed by everyone but him. The feel of her small hand running up and down the length of his cock almost made his eyes cross. "Um... They still don't know who did it." He worked his way under Cory's short skirt and stuck two fingers deep into her pussy. "All they know was that the bomb was set to explode outward when I opened the door."

Soft fingers began tickling his scrotum and he thought he was going to shoot right there in front of two of his best friends. He tried to get his mind off the sensations he was experiencing by continuing the discussion, although by the look on Cree's and Jake's faces he would just have to repeat everything the next day. He was about to speak when he heard the thud of boots and a pair of jeans landed on the floor in front of him.

Like always, Cree and Jake didn't seem to care who was around when the fever struck them. He looked over at Cory. Her eyes had gone half-lidded watching the two men as Remy fingered her. Despite everything else going on she hadn't abandoned the tight-fisted stroking of his cock and Remy decided to not even bother finishing his conversation. He leaned over to take Cory's mouth and saw Jake crawl into Cree's lap. The two men kissed and the low moan from both told Remy exactly what they were doing under the blanket, and it was hotter than hell. He wanted some of that too. Right. Fucking. Now.

Remy quickly pulled Cory's panties off and guided her onto his lap. "Fuck me," he whispered in her ear. She licked her lips and glanced at the two fucking men in front of her. "Don't worry about them. The house could fall down right now and they wouldn't even be aware of it. Now climb on and slide that sweet pussy down on my cock."

Cory straddled his lap but put most of her weight on her knees, resting on either side of Remy's thighs. Remy undid her halter top and kissed the still-healing wound. Poor Cory would carry his mark for quite a while, it seemed. He held his cock by the root as she impaled herself on his full length.

"Oh God. Oh, sweetheart, you feel so hot." Remy put his hands on Cory's hips to help guide her. "Sorry, but you're gonna have to do most of the work this time." Remy sucked and played with her breasts as she rode him hard. Remy pulled off her nipple to

glance over at Jake and Cree. Remy had never even considered being with another man but the sight of those two rutting like animals made his cock even harder.

The blanket had slipped off the pair somewhere along the way and Remy watched as Cree's cock disappeared in and out of Jake's hole. They were kissing and biting each other's neck and chest. It was passion at its finest, and Remy couldn't get enough.

Cory watched Remy watch the guys behind her. It turned her on more than anything in her life. She'd never even thought about having multiple partners but right now she yearned to fuck all three of these men while she watched them fuck each other. She leaned down to whisper in Remy's ear. "It's hot, isn't it? Watching the two of them go at it is the hottest most erotic thing I've ever seen."

Remy looked at her and licked his lips. "God help me but it is." He looked deep into Cory's eyes as she continued to pump her way up and down his cock. He reached around and stuck two fingers deep into her ass. She gasped and came on his cock. "Does it gross you out that I find Cree and Jake sexy as hell to watch? That the thought of touching them turns me inside out with desire?"

Cory shook her head where it rested on his shoulder. "Absolutely not, I find it sexy that you find it hot." She realized that she'd stopped working his cock when she'd had her climax and began sliding her dripping pussy up and down his length once again.

"Fuck me, Cory. That's it. Right there." The twin shouts of climax behind them didn't even register to Cory and Remy as they got caught up in their own sexual frenzy. Remy latched on to Cory's breast as he pumped his cock deep into her pussy and his fingers deep into her ass.

"Gonna come, sweetheart. Come with me." As Cory arched her back and let out a wail of release, Remy pulled her down on his cock and erupted inside her. Cory leaned against his chest and tried to regain her breath.

When at last they both became aware of their surroundings, Remy quickly looked over at the porch swing. Both Jake and Cree sat openly watching them, their half-hard cocks in each other's hands.

"Fuck, that was hot," Jake finally said and squeezed Cree's cock a little tighter. Cree agreed with a grunt.

Cory looked over her shoulder at Cree and Jake. Her eyes wandered to their half-hard shafts, before slowly making their way up to look into Cree's eyes. She slowly climbed off Remy's lap and reached for her top. She first tried to reach the small piece of material with her foot but it had been flung too far away. Blushing, she finally crossed an arm over her nipples and retrieved it off the porch. She looked up at Cree and Jake. "Sorry."

Cree's and Jake's eyes zeroed in on her breasts. "No problem," Cree managed to grind out between clenched teeth.

Cory rushed back over to the loveseat and hid under the blanket as Remy helped her with her top. While she was getting dressed both Cree and Jake put their jeans back on. Remy smacked her ass and handed over her panties.

When she was fully dressed she stood and folded the blanket. "Um...I'll see you two in the morning." She looked down at Remy. "I'm going on up to bed. You stay down and talk to your friends." She leaned over and kissed him and went inside the house.

Remy looked over at his friends. "You think we should talk about it?"

Cree ran his hands through his long black hair. "Hell, I don't know. I mean, that's never happened to us before. Jenny's always been the only woman the two of us have lusted after." Cree looked over at Jake, who nodded his agreement.

"Well, I have a little confession of my own to make. In the past, if either of you had looked at Cory the way I saw you both watching her I would've killed you. But for some reason I felt proud that you lusted after my lady. And I don't mind telling you the sight of you two fucking right in front of me made me harder than hell. I've never had the kinds of thoughts that are swimming through my head right now. I think we all need to just sleep on what happened tonight. Maybe things will seem clearer in the light of day."

Cree and Jake nodded. Cree cleared his throat. "So tell me about your house..."

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As Cory reached the top of the stairs, she sensed a shadow in front of her. She looked up and saw Jenny standing in the doorway to her bedroom. "Can I talk to you for a minute, Cory?"

Shutting her eyes against her own guilt, Cory followed Jenny into the guestroom. Jenny sat on the side of the bed and motioned to Cory to take a seat beside her. Tears threatened as Cory sat on the edge of the bed. "I'm so sorry but it wasn't what you think. I don't know how much you heard but Cree and Jake didn't—"

Jenny cut her off mid-sentence. "Please don't apologize. I didn't call you in here to go all jealous wife on you. I called you in to ask a favor." Now Jenny looked like the embarrassed one. She bit her lip. "When you were at Gabe's and Kate was there, did the two of you talk much?"

Confused, Cory nodded her head.

"And did Kate tell you anything about my sex life?" Jenny smoothed the comforter at her side.

"A little. She told me about the guys staying away from you during the early stage of your pregnancy. She told me you went to her for help in convincing the men you needed sex just as much as they did." Still confused, Cory looked at Jenny from under her lashes. "I'm sorry but I'm not sure where this is going."

Taking a deep breath, Jenny blew it out and continued. "I love sex with my husbands but just recently the whole idea turns me off. I don't know if it's my size or my hormones but the thought of making love leaves me cold." She paused and looked closely at Cory. "Until tonight. When I heard the four of you outside, something released in me. I actually got off just listening to you guys." Jenny stood and went to the bathroom for a glass of water.

"I don't know how to go about this but I was kind of wondering if the five of us could maybe come to some kind of arrangement? I need to talk to Cree and Jake, of course, and you need to talk to Remy but I'd like us all to get comfortable enough with each other to...share. Of course, in my present condition intercourse is out of the question but something." She sat back down on the bed bedside Cory. "I hope you don't think I'm twisted. I've never been the least bit attracted to any other man besides my husbands until I met Remy. I have to confess there have been times when I've climaxed just thinking of his sexy accent." Jenny blushed, "I'm going to shut up now before you think I'm a bad person."

Cory reached over and squeezed her hand. "I don't think you're bad or twisted. But you're right, we need to discuss this with our men. I have a feeling we're going to be staying here for a while, so maybe we'll just see how things go."

Jenny squeezed her hand back. "I've loved my husbands since I was a teenager. I went through hell trying to protect them from Buck. I was raped, branded and left for dead, but not once did I stop loving them. They are more precious to me than my own life and I would never suggest they do anything that would hurt them, but this feels right to me. If this thing happens between all of us, please know that my relationship with them is mine, and it's very special to me. Just as yours is with Remy. Sex and caring about each other is one thing but my family is my own. And I'll never again let anyone separate us. Do you understand what I'm telling you?"

Cory nodded with a smile. "I understand perfectly. You can trust that I won't try to take your husbands away from you. Like you, I've loved Remy forever, and if I thought this arrangement would in any way jeopardize my relationship with him, I'd tell you no."

Jenny nodded as she walked toward the bedroom door. "The same goes for me. No matter how much I may come to love Remy, I'll always regard him as your man. See you at breakfast and thanks."

* * * * *

The next morning, after a long night of talking with Remy, Cory cooked everyone breakfast. Remy sat at the table reading the morning paper as Cory fried enough bacon and sausage to feed an army. She felt nervous about the decisions she and Remy had agreed on in the early morning hours.

When she heard boots on the stairs her palms began to sweat. The booted feet disappeared before coming into the kitchen. Cory wrinkled her brow.

Had the threesome changed their mind?

"Good morning," Jenny called out as she entered the kitchen. She poured herself a glass of orange juice and sat at the table. When Cory glanced over at her with a question in her eyes, Jenny nodded and smiled. "Thank you for starting breakfast. My feet are feeling my weight this morning."

Remy looked up at Jenny and smiled. "Where are Jake and Cree this morning? I thought I heard them come down the stairs." Remy folded the paper and put it to the side.

"They're in the study but they should be out any minute." Jenny blushed. "I think they wanted a couple of minutes alone."

Cory drained the bacon and sausage and started on the scrambled eggs. "I think we should all sit down and talk, don't you?" she asked, looking over her shoulder at Jenny.

"That was our hope. Jake's calling down to the barn to tell Hank he won't be out until a little later this morning. I think right now we're all a little nervous but I also think we all agree that this is a good thing. Although I've been barred from joining in the physical activities until after the twins are born. I also think someone should clue Ben and Kate into our decision. It wouldn't do for one of them to come popping in on an uncomfortable situation. I think I'll leave that little detail to Cree, he's the diplomatic one."

Remy laughed. "Oh hell, I completely forgot about Kate and Ben." Remy looked at Jenny. "What do you think they'll say of this odd arrangement?"

Cory smiled knowingly at Remy. She could tell by the way he was squirming in his chair he had an erection.

"I think they'll think it's our own business. I mean, we're all adults and what goes on in our home is up to us. It's not like we're breaking the law or anything. It might be a little tougher once the twins are born but I think if we're all of like mind this could be a very good thing for everyone," Jenny said, crossing her arms under her breasts.

Remy slipped his hand under the table and Cory bit her lip to keep from laughing. She heard footsteps coming down the hall and Cree and Jake entered the room.

They both stopped and looked around. "Did we miss something?" Cree said, wrapping his arms around Jake.

Jenny rose and went into their embrace. "Not really. We were just discussing our new arrangement. We think you've been elected to talk to Ben."

Cree ran his hand down Jenny's back and squeezed her butt. "Why don't we hold off on that for a little while? Let's just get comfortable with each other first. Then I'll spill the beans to Ben." Jenny nodded and kissed her husbands. Cree looked down at Remy. "She told you intercourse is painful for her and she can't really do anything until the twins are born, didn't she?"

Remy nodded and took a drink of his coffee. "I understand that perfectly. I know she's not my wife but I feel pretty protective of Jenny and the babies. I'd never do

anything to hurt her or them." Remy looked over at Cory. "You're sure this is okay, sweetheart?"

Cory spooned the eggs into a bowl and set them on the table. "Yes." She turned back toward the stove and took the breakfast meat and biscuits out of the warming oven. When she turned back around, she caught the look in Remy's eyes. Cory had known him long enough to know what he was worried about. She put her hand on his shoulder and kissed the top of his newly shorn head. "It's nothing like what Anton asked me to do. These people are our friends."

At Cree's cough, Remy looked his way and shrugged. "Anton asked Cory to 'service' his business associates."

"That's disgusting. Man, you were married to a prick," Cree said and looked at Cory. "Well, the tension in this room is so thick I'm about to choke. I guess I'll be the first one to break the ice." He walked over and wrapped his arms around Cory. He looked into her light green eyes and whispered against her lips, "You are one beautiful woman." He pressed his lips to hers and, on her indrawn breath, parted her mouth and delved his tongue inside.

Cory reached up and wound her fingers into Cree's long black hair, as he did the same to hers. The kiss went on and on with a few little rubs thrown in until they both heard moans behind them. It seemed the three people at the table were enjoying the show.

Cree broke away from Cory and seated her at the table. He looked closely at Remy, seemingly looking for any sign of jealousy. Cory wasn't sure what Cree saw, but she saw nothing but desire in Remy's eyes. Nodding, Cree knelt in front of Remy's chair and leaned in for a kiss.

Cory watched as Remy moaned at the first touch of their lips. When Cree thrust his tongue inside Remy's mouth it was Jenny's moan that broke them apart.

Jake gathered them all together as a group. Taking turns, they kissed and touched one another. Five sets of hands and five tongues kissed and explored.

"Let's eat our breakfast and then we can figure the rest out. At least the awkward tension is gone," Cree said, helping Jenny to her chair.

Cory studied Jake as he rubbed his erection and sat down at the table. "Yeah, but it's been replaced by sexual tension."

Jenny fanned her face with her napkin. "As much as all that turned me on I'm not so sure the excitement is good for my blood pressure. I know Ben and Kate are over working at their ranch so I think I should go over there for a little visit after breakfast." When Jake started to protest she held up her hand. "I love you two and you both know it. And in a couple months I'll be more than happy to be at the bottom of the dog pile," she grinned, "as a matter of fact, I'm very much looking forward to it. But for now let me do this my way. Just enjoy yourselves and if I need anything I'll let you know."

Cree leaned over and kissed her. "I love you, Jenny. I'm just a little scared this will change things."

Jenny shook her head. "Don't worry about me. It was my idea, after all. But you have to realize that it will change things. Not in our marriage, of course. You two will always be my husbands. Hopefully we'll all become like one big happy family. Love comes in so many forms, Cree. This is just one of them, and the chemistry between us is too strong to be ignored."

Cree looked around the table. "Okay, but is it okay if I have one of the cowboys drive you over to Ben's? He can bring you back or you can call if you're ready to come home before they are."

"Sounds good. And while I'm gone, you all can discuss condoms and whether there's a need to use them, if you know what I mean." Jenny giggled and started in on her breakfast.

* * * * *

After Chuck left to drive Jenny over to Ben's, Remy went into Jake's study to call Nicco as Cory did the morning dishes. Jake and Cree went out to the barn to check on the horses. Remy remembered how Saturdays on the ranch were pretty laid-back. He also remembered Jake telling him that was one of his and Cree's favorite places to fuck. A brief vision of Cree bent over a hay bale while Jake plowed into him danced through Remy's head. He chuckled, "Damn, man, get yourself together." He picked up the phone and punched in Nicco's number.

"Hello."

"Hey."

"How are you feeling?"

Remy thought quickly about the kiss at breakfast, the taste of another man was so much different. "Good. Things are going well so far. What've you found out?"

While he was listening to Nicco talk about the information Mac had found in the little notebook of Anton's, he noticed Jake standing in the doorway. Jake's eyes were zeroed in on his cock. He raised an eyebrow and licked his lips. Remy smiled to himself. He'd had many phone conversations with either Jake or Cree while the other one was sucking them off. Knowing that's exactly what Jake wanted to do to him made him a little nervous, but also excited. Being an amateur at all this, Remy decided it would be better to finish his phone call first.

He looked away from Jake to stare out the window, trying like hell to concentrate. "Is Mac following up on the names?"

Remy saw Jake coming toward him out of the corner of his eye. He knew his time was short when Jake unbuttoned his own jeans and pulled his cock out. Remy swallowed as he knelt between Remy's spread thighs. Remy was so excited he thought he might come just from the anticipation of feeling a man's lips wrapped around his cock for the first time. "Listen, Nicco, something's just come up and I'm gonna have to call you back in a little while." Remy hung up the phone just as Jake unzipped his jeans

and wrapped his fingers around Remy's throbbing shaft. Jake's tongue slid up the veined column of his erection. "Oh, fuck." Jake knew how to handle a cock, that much was quickly evident.

Jake looked up and smiled. "Feels good, doesn't it?"

"Fuck, yeah. Keep going," Remy said, pulling his jeans and underwear down to his ankles. Jake chuckled and swallowed Remy's cock all the way down his throat. Jake squeezed his shaft with his throat muscles. Damn, Remy thought he could get used to this. "Oh shit, Jake. Fuck, man. Gonna come."

Jake pulled off enough to swirl his tongue against the side of Remy's already-sensitive shaft. Remy grabbed the arms of the chair and involuntarily thrust his cock farther down Jake's throat and exploded. Jake moaned as Remy's cries filled the study.

Remy's entire body trembled as Jake sucked him dry. Pulling off his cock, Jake licked him clean and then stood and straddled Remy's lap. "Damn, Remy, I had no idea you'd taste so good." He leaned forward and gave Remy a deep kiss, sharing his flavor with him.

Grabbing Jake's ass, Remy took the kiss deeper until Jake shook in his arms, warmth spreading between them. When the kiss finally broke, Remy looked down at Jake's spent cock. He grinned and kissed Jake again. "I never knew. Why didn't we ever try this before?"

Jake nipped his lip. "We weren't ready before. Now we're all secure in our relationships and we can explore the feelings we've carried for each another. Just go with it and stop analyzing everything to death." Jake leaned back and took a couple of tissues from the box on the desk. When he started to clean his own cum off his stomach Remy stopped him.

"I want to taste. I've never...well, you know." At Jake's nod, Remy helped him to his feet. He leaned over and took Jake's semi-erect cock into his mouth. The taste was different from a woman's cum. Stronger but still damn good. He licked Jake's cock like a popsicle, cleaning every drop he could find. When Jake was properly cleaned, he wrapped his mouth around the cock once again. It felt so soft on his tongue. He ran his tongue along the wrinkles of skin and suckled the cock as if it were a nipple. Pulling off, he looked into Jake's eyes. "Wanna help me upstairs? I need to take my medicine and you've worn me out. I think a nap with a little snuggling sounds good."

Jake winked and held out his hand. "You'll have to keep reminding me you're still not a hundred percent. I tend to get a little carried away once I get down to business."

Remy laughed and took Jake's hand. As they walked toward the stairs arm in arm, Remy looked around. "Oh, so now I'm business, am I?"

Jake stopped and turned to give Remy a kiss. "No, you're pure pleasure, and I plan on getting to know every square inch of you."

Remy felt his cock twitch at the thought of Jake exploring him. "Where are Cree and Cory?"

Jake bumped his hip against Remy's. "I think Cree was gonna talk her into helping him gather eggs out in the chicken coop."

Remy chuckled. "That should be interesting. I don't think Cory's ever gathered eggs before."

* * * * *

Cory was just finishing up the dishes when a pair of arms wrapped around her from behind. She didn't even need to turn around to tell they belonged to Cree, his woodsy smell told her first.

Cree pulled her back against him and kissed her neck. "Almost done?" He nibbled his way around her neck and up to her ear.

Lifting her arms over her head, Cory clasped her hands at the back of his head. "I'm done. Why, what did you have in mind?" She was surprised how comfortable she felt in Cree's arms, he didn't feel like a new lover at all.

Cree slipped his hand under the tiny halter top and massaged her straining nipple. When she arched her back even further he moaned and brushed her backside with his straining erection. "I don't know? A little of this..." He pinched her nipple. "And a little of that," he said as he thrust his cock against her ass. Her entire body thrummed, turned on by his straightforward touch.

Cory couldn't take it any longer and turned in his arms. She started unbuttoning his shirt as she looked at him through her lashes. "This and that are two of my favorite things." The expanse of skin she uncovered was sculpted and bronzed. Looking at the dark brown discs of his nipples, her mouth began to water. God, this man was sexy.

As Cory removed his shirt, Cree started untying her halter straps. He untied the bottom one first. When his long slender fingers unraveled the knot at the back of her neck he stepped back and let the small garment fall to the floor. "Oh, darlin', you make my head spin." He lifted her onto the counter and took her nipple between his teeth and bit down gently.

Cory moaned and wrapped her legs around Cree's torso. Cree opened his eyes and focused on her breast. No. Not her breast but on the healing wound on her breast. He pulled off her nipple with a pop. "What the hell happened?" He nodded toward her bite mark. "Did Remy hurt you?"

The protectiveness in his stance and voice fueled her lust even further. She shook her head. "It happened during a really great climax. Don't say anything to him about it. It took days for Remy to even look me in the eyes afterward. He was just sick with guilt. I understand what it's like to come so hard you lose your head and that's all that happened." She waited for Cree to unclench his jaw.

He ran his finger lightly over the perfect dental impression. "How long ago did it happen?"

His tone was softer and Cory could tell her explanation satisfied him. "The first week we were at Gabe's, so I guess a little under three weeks ago." She raised Cree's head with her hands on either side of his face. She leaned in and gave him a light kiss. "It's okay, really."

With a short nod of his head Cree leaned in and took her mouth in an explosion of passion. His tongue mapped every ridge and every tooth. Pulling her closer to the edge of the countertop, Cree fit his jean-clad erection against her pussy and ground himself against her.

Whimpering, Cory reached down and cupped the hardened ridge with her hand before starting on his button and zipper. "Now. Need to feel you inside me." She hurriedly undid his jeans and pushed them down with her legs. She was shocked that he wasn't wearing any underwear but was thankful it was one less garment to get in her way.

As Cree hiked her tiny skirt up around her waist he looked down. "Are you fond of these panties?"

The look in his eyes fueled her passion even higher. She shook her head and Cree ripped them from her body. "Unless you want to buy new ones every week I'd suggest just leaving them off while you're around us. Jake and I like to play and it's much easier when we can feel your sweet pussy without going through underwear every damn time." Cree positioned his cock at her wet opening. "Sure you want this? It'll change things once I've been inside you. You'll no longer be just a friend to me."

What, was he kidding? Couldn't he see the juices running down the inside of her thigh to pool on the countertop? Cory answered by leaning back as far as she could against the cupboard doors and wrapping her legs around his stomach. She pinched her breasts and enjoyed the look on Cree's face as he struggled to maintain some sort of discipline.

Plunging his cock deep inside her pussy, Cory moaned and reached out to pinch Cree's nipples. "Oh. Yes. Harder," she cried.

With a smile on his face, Cree pounded into her, hard. Her head kept hitting the cupboards but neither of them paid any attention. "Stick your fingers in my ass," Cory cried. She needed to come desperately.

After licking his fingers, two digits shoved their way into her hole and began pumping in and out, matching the rhythm set by his cock. Their bodies were sweaty and Cory's butt started making squeaking noises as it slid back and forth against the countertop. From now on, this kitchen would always bring erotic memories to her.

Sweat ran down Cree's face as he continued the quick, hard rhythm. "Can't wait to fuck this ass." He suddenly pulled out of her and quickly wiped his hands on the wet dishcloth before carrying her and the cloth to the kitchen table. Bending Cory over the table, he flipped her skirt back up around her waist and thrust his fingers into her pussy. Extracting a good amount of cream, he smoothed it liberally over her already-stretched hole.

Steadying her, he inserted three fingers deep into her pussy as he pushed his cock into her back entrance. The stretch was amazing and Cory felt her body begin to quiver. Once he was fully seated inside her, Cree leaned his head down on her back. "You're gonna kill me. Fuck, you feel good," he whispered, kissing her neck.

Bracing her arms on the edge of the table, she withdrew her body from his cock before slamming back, embedding Cree even deeper inside her body. "Fuck me."

Cree slipped his fingers from her pussy so he could hold on to both her hips. The punishing slap of his balls against her pussy seemed to be enough to please that part of her anatomy. Cree leaned down again and nipped her shoulder. "Fuck, darlin'. Oh, fuck, I can't hold it. Come for me, Cory." He released one of her hips and reached around and squeezed her clit, hard.

"Uhhh...Cree!" Cory shouted so loudly the cowboys in the barn probably heard her.

Cree pushed as deep as he could and spewed his seed in long bursts of endless pleasure. They both collapsed to the kitchen floor with Cory wrapped in Cree's arms. He kissed the top of her head as they both came down from their high. "Thank you, darlin'. I'll never forget it for the rest of my life." He smiled and tickled the area around her bite wound. "I get it now."

Cory snuggled closer into Cree's lap. Her head spun with the change in her feelings for this man. It was no longer just sex to her. She briefly thought of Remy and how he would feel if he knew. Those thoughts led to Jenny and the promise she'd made. No, she wasn't about to take Jenny's husband from her, but it was no longer a casual relationship for her. "We need to do something very special for Jenny. I know she can't have intercourse but can she climax without injury to the babies?"

Rubbing her breasts softly, Cree nodded. "Yeah, but the problem is that with her hormones all out of whack, Jenny can't seem to come without it."

Smiling, Cory whispered in his ear. He raised a brow and pulled back. "You think it'll work?"

"I'm almost positive." Cory leaned in for another toe-tingling kiss. She thought of Jake and Remy. She knew they were together somewhere in the house. Cory wondered if she'd have such a strong reaction to Jake after the first time they made love. Cree must have read her thoughts because he squeezed her breast and chuckled.

"The reason I came in to find you in the first place was to see if you wanted to help me gather eggs from the henhouse. And if we don't get them soon they'll be hard-boiled in this heat."

"Really?" She saw the grin on Cree's face and slapped his chest. "Lift me up, you big warrior, and I'll help you gather the eggs. Although I hope you know I've never even been around a chicken before, unless it came fried and in a bucket, let alone gathered eggs. I might get frightened and have to hold on to you."

Cree picked up the dishcloth and wet it with warm water. He took his time cleaning Cory. Taking time to give her pleasure, showing her he truly cared. "As long as you

hold on to the right part I'm good with that." He quickly rinsed the rag and cleaned himself before pulling on his clothes.

The two of them dressed and went out to gather eggs.

* * * * *

Dinner that night was a little strange. The sexual chemistry around the table was in overdrive but they had to keep a leash on their lust because of Ben and Kate. Ben didn't seem to notice anything but Kate kept glancing around the table with a questioning look on her face.

Ben reached for the last steak on the platter. "Anyone gonna eat this?"

The entire group laughed. Cree leaned back and patted his belly. "Go ahead, Ben. We cooked three for you anyway." He winked at Kate. "We also made an extra five pounds of mashed potatoes."

Ben loaded more potatoes onto his plate beside the piece of steak. "Smartass. So tell me what's new with the investigation?" He cut off a large chunk of steak and lifted it to his mouth.

"I talked to Nicco this morning. Mac's been a very busy boy working on the notebook we found that had belonged to Anton. It seems my dear ex-friend was getting in pretty deep with some Colombian drug runners. I guess some of the names in the book match up with the United States government's most-wanted list. Mac's checking out facts on his end and Nicco's still in the Keys doing his own investigation on the explosion that killed Anton. He was supposed to be fishing off the coast of Islamorada when his boat exploded. According to Nicco, something smells fishy." Remy took a drink of his beer.

Ben finished off his steak and potatoes and pushed his plate back. "So how long are you and Cory planning to stay in New Mexico?"

Remy got up from the table and got another beer out of the fridge. He held it up, asking a silent question. Jake held his hand up and nodded. Remy took another one out of the fridge and handed it to Jake, their fingers lingering together for a few seconds. He looked at Cory as he sat back down. "We're not really sure, to be honest. We put the bar up for sale before we left Key West. If all goes well and we sell it fairly quickly we might just move somewhere around here."

Ben seemed a little shocked. "You're sellin' the bar? What are you gonna do around here for a job?"

Remy took a drink and shrugged. "The bar was all Anton's idea. Cory and I agreed that neither of us was happy running it. As for what I'm gonna do now? Who knows but I'll come up with something. Nicco's had me helping him run his training seminars for years. Maybe I can do something with that. It's possible bodyguards would rather train out in God's country than in the middle of New York City. It's something I'll have to give some thought to."

Kate pushed herself up from the table and carried a load of plates to the sink. Cory jumped up and practically ran toward her. "No, Kate." She took the dishes out of Kate's hands. "I'll do that. You're pregnant. You shouldn't do anything to endanger your baby."

Kate looked at her like she was crazy. She glanced over at Remy, who pleaded with her not to get into it with Cory. "Uh...thanks, Cory. If you'll clear the table I'll start washing and then you can dry and put away." She looked back at Remy to see if she'd done the right thing. At Remy's hint of a nod, she sighed a sigh of relief.

The men moved out to the porch while the women stayed in the kitchen and did the dishes. Jenny sat at the table under strict instructions to do nothing but keep the women company.

When Ben sat down in the big rocker he looked over at Remy. "What was all that about? Kate clears the table all the time. Hell, I can barely keep her from hefting hay bales."

Remy ran his fingers through his hair. He still wasn't used to his new closely cropped hair. "Nine years ago, she was pregnant with my child. I went back out to the field with you bozos and didn't know. Anton married her so she could save face with her family. When she was six months pregnant she told me she fell down the stairs, but Nicco told me she confided in him that Anton pushed her. Anyway, she lost not only the baby but the ability to have more. She desperately wants one, I can tell. Cory's mentioned adoption so we may look into it as soon as we become legally man and wife. I guess she's just a little paranoid when it comes to pregnant women. She doesn't want anyone to go through what she went through."

Jake whistled. "I'm glad you told us, Remy. It would be just like one of us to stick our foot in our mouth and ask her about having a one." He gave Remy a heated look. Remy knew Jake was dying to make love to Cory. Jake adjusted his hardening cock as Remy watched.

Cree cleared his throat and picked up where Jake had left off. "What kind of monster was your best friend anyway?"

"Ex-best friend. I'll tell you a little of what Nicco found out while I was in the hospital. He found an envelope of pictures..." Remy told him about Cory's abusive husband. When he was finished he saw the looks on his friends' faces. They'd all been through similar abuse with their own women.

Cree blew out a breath. "How in the hell have all of us been lucky enough to find women who are willing to trust us after such abuse? It amazes me that there are so many fucking assholes in the world that think it's perfectly acceptable to use their size and strength against women." He looked over at Remy. "Maybe that's what you should do. Instead of training bodyguards maybe you should open a retreat for battered women and teach them how to defend themselves. It would not only make them feel safer but give them back some of the power their husbands or boyfriends have taken away."

Remy's eyes widened at the idea. He looked at the three men sitting in front of him. "You think there would be a market for that kind of thing? I mean, enough of a market to actually make a living?"

All three men nodded. Ben cleared his throat. "I can help with enough money to get you off the ground. Maybe you could set up some kind of scholarship program for women who can't afford it? I could help with that too."

"But what about your charity work with Boone? I can't ask you to help support another charity, Ben." Remy turned over the idea in his mind.

"Remy, I've got more than enough money to fund a dozen charities if I want. And this one would be especially close to my heart. Kate could have sure used such a program after the little fucker Clint raped her."

Jake looked at Cree. Cree nodded and took Jake's hand. "We'd be willing to donate some land for you and Cory to build a home and a center. It shouldn't take more than about twenty or thirty acres and that's really stretching it. But I was thinking maybe you could make a kind of retreat for them with horseback riding and stuff. All of our land would be at your disposal."

Jake chimed in before Cree could finish. "We'd like you to make your home here. We've missed you over the last couple years." Remy saw a wealth of feeling in Jake's face as he said it. Good, he wasn't the only one quickly developing stronger feelings than expected.

Remy swallowed around the lump in his throat. "I'll have to talk it over with Cory but I think she'll like the idea as much as I do. I plan on flying her out to Vegas next week and making it legal. That will give us a couple days in Vegas for a honeymoon before we all have to leave to attend Boone's grand opening."

The other three men congratulated him.

"What's this all about?" a sexy voice said from the doorway. Remy held out his hand and Cory sat down beside him on the loveseat. "I was just telling the guys that I was going to kidnap you next week and fly you out to Vegas to make you my wife."

"Well, I do believe that's just about the most romantic proposal I've ever heard of." She rolled her eyes and gave a snort.

"You mean this smartass hasn't even proposed yet? Remy, what the hell's wrong with you?" Ben rolled up his shirtsleeves. "Does your ex-commanding officer need to teach you a few manners when it comes to women?"

Remy held up his hands in front of him. "Geez, guys. Hold off on the firing squad." He knelt down in front of Cory and lifted her hand to his lips. Looking into her green eyes, he had absolutely no doubt she held his future in the palm of her hand. "Corrine, I've loved you since I was sixteen years old. I lost you for many years but then the dear Lord blessed me and brought you back into my life. I love you, sweetheart. Please say you'll do the honor of becoming my wife?"

Cory obviously wanted to tease him a little. She put her finger to her lips like she had to think really hard about the answer. Finally she smiled and kissed him. "I've loved you forever too, Remy, and I would be honored to be your wife."

Remy gave her a heart-melting kiss. He felt his cock fighting to free itself from its jean-clad imprisonment. "Can we go upstairs and seal the deal?"

Cory stood and held out her hand. She looked at the other three men. "Carry on, guys. We should be gone about an hour." Cory led Remy by the hand into the house.

* * * * *

Forty-five minutes later after covering Remy's stitches with plastic wrap and tape, they were both in the shower soaping each other down. Cory ran her fingers through Remy's hair, being careful not to uncover the stitches. Usually, he just wore a shower cap, but all the sweating they'd done a few minutes earlier had definitely made shampooing a priority. "You know, I'm getting used to this new look of yours. I think I almost like it better. It's just long enough to wave but not curl. Maybe I should get my hair cut like it?"

Remy jawed dropped. "Bite your tongue, sweetheart. Other than the occasional trim, I hope you never cut your hair." Remy ran his hand down the length of it. "I love the way it just kisses that pretty little ass of yours when you walk and the way each curl is separate and distinct. Please don't cut it."

Running the washcloth over Remy's chest, she watched as the soap bubbles ran in rivers down the defined creases. "I need you to do something for me."

"Just name it. Whatever it is, you've got it." Remy turned her around and began washing her hair.

"Cree and I want to give Jenny a little of the joy we've felt today. I was hoping you'd be able to help us out. Jenny confessed to me last night that your Cajun persona drives her wild. I was thinking maybe you could tuck her into bed tonight and talk and touch her into a climax. As long as there's no penetration, she should be fine, according to the doctor. Cree said they've tried everything but with Jenny's hormones all out of whack she can't climax without getting fucked." Cory reached her hands behind her to touch his hips. "I have faith that by giving her your best 'Crazy Cajun' imitation and touching her you'll get the job done." Remy finished rinsing the conditioner out of her hair. Cory spun around in his arms and kissed him. "What you say? Will you do it?"

Remy smiled. "Hell, yeah, I'll do it. But she usually goes to bed early so we'd better get a move on."

By the time they both arrived downstairs, Ben and Kate had already left. *All the better for Jenny.* Cory thought. The threesome was lounging on the big wide couch watching the nightly news when they entered the great room.

Jenny looked over the back of the couch and smiled. "I heard the good news. Congratulations."

"Thank you. We're planning to leave Thursday. That'll give us a three-day honeymoon and have us back here by Saturday evening. Remy and I figured we can all drive to Gabe's together on Sunday morning."

They nodded their heads at the plan. Jenny rubbed her belly and yawned. "Well, I think it's time for me to hit the hay."

Remy reached out and pulled her off the couch into his arms. He kissed her deeply, passionately. By the sound of the little moan that escaped, Cory would have to say Jenny liked the kiss as much as she enjoyed watching it.

Breaking the kiss, Remy licked her lips. "Ole Remy gonna tuck his sweet honeychile in dis night." He looked into her eyes and kissed her again.

Jenny practically swooned at the different rhythm of Remy's voice. "Okay." Jenny turned back to the couch. She leaned over just enough for Cree and Jake to stretch up and give her a kiss. It was Remy's turn next. He gave each man a thorough tongue bath before giving Cory a hug and a kiss. "You're sure about this?" he whispered in her ear.

"I'm positive. Go do for Jenny what you do for me."

Remy smiled and led Jenny up the stairs with his arm around her.

Cory grinned after the pair. She could tell by the flushed look of Jenny's face that she would indeed get her orgasm. She disappeared into the kitchen and came back with three bottles of beer. She handed one to Cree and then to Jake.

Jake patted the couch between him and Cree. "Come on over and snuggle with us, sunshine."

Cory smiled to herself. She'd gone a lifetime without a pet name and now she had three of them. She was glad she decided to just wrap a soft cotton robe around her naked body instead of putting her clothes back on. Stepping over Cree's legs, she squeezed herself between the two men. As soon as she was snuggled in hands began to wander over her body.

The three of them watched the rest of the news as a kind of foreplay. Jeans became unbuttoned and unzipped. Shirts came off and were flung to the floor. Cory's robe was suddenly parted and two mouths attached themselves to her breasts. Arching her back, Cory moaned and began stroking their cocks as they pleased her.

Cree suddenly broke his wet hold on her nipple and looked into her face. "Shall we take this upstairs? Because what I have in mind is going to require a little more room than this couch is able to provide."

Cory kissed him and nodded. This would be her first time ever with two men and she suddenly felt a little nervous, although thanks to Remy and her dildo she already knew what it felt like. Cree stood and fastened his pants enough that they would stay up before bending over and picking Cory up into his arms. "Get the beers, Jake." Cree kissed her as he carried her up the stairs.

When they passed the master bedroom they heard snippets of Remy's voice and Jenny's moans. "Ahhh Jenny dat is a purty pussy. So soft. Ye let ole Remy touch dat purty pussy?"

At Jenny's continued moans, Cree and Jake looked at each other with raised eyebrows and continued on to the guestroom. Cree let Cory slide down his body at the side of the bed. He pushed the cotton robe off her shoulders and began getting undressed. "Gonna make love to you, darlin'. Jake and I are gonna fill both those sweet holes."

Cory's knees threatened to give out and she collapsed back on the big king-size bed. She scooted to the center and pushed all the covers down to the foot. With her head on one of the pillows she spread her thighs just enough to entice the two naked men standing before her. They were both perfect. She looked at Jake's erection and thought about Remy's experience with Jake that he'd shared with her in the shower. Yeah, she could definitely see either of these men making love to Remy. But right now, it was her turn. "Come on, boys," Cory said in her best sultry vixen voice.

Both men jumped in bed on either side of her. Jake kissed her while Cree made himself at home with his head between her thighs. Cory reached down and held on to his head as he lapped at her already-drenched pussy. "Oh, that feels good," she said, breaking the kiss. She looked into Jake's eyes. "I want to taste you. Remy said you taste like earth and man." She could almost swear she saw Jake blush but it was quickly forgotten when a huge cock appeared in front of her face.

Cory could tell Jake and Cree had definitely had practice at this. While she was taking her first licks of Jake's manhood, he was sucking Cree's cock deep into his mouth. Cree moaned and the vibrations rattled against her clit. It was like touching a live wire and she came without warning.

Cree made a grunting sound and delved deep into her pussy with his tongue, lapping up everything she had to give. Cory continued to suck Jake's cock as far down her throat as it would go. She could feel Jake's body trembling as he tried not to come.

As if by unspoken agreement the two men broke away suddenly. Jake reached for the drawer in the bedside table and withdrew a bottle of expensive lubricant. She blushed knowing that she and Remy had used the same bottle an hour ago, only they were bent over the bed instead of in it.

Cree repositioned her as he stretched out underneath her sensitive body. He cupped her face in his palms and drew her in for a deliciously erotic kiss. Cory tasted herself on his lips and tongue as he continued to thrust inside her mouth.

He pulled away and stared into her eyes. "Relax now. Jake's gonna get you ready for his cock."

"Sweet mother of God. Damn, sunshine, you're already stretched." Jake smacked her ass. "Did Remy already get a go at this tonight?"

Cory smiled down at Cree and wiggled her ass for Jake. "Just slick yourself up and get on in here."

Cree started laughing as Jake slapped her butt again. "Such impertinence from a woman with such a pretty ass. Cree, you'd better get in there quick because I'm about to impale this pretty thing."

Cree held Cory's hips as he lowered her onto his shaft. "Yes. Damn, you feel hot." Just as Jake was getting ready to enter her from behind, they heard Jenny's and Remy's wails of ecstasy. The three of them started giggling as Jake did in fact impale her on his huge erection. Cory had never felt so full in her life. This was nothing like having a dildo inside her while being fucked. Once both men found their rhythm, Cory enjoyed the ride.

Jake hissed and leaned over to put his head between Cory's shoulder blades. "So good." His thrusts became more forceful until she felt she was a pinball being bounced between two bumpers. The rhythm was so fast and the sensations so deep that she felt her body begin to convulse as her climax ripped through her body. Cory cried their names as both men yelled their climax. She felt them pump both holes full of white creamy cum.

Collapsed into a pile of arms and limbs, the threesome shared strokes and kisses as their breathing gradually returned to normal. Cory felt cherished wrapped in four arms with two men crooning words of appreciation to her. "That was...that was just, *wow*." Cory yawned as Jake slid off the bed and headed to the bathroom. Cory heard the water running as Cree kissed her.

Soon, Jake was back with two warm washcloths. He started with Cory, cleaning her as he nibbled on her stomach. Next, she watched as Jake fondled and cleaned Cree. The two men ended up in a loving embrace, kissing and whispering words of love.

Cree broke the kiss and snuggled up on one side, while Jake snuggled up on the other side. They naturally all moved to their sides, spoon fashion, with Cree in front of her and Jake in back.

Cory was just about to fall asleep, she felt so happy and sated. "Do you think we should switch beds?"

Jake kissed her neck and tucked his hand between her legs. "I'm sure Remy and Jenny are already asleep." Jake wiggled his fingers just enough to start her up again. He rested his fingertips just inside her pussy lips. "Is it okay if we just all stay right where we are and sleep?" He licked her shoulder.

Cory rolled her eyes and pushed back against his semi-hard cock. "It's good for me." She nipped Cree's shoulder as she rested her hand on his cock. "What about you, Cree?"

Cree grunted and gave a little thrust into her hand. Jake snickered behind her. "He's good to go."

Within minutes they were all sound asleep, the day's activities having taken their toll.

Chapter Eight

In the wee hours of the morning Jenny kissed the man wrapped around her. She started for a minute then remembered her night with Remy. *God, she hadn't come that hard in months.* Remy's voice and intimate touches made her forget all about being a pregnant woman and took her to that place where she was just a woman. She couldn't wait until after the twins were born so she could have him inside her.

Trying to get more comfortable, she wiggled around a bit. Remy wrapped her up even tighter in his sleep. Jenny's eyes opened wide as she suddenly realized what had awoken her. "Remy?" Jenny kissed his sleep-softened lips. "Remy, wake up." Still nothing. She couldn't get her arms free of his tight embrace so she said it a little louder. "Remy, wake up. My water broke."

Remy shot straight up in bed. He frantically started touching her stomach as if she were going to have the babies at any second. "Hold on, sugar. Don't have those babies yet." He jumped off the bed and quickly put on his jeans. He bent over and gave her a quick kiss. "You stay right there and I'll go get the other three."

Remy raced out of the room and threw back the door to the guestroom. He took in the scene before him and started to get hard. Cory was snuggled up to Jake's chest, with Cree's body pressed against her from behind. Her leg was bent and insinuated between Jake's with Cree's hand between her thighs cupping her pussy even in sleep. Damn, that was hot. Shaking his head, he flipped on the light. "Wake up. Jenny's water broke and we've got to get her to the hospital."

The pile of naked bodies on the bed sat up as one. Cree untangled himself and reached for his jeans. "Does she need an ambulance?"

Remy ran his hand through his hair as he reached for Cory. "I-I don't know. Oh, fuck, I just left her in bed by herself." He raced back out of the room, dragging a naked Cory by the hand.

When the four of them pushed their way through the door, Jenny was dressed and sitting on the edge of the bed. Cree and Jake ran over to her. "Why aren't you in bed?"

As Jake and Cree sorted out the situation, Cory realized she was the only one still naked. She pulled her hand out of Remy's. "I'm going to go put some clothes on." She went back to her room as the men ran around like chickens with their heads cut off.

Cory knew she'd probably be at the hospital for a while so she put on comfortable jersey shorts and a t-shirt. She dug out clean clothes for Remy and ran a pick through her disheveled hair. When she arrived back at the bedroom Cree was on the phone with

Jenny's doctor. She calmly went to Cree and Jake's closets and pulled out clean clothes for them too. She stuck an electric razor from the bathroom into her purse alongside Remy's razor.

As the men made plans to leave, Cory made a quick pot of coffee and poured the contents into an insulated thermos. She got some snacks out of the pantry and put them into a canvas bag she found under the sink before loading everything in their rented SUV. She even thought to put a pillow and blanket in Cree's sheriff's vehicle. She turned around just in time to see all three men leading an exasperated Jenny down the porch steps.

Cree ran ahead of them when they reached the bottom of the steps. "I'm gonna drive Jenny with the lights on. I think it's okay to have Jake in there with us but you and Remy will need to take your rental."

Cory rolled her eyes and kissed his cheek. "Everything's already taken care of, Sheriff. I put a pillow and blanket in the backseat for Jenny. Don't worry about us, we'll get there as soon as we can."

Jake and Remy loaded Jenny in the backseat. After closing the door, Jake gave Cory a quick kiss. "Wish us luck. The doctor thinks since her contractions have barely started we'll make it to the hospital in plenty of time." He jumped in the front passenger seat and the SUV roared down the driveway.

Remy wrapped his arms around Cory as they watched the threesome speed away with the vehicle's emergency lights on. He looked down at Cory and kissed her. "Are you okay, sweetheart? I'm sorry if you felt lost in the shuffle in there. We were all so afraid she wasn't going to make it to the hospital in time, I guess we lost our heads."

Cory led Remy to the passenger side of the SUV. "I'm great. You, however, are still not calm enough to drive." She kissed him again and ran her hand down the front of his jeans. "Get in."

* * * * *

Two and a half hours later, Carson and Cash Sommers made their appearance into the world, Carson born a mere eight minutes before Cash. Both babies were healthy and, now that they were nursing, seemed perfectly happy.

Remy watched as Cree and Jake sat on either side of Jenny's bed. They couldn't stop touching their new sons or whispering words of love to Jenny. The beauty of it all brought tears to his eyes. The look on Cory's face when she caught him watching the scene broke his heart. Remy could tell what she was thinking by the tears shimmering in her eyes.

He walked over and wrapped his arms around her. He led her out of the room after telling Ben and Kate they'd be down the hall. Remy settled Cory in one of the waiting room chairs and sat down beside her. He put his arm around her and leaned in for a kiss. "Shh. Don't cry, sweetheart. We'll have our own family someday."

Cory cried harder. "I wish I could give you a child. You deserve to have the same look on your face as those two men in that room. I'm sorry I can't give you that."

Drying her tears with the back of his hand, he leaned in and kissed her eyelids. "I'm sure the day we bring our adopted child home with us I'll have that very same look. It's not just about you physically having the child. It's the combined love that is felt for both mother and child. I won't love a child any less because his or her DNA doesn't match ours."

Cory sniffled and Remy handed her a tissue off the table in the waiting room. "Maybe we should move up our trip to Vegas. Give the new family a chance to be alone for a while."

Remy rubbed his hand up and down her back. He wanted to make love to her right now. He could tell she needed that connection to him again but unfortunately the hospital staff might look down their noses at them if they were to fuck in the waiting room. "We can go tomorrow morning if that's what you want, sweetheart. I can't wait to make you my bride. I'll go tell everyone we're gonna go on back to the Triple Spur. How 'bout if we ask Kate and Ben to fly to Vegas with us? It'd be nice to have friends there when we tie the knot."

Cory finally smiled. "Yes, I like that idea. If you don't mind, I'll just stay here."

After giving her another quick kiss, Remy walked back down the hall. He entered Jenny's room and once again felt caught up in the love. He quietly talked to Ben and Kate about accompanying them to Vegas for a couple days and they both agreed happily.

Kate dragged Ben out of the room to go talk to Cory about what they needed to bring. Ben just rolled his eyes and followed his wife.

Remy walked over to the bed. He stood behind Jake and ran his fingers through Jake's hair as he watched the babies nurse.

Jake tilted his head back and looked up at Remy. "Give me a kiss, Godfather."

Remy leaned down and kissed him. It was a little weird since Jake was effectively upside down but it worked well enough to start a tingling in his groin. He broke the kiss and looked into Jake's eyes. "Godfather?"

Cree came around the bed and gave Remy a nice kiss too. "We've decided to have you and Cory as the twin's godparents. If you'll accept, that is?"

"We'd be honored. But I won't mention it to Cory just yet. She's feeling a little blue right now. As a matter of fact we've decided to fly to Vegas in the morning instead of waiting until Thursday."

Cree watched him closely. "Why's Cory sad? Is it because of the babies?" He looked over at his wife and newborn sons.

Remy ran his hand through his hair and sighed. "It's my fault. She caught me looking at you guys and the babies with tears in my eyes. She took it personally, I guess. Cory's just feeling bad that she can't give me what Jenny's given the both of you. I tried

to talk to her and I think, on the surface anyway, she seems better but she asked to go to Vegas to give you all time alone as a family."

Jenny finally spoke up as she handed one of the babies to Jake and one to Cree to burp. "You're our family now too, though. Do us a favor and don't keep her away too long. It'll be easier for her to deal with when we show her you both will always be a part of our lives. The longer she stays away, the more barriers she may begin to erect out of self-preservation. Now bend down here and give me a kiss goodbye."

Remy smiled and sat on the side of the bed Cree had vacated. He carefully wrapped his arms around her and leaned in to give her a deep kiss. He rested his forehead against hers and looked into Jenny's eyes. "How did I get lucky enough to have two exceptional women in my life? You take care of those babies while I'm gone. And thank you for inviting Cory and me into your beautiful family."

"Congratulations on getting married," Jenny said as she ran her hand down the side of his face.

Remy kissed her again. "Love you, sugar." He rose from the bed and kissed Cree and Jake one more time. "You guys coming home tonight or staying here?"

Cree finally got Cash to give him a big burp and laughed. "We'll most likely stay here. They'll probably let Jenny and the twins go home in a couple days if they continue to do well. We'll see you when you get back."

* * * * *

Cory was in heaven. The day after they arrived, they'd said their vows in a tiny Vegas chapel. She'd worn a simple white sheath dress with a bouquet of deep red roses that Remy had bought her. He'd also surprised her with a large diamond and sapphire ring. "It belonged to my mother, Evelyn. Nicco was able to salvage my safe out of the house. The ring and my father's pocket watch were the only things I cared about losing. Turns out I didn't lose either of them." He kissed the ring before he slid it on her finger. "I love you, Corrine."

After their wedding, Ben took the four of them out to eat. They had a wonderful dinner of steak and lobster and the best champagne money could buy. Cory and Remy couldn't stop touching each other. He fed her bites of lobster and licked the melted butter off her chin and lips when it dripped.

Cory would have felt awkward behaving like they were if Ben and Kate weren't doing the same thing across the table.

Remy cleared his throat. "Thank you for the fabulous dinner, Ben, but I think it's time I take my bride upstairs. We'll see you tomorrow at breakfast."

Ben reached across the table to shake Remy's hand. "Congratulation again, buddy. I hope the two of you are as happy as Kate and I." He held his hand out for Cory's and kissed it.

Cory was surprised by the growl emanating from Remy. When they got back to the room she questioned him about it.

"I don't like his lips on you, sweetheart, that's all." Remy tugged off his jacket and tie and sat on the side of the bed. He began unlacing his shoes.

Cory slipped out of her slingback sandals, still looking at him. "You don't like Ben kissing my hand but it's okay for Cree and Jake to do a lot more?"

Remy stopped what he was doing and opened his arms. Cory went to him and sat on his lap. "It's not the same thing to me. I don't know why, so I can't really explain it to you but Cree, Jake and Jenny feel more like family now. Maybe it's wrong but I honestly don't feel jealous when I see you with them. Turned on? Hard as a rock? You bet. But not jealous."

Cory ran her hands down Remy's face. "Is it wrong to have feeling of love for them? Because God help me, I do. Not so much for Jenny in a sexual kind of way but I love her like a sister. Sorry to disappoint you, sugar, but I don't think Jenny and I will ever be able to give you three guys a thrill show." She smiled as Remy slapped her butt. "Disappointed?"

"With you? Never. The important thing is that we all do what feels right. We'll build us a nice little house next door to the Sommers and we'll be able to love them the rest of our lives. I don't see this thing between us ever going away. Do you?"

Cory leaned in and kissed him. "No, it feels too right to give up."

Remy nodded his head. "Besides, did I tell you they want us to be the official godparents to the twins? Jenny wants you to love them as much as she does. You'll see, it'll all work out. In a year or two we can start the process to adopt but I'd like to get the house built and maybe the center for women before we do it though. Is that all right with you?"

"Perfectly all right. Now how about we get our clothes off and start on our honeymoon?"

"Gladly, Mrs. Boudreaux." Remy unzipped the back of her dress as he stood her back on her feet. He pulled the dress down past her hips and she gave a little wiggle. As the dress fell to the floor, Remy ran his hands over her white lacy demi-cup bra. He unfastened the front clasp and let her full breasts rest in his hands. "I need a taste first to get me going." He ran his tongue around the beaded areola. "Mmm. Your breasts are so sensitive." He enveloped one of her large nipples with his mouth and suckled.

Cory arched her back and held on to his shoulders. "Oh, I need you naked and in me." She started unbuttoning his dress shirt as he removed her white lacy thong.

When they were both naked, Remy pulled back the covers on their bridal bed. He'd had the hotel put white silk sheets on the bed especially for this night. Cory's eyes lit up when she saw them. "Are you responsible for this?" She crawled between the cool silk sheets.

"Nothing but the best for you, my sweet." He crawled in beside her.

"You're right about that because you're the best for me." She slid her freshly waxed pussy against his waxed groin. They'd both gone the day before to get it done. "Mmm...feels so soft and smooth."

Remy grabbed her butt and thrust up. "Smooth, yes, but I don't know about soft." He reached between their bodies and separated her pussy lips, sliding his cock back and forth across her clit. "Ride me. Let me see if you have the makings to be a cowgirl."

Cory giggled and sat up. In her most provocative pose she slid down the length of his shaft until he was buried to the root. "Hang on, cowboy."

She started moving up and down on his shaft as she played with her nipples. Remy alternated between watching Cory manipulate her breasts and watching her slide up and down on his shaft. He watched as her juices slid down his cock from her hairless pussy. "Damn, that's hot. Hold on, I feel a good hard bucking coming on."

Remy thrust up into her hard. Her cries shattered the quiet of the room as she climaxed around him. When Cory started to lag, Remy flipped them and took over the riding. He pounded his cock in and out of her at lightning speed. He quickly stuck two fingers in her ass as they exploded in a dual orgasm.

Collapsing on top of her, Remy quickly moved to the side and pulled her into his arms. "God, I love you."

Cory yawned as she stroked his chest. "I love you too, husband."

* * * * *

They met Kate and Ben for breakfast the next morning after a long morning session of lovemaking. Cory was starting to feel a little stiff as she let Remy seat her at the table.

Kate must have noticed the wince on her face as she sat down. "Busy night, Cory?" She winked over at Remy. "You'd better ease up on her. It looks like she could use a nice hot bath and a nap after breakfast."

Remy looked confused for a minute then looked over at Cory. "Are you okay, sweetheart?"

Cory touched his face and blushed. "I'm great. Just a wee bit sore this morning. I think Kate might be right about the bath and the nap though. Why don't you spend a little time at the gaming tables after breakfast?"

Nodding, Cory noticed the look of guilt on Remy's face. She leaned over and kissed him. "I had a wonderful night. I wouldn't have changed a single thing, so stop worrying."

That seemed to lighten Remy's face. "Well, if you're sure? Yeah, I'd like to spend some time at the tables. Ben, are you up for it?"

Ben looked at Kate. Remy smiled at him. He would never have imagined Big Ben looking to a woman for permission. When Kate kissed Ben's cheek and nodded he turned back to Remy.

"I'm in. Kate, would you like to come along?"

Kate rubbed her bump of a belly. "Actually I think I might go up with Cory and take my own nap." She narrowed her eyes at Ben. "There's someone else at this table who didn't let his wife get enough sleep last night." Kate ruined the mean look she was giving Ben with a quick wink and a smile.

* * * * *

After breakfast, Cory kissed Remy and walked toward the elevator with Kate. When they got to her floor she told Kate she'd see her in a couple hours and went to her room.

Cory undressed as she ran a hot bubble bath. Stepping into the oversized tub she buried herself in bubbles up to her neck. She rested her head on the bath pillow and closed her eyes.

She must have dozed off for a minute when something woke her. "Remy? Is that you?" When no one answered she shrugged her shoulders and got out of the tub. Cory dried off quickly and crawled into bed.

The alarm she'd set before her bath woke her an hour and a half later. Cory opened her eyes and reached for the alarm when she saw the single red rose on the pillow beside her. She quickly quieted the alarm and picked up the rose. Thorns she hadn't even stopped to look for embedded themselves into the palm of her hand.

She gently pulled the rose out of her hand and went to the bathroom. She ran her hand under cold water as she searched for still-embedded thorns. Cory pulled three out and washed her hands with the antibacterial soap supplied by the hotel. She retrieved a washcloth from the rack and wrapped it around her hand.

Thirty minutes later wearing a yellow halter dress, she walked into the main gambling room, looking for Remy. When she spotted him at the poker table, she walked his way.

Remy saw her coming and folded. He stood and gathered his chips as he watched Cory walk toward him. After gathering his chips he excused himself from the table and walked toward her. Remy stuffed the chips into his pocket and hugged her. "How was the nap?"

Cory kissed his neck. "The nap was wonderful but I can't say the same for the gift you left me." She held up her palm.

Confused, Remy looked at the sore-looking pricks all over her hand. "What happened?"

"I just told you what happened. Next time you leave a rose beside my pillow make sure it's de-thorned. I picked it up and it felt like I'd just fisted a razor blade."

Remy shook his head, he'd suddenly gone pale. "Sweetheart, I didn't leave you a rose. I haven't been to the room since we left for breakfast." Remy held her closer and looked around. "Shit. I've evidently been off my game. I got so damn confident that our

troubles hadn't followed us from Key West that I haven't been vigilant enough." He closed his eyes and rested his head on top of Cory's. "I'm sorry."

Cory raised her head and kissed him. "Let's find Ben and Kate and get the hell out of here."

Remy nodded and marched her through the casino looking for Ben. He wasn't hard to spot, being six foot seven. Remy interrupted his game and told him what had happened.

Ben looked shocked. Cory could see the muscles in his jaw tensing and she knew both of these men were going into full protection mode. Ben pulled out his cell and called Kate. He told her to start packing and not to open the door to anyone but him. He closed the phone and looked at Remy. "Why don't we have Cory go with me while you go back to your room and pack?"

Remy wanted to argue that Cory should stay with him but he knew Ben was right. Whoever had been in their room could easily get back in again. He finally nodded and they split up, Ben taking Cory with him.

Before going back to their room, he stopped and talked to the hotel's security office. They were very helpful and offered to view the video from the elevator and the hallway outside Remy's room. It took several minutes but the tape only showed one suspicious-looking character. A guy with a baseball hat pulled low coming out of the elevator and walking in the direction of Remy's room. With the guy's face hidden beneath the brim of the cap, he was unable to identify the man. Thanking the security officers for their time, he decided to just get Cory out of there as quick as possible.

Remy let himself into the room and looked around. Other than the rose, which had been unceremoniously dropped onto the satin sheets, nothing else seemed out of place. He flipped his cell phone open and called Cree as he started packing.

"Hello."

"Hey, it's me. We've had a bit of trouble this morning and we're on our way home." Remy went on to tell Cree about the rose and the suspicious-looking guy in the hallway.

"Get her back to the Triple Spur. We'll keep her safe."

Remy could hear the conviction in Cree's voice. "Are you sure? I mean, with the twins coming home tomorrow, are sure you want us to come back there? Because I'm sure we could probably stay with Ben and Kate."

Cree cut him off. "You two belong here, in this house, with us. We'll have three ex-SEALs living under one roof and another just across the ranch yard. Don't worry, just bring Cory back home where you both belong."

"We should be there sometime this evening. Thanks, Cree."

"You can thank me later."

Remy hung up and closed Cory's suitcase. He dialed the phone once more and talked to Nicco who'd agreed to get with Mac about the new development. He told Remy to call them if they needed more backup. They both agreed that Gabe had enough on his plate trying to get the rehab center ready for next week's opening.

Chapter Nine

It was after eight o'clock in the evening by the time the four friends pulled into the Triple Spur. Remy let Ben and Kate off at the foreman's house before driving up to the main house. Cory was sound asleep with her head resting against the passenger window when Remy turned off the SUV. He brushed her cheek with the back of his hand. "Wake up, we're home."

Cory's eyes flickered open as she yawned and stretched. "I'm sorry I fell asleep on you. I just can't seem to stay awake. I feel like I've flown halfway across the world or something." She noticed her hand throbbing but thought it was because she slept on it. Besides, Remy had enough to worry about without her whining about a sore hand. "I need something to drink."

Cory sat up in the seat and started to open the door but it was already opening with a smiling Cree on the other side. Cree grabbed her up out of her seat as Remy unbuckled her. "Hey, darlin', how ya doing?" He gave her a deep kiss. "We've missed you guys. Come on into the house. Jake and I just got home from the hospital." Cree passed Cory off to Remy as he got the suitcases out of the back. "You have to carry your bride over the threshold."

Remy scooped Cory up into his arms. Cory laid her head on his shoulder as he carried her up the stairs and into the house. "We're home, sweetheart." Remy kissed her and let her down.

When Jake came out of the kitchen to grab her up in his arms, her hand got wedged between them. "Ow." Jake jerked at her hiss of pain. He released her immediately. "What I do? Did I hug you too hard?"

The obvious concern in his voice made Cory feel bad. "No. I'm sorry, my hand is just a little sore, that's all." She gave him a kiss but he didn't grab her up again. "Please don't treat me like spun glass. I'm fine really."

"Well, in that case, let's try that kiss again." Jake moved in closer and wrapped his arms around her. He parted her lips with his tongue and delved in deep. "I missed you. Tell me how the wedding went."

Remy was behind Cree with his arms wrapped around him and his head resting on Cree's shoulder. "Oh, guys, I can't begin to tell you how beautiful our Cory was." He kissed Cree's neck as he stared lovingly at Cory.

Jake broke his hold on Cory and gave Remy a quick kiss. "Well, now that you're finally home you can come in and eat a late supper with me and Cree. This'll be the first night we've slept in our own home since the twins were born but Jenny thought it was

important that the two of us be here to welcome you home. I've made up a salad and I just need a couple minutes to throw the steaks on the grill. Why don't we go sit on the back patio while they cook?"

Cory followed Jake into the kitchen to get a couple of beers out of the fridge. Jake picked up the platter of steaks and headed to the patio with Cory right behind him.

When they were gone Cree turned in Remy's arms. "Is she really okay? She seems a little off?"

Remy ran his hands down the length of Cree's hair to his butt. He took a quick squeeze and sighed. "I don't know. I mean, I think she's all right but she's slept most of the way home, both on the plane and in the car. And when she wasn't sleeping she was either drinking something or going to the bathroom. I swear that woman had four big bottles of water just on the short flight here. Maybe this whole thing with whoever is trying to scare her is freaking her more than she's letting on?"

Cree licked up the side of Remy's face and over to his mouth. He gave Remy a deeply passionate kiss. "You're home now, that's what's important."

Remy kissed him again. "This place does feel like home." They rubbed for a couple more minutes until they heard Jake calling them.

When Remy led Cree to the back patio, Jake stopped them in the doorway. "Cree, grab the salad out of the fridge on your way out and another beer for Cory." Cree rolled his eyes and let go of Remy's hand to go back into the kitchen.

Remy sat down at the outdoor dining table and pulled a tired-looking Cory onto his lap. "Would you like me to feed you again tonight, sweetheart?"

Cory laid her head on his shoulder and yawned. "Actually, I'm not very hungry. I think I'd rather just go to bed."

Remy stared down at her. "Would you like me to carry you up?"

Cory put her hands on either side of his face and kissed him. "Yes."

Remy looked into her eyes and pulled her hand away from his face. He looked at Cory's hand but it was just too dark to see much on the patio. Remy stood and carried her into the kitchen. He set her on the kitchen table and looked at her hand. "Sweetheart, your hand feels really hot. Hey, Cree, flip on that overhead light, would ya?"

Cree walked over to the wall and flipped the light switch. "Fuck, Remy. How long's it been like that?"

Jake must have heard the commotion because he came into the room in a flash. "What's going on?"

Remy examined Cory's hand. "Sweetheart, why didn't you tell me you were hurting?" He held Cory's red, swollen hand in the palm of his. He gently turned it over so he could see her thorn wounds. "Oh, fuck." Each tiny wound where a thorn entered her skin was red and blistered. "Why didn't you say anything?"

Cory yawned and shrugged her shoulders. "I hadn't really looked at it closely. I just figured it was sore because it hurt like hell when it happened. Besides I'm just too tired to care right now about my hand." Cory's eyes fluttered and rolled back into her head as she passed out on the kitchen table.

Remy caught her before her head hit and scooped her up into his arms. He looked over at Cree. "We've got to get her to the hospital."

Cree ran to the living room and grabbed his keys. He took the blanket off the couch and ran back into the kitchen. "Let's go."

With lights flashing, they raced to the hospital in Santa Fe. Remy sat in the backseat holding Cory, who went in and out of consciousness. "Come on, sweetheart, stay with us." Remy continued to talk to her while trying his best to keep her still. He looked up at Cree. "What do you think's wrong with her? I mean, I know it has to have something to do with that damn rose, but what?"

Cree's eyes landed on Remy's via the rearview mirror. "I don't know, man. Poison of some kind? It's better not to speculate and let the doctors try to figure it out. Is she still breathing okay?"

Remy took the time to concentrate on her breathing patterns. "She's not struggling for breath but it seems to be a lot slower than normal."

It took Cree a little over an hour to make the ninety-mile trip to the hospital in Santa Fe. Cree pulled in front of the emergency bay, Remy jumped out with a barely conscious Cory still in his arms. He carried her through the automatic doors, yelling for a doctor. The emergency staff came running. They had Remy carry her back and deposit her on an exam table. He told them about the rose at the hotel and the symptoms she'd exhibited throughout the day.

The doctors began to examine Cory as they told Remy to wait in the lobby. Remy fought like hell to stay in the room with his new wife but when Cree came through the swinging set of doors, he knew he wasn't going to win.

Cree stepped up to Remy and took his hand. "Come on. Let the doctors work on her. Jenny's out in the waiting room with Jake."

Remy let Cree lead him out into the waiting room. He spotted Jenny sitting next to Jake and walked right to her. She stood and held out her arms to him. Remy held Jenny as he cried for his wife. "She has to be okay. If something happens it'll be my fault. What kind of husband goes gambling while his new wife goes to their hotel room alone? Oh God, why didn't I notice her hand sooner? Maybe if I'd have seen it sooner..."

"Shh. Cory's in good hands now. Please don't do this to yourself." Jenny led him over to a couch where she could still hold him while he cried. He laid his head down on her lap like a little boy with his mother. Jenny ran her fingers through his short hair as she crooned words of love and encouragement to him. She looked over at Cree. "Can you find a nurse and ask her about some kind of sedative for him?" Cree nodded and

took off. Jenny looked over at Jake. "I think it's time to call Nicco and Mac and get them here."

Jake stood and kissed her before walking out the automatic doors to use his cell phone.

A nurse followed Cree back with pills and a paper cup full of water. "I can't give him any prescription medicine without a physician looking at him and they all seem to be busy at the moment. I brought a couple of pain relievers though. I would image with all the emotional turmoil he's experiencing he'll probably have a whopper of a headache."

Jenny took the pills and cup, thanking the nurse as she left. She set the cup on the table beside the couch. "Remy? Do you think you can sit up and take some pain relievers? It'll make you feel better." She continued to stroke his back and head as Remy started to calm down.

Cree looked over at Jenny. "Where'd Jake go?"

Jenny nodded to the ER entrance. "I told him I thought it was time to call Nicco and Mac in. Someone's finally stepping up their game."

Cree nodded and went out the automatic doors. He found Jake leaning against the side of the hospital, still on the phone with Nicco.

When Jake saw Cree coming, he wound up his call. "All right, we'll see you sometime tomorrow." Jake hung up the phone and found himself in Cree's arms. He gave him a deep wet kiss as he turned the phone off and slipped it in his pocket. "Nicco will be here tomorrow. Mac's got his hands full right now with the agency. He'll make it to Gabe's opening next week but that's about it. Mac's sending one of his best bodyguards to take his place. Some fella by the name of Amir." Jake grinned, "Seems he's some kind of human lethal weapon. Anyway he'll be here about the same time as Nicco. I told him to give me a call when he lands and if one of us is still at the hospital we'd go pick them up at the airport."

Jake looked toward the ER entrance. "Any word yet?"

"No. Remy's finally starting to calm down though. You remember the way we were both times Jenny's future was uncertain?"

"Yeah I'll never forget it. I'm just glad our Jenny's being so calm about all this or I might be inside crying like Remy. She always knows what to say to get our minds off the bad stuff and on to doing something productive." He held Cree tighter. "Why do I feel like a part of me is being torn apart? I know we both care for Cory but what I'm feeling is more like love. Is it wrong to love another woman besides Jenny?"

Cree smoothed Jake's unruly hair. "That depends, I guess, on whether you love our Jenny any less because of the feeling you have for Cory."

"Hell, no. You and Jenny are my life. I couldn't live without either of you." Jake blew out a breath. "God, don't even think such a thing."

Cree kissed his forehead. "I think you just answered your own question, cowboy. Loving Cory *and* Remy can't be wrong if it doesn't hurt anyone else." He started to walk Jake back toward the entrance. "So tell me what Nicco had to say?"

"He said he can find no evidence that Anton is alive or dead. The boat explosion he thinks was definitely planned but by whom still remains a mystery. It seems the Coast Guard didn't actually find a body. Well, not a whole body anyway. They found a few odds and ends and one of them happened to be a left arm. Cory identified the wedding ring on the hand as Anton's. At the time they didn't suspect foul play. The Coast Guard just assumed it was another careless boater, and when Cory identified the ring, they left it at that. They gathered all the pieces they could find and cremated the body." Jake gave a full body shiver. "Remy's house bomb was a simple rigging job. Hell, you can learn to do almost anything on the internet these days. The one good thing about it was that it didn't appear to be a professional job. The bad news is that leaves a hell of a lot of suspects."

They walked through the door to find Remy and Jenny talking with a doctor. Cree and Jake raced over to get in on the conversation.

"We'll continue to push fluids through her and monitor her condition. I'd say we'll know more in the morning. I'm having some blood samples sent out to a toxicologist as we speak."

Remy shook the doctor's hand. As the doctor walked off Cree turned to Remy. "Well?"

Remy rubbed his eyes. He looked like he hadn't slept in days. "She's stable for now. The doctors think there must have been some kind of toxin on the rose thorns. It had to have been a slow-acting toxin or a light dose to take so long to affect her body like it did. They're trying to get fluids pushed through her system by IV. They'll keep her in the ICU tonight. The doctor hopes by tomorrow when he makes his rounds she'll be showing improvement."

"The doctor said Remy wouldn't be allowed to stay overnight on the ICU floor so I think the two of you should take him home and make him get some sleep. I told the doctor which room I'm in, and to have someone come and get me if her condition changes."

Jake could see the tears swimming once again in Remy's eyes. He knew the guilt that he was feeling right now. He also knew how much Remy wanted to stay but by the looks of him he was about to fall over from stress and exhaustion. He took Remy's hand in his. "We'll take care of you, Remy. Jenny'll be here if anything happens." Jake looked over at Cree. "Maybe it would just be better to get a room for the night in Santa Fe. That way we'd be closer if something did happen and we wouldn't have to make the drive home and then back in tomorrow."

Cree nodded. "Makes sense." Cree gave Jenny a hug and kiss. "Take care of our sons and I'll see you in the morning."

Jenny nodded and gave Jake a kiss and then she turned to Remy. She wrapped her arms around his waist and hugged him. "She's gonna be fine. Women are a lot tougher than you men give us credit for."

* * * * *

It was after midnight when Jake checked them into a hotel. Cree and Jake undressed Remy and put him into the big king-size bed. They made quick work of their own clothes and crawled in on either side of him.

Cree and Jake wrapped themselves around Remy. Cree kissed his neck. "Get some sleep. Jake and I'll be wrapped around you all night to keep the dreams away."

When Remy's eyes popped open the next morning, he was still sandwiched between Cree and Jake. Both had their arms around not only him but resting on each other's hips. *He loved them.* How had their plans of keeping things friendly gone astray? Remy looked at Cree's sharp but perfect facial features. He raised his head just enough to kiss his sleeping lips.

Remy needed to get up and get dressed. He needed to see his wife but both Cree and Jake looked so peaceful in sleep Remy hated to wake them. He finally decided he might be able to wiggle out of their embrace by moving straight down. As he started to do just that it occurred to him that not only were their arms around him but their legs as well. *Fuck it.* They were going to have to wake up anyway.

Smiling to himself, Remy wrapped his fingers around both cocks and began a slow, stroking rhythm. Jake was the first to become aware of what was happening. Jake thrust his hips forward, effectively trapping Remy's hand between Jake's cock and his own ass. Remy carefully slid his hand out from behind him and let Jake have his way.

Cree woke up when Jake moaned loudly. Opening his eyes, Cree looked right at Remy and smiled. "Morning." He began to rub his cock alongside Remy's. "You feel good in the morning. Nice and warm."

Jake rolled Remy over to his back so he could get a good morning kiss. As he kissed him, he straddled his thigh and began rubbing his cock on Remy's leg. Jake broke the kiss and pulled Cree closer to kiss him. Cree mimicked Jake's position and both men began rubbing themselves off on Remy's thighs.

When both hands joined to wrap around his cock, Remy closed his eyes and enjoyed the ride. "I love you guys. I know we weren't supposed to actually fall in love with each other but it's happened and I'm not sorry."

Cree and Jake started kissing him at the same time. The three-way kiss became a biting, licking frenzy as Remy came first, followed quickly by Cree and Jake. The smell of cum in the air was wildly erotic. When they finally broke their kiss, Cree put his hand on Remy's cheek. "We love you too, and Cory. We all belong to each other now. Our kids will be your kids. Forget about building your own house for now and just live

with us as a family. It might become an issue someday when the kids get older but we can worry about that later."

Remy looked from Cree to a nodding Jake. "You feel the same way?"

Jake licked the side of Remy's face. "I do. And I happen to know Jenny loves you just as much as we do."

Remy cleared his throat. "Um...about Jenny. Cory told me that she loved Jenny like a sister but could never see herself becoming one of her lovers." Remy smiled, remembering the conversation. "She said there would be no free shows for us."

Cree laughed. "Women. They don't know what they're missing. It just so happens that Jenny said basically the same thing after you two left for Vegas. I think we have to just be happy that they love each other in any fashion and they won't feel any animosity or jealousy about sharing the three of us."

Cree stretched. "Do we live in a great world or what? I love the fact that I can openly love whoever the hell I want without recriminations."

"Oh, there just might be a few of those from our other friends and the cowboys on the ranch. I don't really want to hide our love away like it's a secret but I think it would be better if we kept it at home. Our twins will have to go to school in the town. They'll have enough to deal with, just by having you two as fathers without adding Cory and me to the mix."

Jake smiled and bit Remy's nipple. "Do you realize you just called Cash and Carson 'our twins'? Let's get up and take a quick shower and get to the hospital. We need to check on our Cory and get our Jenny and twins home."

Chapter Ten

It was eight-forty-five when the threesome arrived at the hospital. Remy immediately checked in with the nurse at the front desk. He was told that Cory had been moved to a private room but that visiting hours wouldn't begin for another fifteen minutes. Although Remy was miffed that he still had another fifteen minutes to wait he was relieved she'd been moved out of the ICU. He turned to Cree and Jake. "That's a good sign, right?"

Jake clapped him on the back. "That's a terrific sign. Let's go get a quick cup of coffee then go up and visit our ladies."

When they entered Cory's room fifteen minutes later, Jenny was sitting on the side of the bed and the two women were chatting away. Cory turned as they walked in the door. "Hey. It's about time you guys got here." She held out her arms and one by one they each gave her a good long kiss.

Remy sat down beside Jenny and held both their hands. "We were here fifteen minutes ago but they wouldn't let us come up until nine." He leaned in and kissed her without letting go of Jenny's hand. "So has the doctor been in to see you?"

"He has." Cory nodded. "He said I'm doing much better and I should be able to go home tomorrow after they do a few more tests to make sure I won't have any lasting effects from whatever was on the rose. They think it might have been jimson weed."

Cory held Remy's hand even tighter and brought it to her cheek. "How are you doing? I hear you had a pretty rough time of it. Thank you, by the way. It made me feel good to know you were so upset that something might happen to me."

Cree interjected at this point. "Upset, hell, the man was absolutely beside himself. I've never seen him like that in all the years I've known him." Cree winked at Cory. "It took a severe ass pounding to even get him calmed down enough to get some sleep."

Cory giggled and looked at a blushing Remy. "It's okay. Cree and Jake are good at that whole ass-pounding thing. I know why you couldn't resist."

Jenny started laughing and swatted Cory's leg. "Hush. You'll give those two even bigger heads than they already have."

Cory and Remy looked at each other then at Jenny and started laughing. Jenny chuckled herself. "Well, you know what I meant." She turned to her husbands. "My doctors said the twins and I can get out of here sometime this afternoon. Have either of you gone to the store for that list of supplies I gave you?"

Cree looked at Jake. "Jake was supposed to do it."

"Was not. I told you to stop by the store when you went in to the sheriff's office yesterday morning. You're the only one that's even been home before yesterday evening."

Cree's jaw tightened as he put his hands on his hips. "Give your wife a kiss and let's go to the store."

Jake gave Jenny and then Cory a kiss and followed Cree out the door. Jenny smiled shaking her head. "It's going to be like having two sets of twins in the house now. Although I hope Cash and Carson don't fuss at each other as much as Jake and Cree."

Cory leaned back against her pillow and yawned. "You're very lucky either way."

Jenny took Cory's hand. "I am, aren't I? Why don't you get some sleep? I'll be back later and bring the twins, with your husband's help, of course."

Cory yawned again and wiped the sleepy tears off her cheek. "I'll see you two in a little while." When Remy started to argue, Cory shook her head. "I need the rest and Jenny could use the help. Now go. I'll be fine."

* * * * *

Later that afternoon, Nicco and Amir followed Remy into Cory's room. Nicco went to the bed and bent and kissed Cory's cheek while Remy growled.

"How are you?" Nicco asked, sitting in the chair beside her bed.

"Fine as frog hair. How was your flight and who's the intimidating but good-looking man in the corner?" At her notice of Amir, Remy growled even louder. "Oh, relax, Rambo. I've got all the testosterone I can handle right now. I was just being friendly."

Nicco chuckled and motioned for the stranger to step farther into the room. "May I introduce you to your new bodyguard? Amir, this is Corrine Boudreaux."

Remy couldn't take it any longer. "What do you mean he's Cory's bodyguard? I'm her husband and an ex-SEAL, for God's sake. Do you think I'm not capable of protecting my own wife?"

Cory looked at Amir. There was something about him. A kind of quiet elegance wrapped in a warrior's body. He was nothing like the SEALs she'd been around. He hadn't said a word since he'd entered the room. When Nicco introduced them he'd simply bowed slightly and nodded. Despite the quiet demeanor, Cory suspected he was not someone you'd want to mess with.

Cory shut out the sound of Remy and Nicco arguing and turned to Amir. "How was your flight? Did you fly in with Nicco?"

"No, ma'am. I flew in from New York. I work for Mac and Nicco at the protection agency. Mac's trying to get things lined up so he can go to your friend Gabe's next week, he sent me in his place. I understand you've been having some problems?"

Cory warmed at his slight English accent. *What a puzzle this man appeared to be.* He looked Middle Eastern but spoke flawless proper English with just a hint of a British

accent. "My dead husband's trying to drive me crazy, although I'm the only one who believes it."

Amir's lips actually tipped up in the corners, but only slightly. "Sometimes listening to one's own instincts saves lives."

Cory looked at him trying to figure out what he just said. *Was he saying he agreed with her?*

Cory's thoughts were interrupted by Remy's lips on her forehead. "I'm going to walk with Nicco down to have a cup of coffee in the cafeteria. He'll just drive to the Triple Spur by himself afterward. *Amir* and I will be here for you tonight." Cory smiled at the way Remy said Amir's name. He was acting like the typical jealous husband and she loved it."

* * * * *

They let Cory go home the next day with orders for total bed rest for the next couple of days. Amir was a permanent fixture outside her bedroom door. Remy had given him strict instructions to check to make sure she wasn't sleeping before allowing anyone to enter.

The best part of Cory's long days in bed was the chance to hold and cuddle the twins. She'd grown quite attached to the little devils in such a short time. Everyone seemed to make a point of bringing one or both in to see her several times a day. Cory cherished the times when they left her alone with the babies. She actually enjoyed changing their diapers and feeding them breast milk from a bottle while Jenny napped. From the sound of it she did quite a bit of that. Cree and Jake were good about getting up with them in the middle of the night but it was Jenny who had to stay awake and nurse them. The men, of course, fell right back to sleep after handing over the twins.

It was finally Sunday morning and Cory was so excited to go somewhere she was up and dressed before six. She'd been so quiet she hadn't even bothered Remy who was still sound asleep. She opened the bedroom door and tiptoed past the rest of the bedrooms. Once in the kitchen she made a big pot of coffee. She felt fantastic. Alive.

Humming to herself as she started breakfast, she didn't even hear Jenny come into the kitchen.

"You seem happy today." Jenny opened the fridge and got out a gallon of milk. She poured herself a big glass and eyed the coffee. "Oh, I can't wait until I can have coffee again."

Smiling, Cory turned toward her with the spatula in her hand. "Can you have decaf?"

Jenny's eyes went big as saucers. "I don't know. Do you think information like that would be in one of my baby books? I don't normally like decaf but just the thought is making my mouth water."

Cory laughed. "Wait 'til I get this bacon and sausage done and we'll look it up on the internet. How did you sleep last night?"

Jenny sat at the table and shrugged. "All right, I guess. I'm starting to get used to the hours so it's been easier. Cree will have to go back to work Tuesday so he'll need more sleep. I don't worry as much about Jake. Hank and the cowboys can always take care of things on the ranch if he needs a quick nap. But criminals? Not so much."

Jake and Remy came strolling into the kitchen, both yawning and scratching their naked chests. Jenny and Cory each received a good morning kiss. "How're you feeling today, sunshine?"

Cory took the sausage and bacon out of the frying pan and put them on a lined platter. She put the platter in the warming oven. "I'm great. If you two men will do me a favor I'd be even better."

Instantly Jake and Remy sandwiched her in between them and rubbed against her. "Whatever you want." Remy kissed her again.

Cory smiled to herself. "Good." She took off her apron and handed it to Remy. "You and Jake make the eggs while I go with Jenny to look something up on the internet." Cory and a giggling Jenny left the room.

Jake looked at Remy. "Is that what you thought she had in mind?"

"Hell, no. I thought we were about to make some fantasy of hers come true." Remy tied the pretty yellow apron around his waist.

Jake pulled him into his arms. "You look so pretty in yellow. I could just eat you up."

That earned him a smack on the ass. "Get the eggs out of the fridge, smartass."

* * * * *

After breakfast, everyone packed an overnight bag and they were on their way to Oklahoma to see Gabe, Rex and Boone. With the twins coming along they had to take two vehicles. The Sommers clan took Jenny's minivan while the rest of them went in Remy's rented SUV. As they drove through Junctionville, Cree pulled into the café.

Remy shook his head. "We just ate. How can he be hungry?"

Ben perked up from the backseat. "I could eat again."

Cory chuckled. "He's probably getting Jenny the biggest decaf coffee he can buy."

"Oh. Well, all right then. Ben, sit back and relax. No more breakfast for you."

They arrived at Gabe's around three o'clock Sunday afternoon. Cory wondered how being back on the Double B would affect Jenny. It was here, Cory had learned, that Buck Baker, Jake's father, had raped and branded her when she was eighteen years old.

Remy helped Cory out of the SUV, while Nicco and Amir grabbed their luggage. Rex came out of the house as soon as they pulled up.

"Let me get a look at those babies," Rex said, taking both baby carriers. His strength was not outwardly evident but the ease at which he hefted those carriers up to eye level told the real story. "Perfect. Just like their momma." He lowered the babies and walked toward the house. "Come on in after you take your things to your cabins. I've got some baby lovin' to do or I'd be a real host and escort you."

Cory and Jenny looked at each other and smiled. There was just something about a man who was crazy about babies. Cory followed Remy to the cabin they'd used last time they were there. Kate and Ben gave up their cabin with the big bed to Jenny, Cree and Jake. After dropping their suitcases off, Cory and Remy went back to the van and retrieved the travel bed for the twins as well as some of the other baby supplies.

They knocked on the door to the Sommers' room and walked in. The threesome was snuggled together sharing a quiet moment. Cory started to back her way out of the room when Cree stopped her.

"Hey there, you two. Come on over, we're just taking a minute to catch our breath. It's nice to have a babysitter once in a while."

Cory and Remy joined them and shared touches and kisses. After a while, Cory looked at the clock. "Cotton's going to think we've abandoned him with the twins."

"Yeah, and it's almost feeding time," Jenny said, as she tried to sit up.

They untangled themselves and quickly straightened their clothes. When Jake started to get Cory revved up, Remy stopped him with a hand on his shoulder. "Later, love. Right now we need to get to work. I'm sure there are still a few things we can do around here to help Boone out."

While Jenny fed the babies, Cory began potting flowers with Amir's help. She smiled as she watched Remy, Nicco, Cree and Jake try to hang the new ranch sign they'd bought for the grand opening. Cory watched as Amir continued to add purple and red petunias to the whiskey barrel they were planting. He sure was a quiet man. He stood tall and lean, although she'd never say he was skinny, his well-developed muscles were obvious under his t-shirt and jeans. His hair was so black it looked blue in the sunlight and was cut military short. "So tell me a little about yourself?" When Amir just looked at her, Cory shrugged. "I mean, you've been with me close to a week now and I know absolutely nothing about you. It just seems strange."

Amir exhaled audibly. "No one but Mac knows anything about me. It's the way I like it."

Cory rolled her eyes at the typical alpha male response. "Well, at least tell me whether you have a family back in New York? A wife? Kids?"

A look passed over Amir's face briefly and then was gone. She was left with the warrior mask he always wore.

Amir shrugged his shoulders. "Once. Back in Saudi but they're all dead now." He turned away from her and started potting more containers.

Cory didn't pursue her line of questioning any further. The pain evident in that brief glimpse was enough to silence her.

* * * * *

They grilled steak and chicken that night for dinner. After Ben had, as usual, cleaned up the last of the food, Cory started clearing the table. "You guys go ahead and sit out on the porch. I've got the dishes tonight."

When everyone went outside but Amir, she waved away his help. She still felt awful about her questions earlier. "It's all right. You go out on the porch and get to know the rest of the gang. They're all great people when you give them a chance. I'm used to doing the dishes at the bar so it doesn't bother me." She filled the sink with hot soapy water without turning around.

Cory heard the screen door shut and knew Amir had followed her suggestion. He seemed so lonely, so wrapped in grief that he wouldn't let anyone else in. Cory finished clearing the table and started washing. She was stopped several times by Jake, Remy or Cree coming in for a few gropes and kisses under the guise of getting another beer.

Cory was just about finished when the hairs on the back of her neck stood straight up. She looked behind her and no one was there. Looking out the window into the darkness, she felt as though someone was watching her. She quickly dried her hands and went out to the porch. Without even acknowledging the rest of the group, Cory stepped off the porch and walked into the darkness.

When Remy came walking up behind her she spun around and faced him. "There's someone out there. Watching me." She took Remy's hand. "I felt it while I was washing dishes."

Remy looked out into the darkness and yelled back to the porch. "Hey, guys, get some flashlights and get over here."

The porch erupted with activity as Gabe and Rex ran into the house to retrieve not only two flashlights but a lantern as well. When the rest of them jumped off the porch and came running, Remy looked back over his shoulder.

Amir was the first to reach the pair. "What's wrong?"

Remy squinted into the darkness in front of him. "Cory said she felt as though someone was watching her through the window." He glanced at the rest of his old team. "We all know that it's best to go with gut instinct on something like this and I believe Cory's."

Rex and Gabe arrived with the flashlights and an already-lit lantern. Remy took one of the flashlights. "Let's break up into three groups. I'm sure we've scared whoever was out here away but we might get lucky and find some kind of clue to his identity." He leaned over and kissed Cory. "Boone, would you take the women into the house and get them into a darkened room? I don't want whoever's watching to be able to track movements inside."

Boone took Cory's hand and started to walk off. He stopped and turned back around. "What about Maggie? Rex put her to bed a little over twenty minutes ago."

Rex kissed him. "I'll take care of Mom. You just get the women inside. Take them to the spare bedroom. That's where the twins are asleep so you'll have to be quiet."

Nodding, Boone ushered Cory and Kate inside. Jenny was already in the bedroom keeping watch over her sons.

After two hours the group hadn't come up with much. They decided to call it a night and come back out at first light.

* * * * *

The next morning, Amir and Remy along with Cree and Jake scoured the area while Nicco went to pick up Mac from the airport. They found several cigarette butts beside the barn and Cree slipped one into a sandwich bag and pocketed it. Remy walked from the barn toward the house, keeping his eyes on the kitchen window. At the spot he figured the watcher had stopped for the best view of Cory, he shifted the dirt under his feet. His boot hit something and he looked down. What he saw took his breath.

Remy squatted down and pulled a wedding band out of the dust using a key from his pocket. "Hey, Cree, you might want to take a look at this."

Cree's head snapped toward Remy's direction and he took off at a run. "What did ya find?"

Remy held up the key with the dusty gold band dangling from it. "It appears to be a ladies' wedding ring. I didn't want to touch it in case there were fingerprints still on it."

"Good thinking. Let's take it into the house and get a better look." Cree walked with Remy and Jake to the house. Amir stayed outside looking for more clues. When they entered the kitchen, Jenny and Cory were holding the babies.

Cory looked up as they came through the door. She put her finger to her lips and pointed toward Cash. Remy looked at the sleeping baby and nodded. Cory and Jenny got up and took the babies into the spare bedroom and laid them in their travel crib.

When she entered the kitchen again, Remy, Cree and Jake were bent over the table looking at something. Cory came up behind them. "What are you looking at?"

All three men turned to look at her. Remy pulled her closer as he and Jake wrapped their arms around her. "I found a ring outside. We think it must have been dropped by whoever you felt watching you last night."

Cory looked at all three men and then down at the ring. Suddenly dizzy, Cory started to fall over. Remy and Jake held her tighter in their arms. "It's your ring, isn't it?" Remy asked.

Cory looked from the ring to Remy. "It's my old wedding ring."

Remy maneuvered her to a kitchen chair. "Sit down." Cory sat in the chair and Jake and Remy squatted down on either side of her.

Cree came up behind her chair and put his hands on her shoulders. "How could someone else have your wedding ring? Was it stolen from your apartment when you had the break-in?"

Putting her head down on the table, Cory shook her head. "The funeral home gave me Anton's ring when they handed over his ashes. God help me but I was glad he was dead." Cree rubbed her shoulders as she continued. "Before I had them bury his ashes I took off my wedding ring and placed it along with Anton's in the urn." She looked over at Remy. "This ring should be resting under his headstone in Louisiana. I told you it was him." Cory pointed to the ring on the table. "That ring was dropped in the dirt on purpose."

Remy looked up at Cree. Cree shrugged. "I'll call the cemetery and see when the grave was disturbed." Cree bent over Cory's shoulder and kissed her. "It'll be okay, darlin'."

Cory sat there for a few more minutes and then stood and faced Remy and Jake. "I'm fine. Why don't you two see if Gabe or Rex need any help. I want to make some potato salad for the guests tonight anyway. I'll just stay inside."

Jake kissed her and stepped back so Remy could pull her into his arms. "We'll figure it out, sweetheart. We won't let anyone hurt you." He kissed her and pulled back a little to look into her face. "Would you like me to send Amir in?"

Cory waved away his concerns. "I'm fine, really. Get Amir to help you all with whatever's still left to do."

With one more kiss from each man, Jake and Remy left. Cory decided to get started peeling potatoes. She pulled a big pot out of the cabinet, being careful not to wake the twins and a napping Jenny and sat down at the table with twenty pounds of potatoes.

When Cory was on her second bag, Rex and Boone came in the kitchen. Cory put her finger over her mouth and motioned toward the guestroom. She mouthed that Jenny and the babies were napping. Rex nodded and motioned that he and Boone would be in their bedroom. Poor Boone looked like he was about to fall over from exhaustion.

After she finished with the peeling, Cory ran water into the pot and set it on the stove to boil. She was wiping down the table when she heard her cell phone ring. She looked around the kitchen and finally spotted it under a dishtowel and flipped it open. "Hello."

She was greeting by the sound of a baby crying with a lullaby playing in the background. Cory immediately recognized the song as the one she'd been singing almost nine years ago on the worst night of her life.

Now as she listened to the crying baby and the lullaby, every detail of that night came back to her. She'd been humming the lullaby while wallpapering the baby's room. She'd picked out yellow-and-white-striped paper with a rubber duck border. She'd

been so happy because she'd felt the baby moving earlier in the day and she just couldn't wait to get the room finished. When Anton came into the room and saw her papering he'd flown into a rage and dragged her by the hair out of the room. The ensuing argument ended with him pushing her down the stairs.

A buzzing fly shook her from her memories. Cory snapped the phone closed and collapsed in a chair. *Why was he doing this?* She had no doubt that it was Anton. He was the only one that could have known about that lullaby.

Gabe found her there crying fifteen minutes later. He quickly sat down next to her and rubbed her back. "What's wrong, Cory? Do you want me to get Remy?"

Cory turned toward Gabe and wrapped her arms around him. She sobbed against his chest as he made gentle shushing noises in her hair. He stroked her hair as he spoke softly. "What happened? Did you get a phone call?"

Cory wiped her face with the bottom of her t-shirt. "Someone's trying to drive me crazy. I need you to find Remy and ask him to come in here."

Gabe nodded and pulled out his cell phone and dialed Remy's number. Cory looked at Gabe, she couldn't believe she hadn't thought of calling him.

"Weh," Remy answered his phone.

"Remy, it's Gabe. Cory needs you in the kitchen." He turned away and walked to the screen door. "I think she got a phone call that's upset her. I found her crying at the kitchen table with the phone in her hand."

"Two seconds."

The phone went dead and sure enough about two seconds later Remy came running through the door. He gathered Cory in his arms and carried her to the couch. He set her down in his lap and kissed her forehead. "What happened?"

Cory looked at the phone still in her hand. "Anton called."

Remy took out his phone and called Cree. "I need you in the house. Now." He hung up before Cree could respond. He brushed Cory's errant curls behind her ears and kissed her as he rocked her in his arms. When Cree sat down beside them, Remy looked up. "Cory? Can you tell us why you think it was Anton who called?"

With her nose still buried in Remy's neck she sniffled. "Don't think. Know. He's the only one who knew what the caller did."

Cree ran his hand lovingly down her back. "Darlin'? What did the caller know?"

Wiping her face on the bottom of her t-shirt again, Cory turned her head to face Cree. "Anton didn't say anything. When I answered the phone there was just the sound of a baby crying with a lullaby playing in the background. It was the same lullaby Anton caught me singing the night he pushed me down the stairs."

Cree and Remy both swore vehemently and Cree wrapped his arms around both of them. "The ceremony is in another hour and a half. We'll stay for that and then head home."

Remy nodded his head at the plan but Cory shook her head no. "No. Don't you see? I can't go back to the Triple Spur knowing that I'll be putting everyone else in danger. No, I won't do it." When both Cree and Remy started to argue she held up her hand. "I'm tired of this. I'm going back to Key West and hopefully Anton will follow me. Until I take care of the situation with him I won't go back to the Triple Spur."

Cree closed his eyes "If you and Remy go back to Key West we need to have a plan in place to keep you safe. Let me get together with Amir and the rest of the team first." Cory started to shake her head but Cree took her by the shoulders and shook her just enough to get her attention. "Don't you get it? If this is Anton, and I'm beginning to think you're right about that, he wants something from you. He won't stop until one of you is dead and I'm going to do everything in my power to make sure it's not you. I love you, dammit."

Cory pulled Cree closer with a hand to the back of his head and kissed him. She turned and kissed a speechless Remy. "Go make your plans if that's what you need to do but I'm leaving for Key West tonight."

Chapter Eleven

With their plan hatched, Remy and Cory flew back right after the ceremony. They got to the bar at two o'clock in the morning, tired and grouchy. Remy relocked the front door and took Cory up to her apartment. He undressed her and put her in bed and then called Nicco from the living room.

"Hello."

"Hey, we just arrived at the bar. I put Cory in bed in the other room so I don't want to stay on long but I thought I'd check in with you before I went down for the night. What time does your flight get in tomorrow?"

"Eleven-thirty in the morning. We'll be arriving from Miami."

"Are you sure no one followed you to the Amarillo airport?"

Nicco exhaled, clearly annoyed with Remy. "I know how to do my job."

"Sorry, buddy, but it's not just some client you're protecting now. This is my wife, my entire world." Remy ran his hand through his hair. "Do you know what time Amir and Jake are coming in?"

"Not really sure. They were going to fly out of Santa Fe and go through either Phoenix or Dallas to help cover their tracks."

"All right. If you hear from them let me know. I hope we did the right thing not bringing Amir along, but if Anton's watching he needs to believe we're not on to him." Remy said goodbye and hung up. He undressed and went into the bedroom after making sure the door and windows were secure. He laid the gun he'd retrieved from the bar's office safe down on the bedside table. Remy lifted the covers and slid in next to Cory, who, even in sleep, wrapped herself around him.

Remy lay with Cory in his arms and began to worry about the upcoming days ahead. No matter what, he had to keep her safe. She might get angry with him for smothering her but at least she'd be alive. As he listened to Cory's even breathing his eyelids began to grow heavy and before long he was sound asleep.

* * * * *

The morning brought the return of Cory's anxieties. For a while yesterday she'd had a burst of inner strength but now, as she watched Remy sleep, Cory began to worry again. *What if Anton hurts Remy? How would she be able to live with herself?* It was her Anton wanted. Why, she still didn't know but she had a feeling it was the notebook that Mac had in his possession. If she could get the notebook back and give it to Anton maybe he'd go away. She suddenly realized something and sat straight up in bed.

Startled, Remy opened his eyes and immediately reached for his gun. He jumped out of bed and looked around. "What's wrong? Did you hear something?"

Cory touched his arm. "No. I'm sorry I didn't mean to frighten you. It's just that I suddenly realized I'm a bigamist. If Anton is still alive that means I'm married to two men."

Remy exhaled and blinked his eyes. He put the safety back on and set the gun back on the nightstand. Crawling under the covers, he pulled Cory to him. "Sweetheart, of all the things to be worried about right now that isn't one of them. Whether our marriage is legal in the eyes of the law or not, you're still my wife. The rest will get sorted out eventually."

Tucking her head under his chin, she sighed. "I'm sorry. My mind is all over the place this morning. I'm just worried that something's going to happen to you."

Remy kissed her and then nipped her bottom lip. "Are you saying that you think Anton is tougher than me?"

Cory knew he was trying to cheer her up and damn it, it was working. She twisted his nipple until he yelped. "See, Remington Boudreaux, you're a wimp."

Flipping her over onto her back, Remy sat on her chest and held her arms above her head. "Take it back."

Remembering this same scenario when she was in grade school and the bully on top of her was Stacy Lenderman, Cory shook her head. "No. I won't take it back and you can't make me." She gave Remy her little girl pouty-lip face.

Remy narrowed his eyes and scooted higher on her chest until his hard cock bumped her chin. "Take it back or else."

Cory narrowed her eyes back at him. "Or else what?"

Scooting up another two inches, Remy's cock bobbed against her lips. "Or else I'll make you take me down your throat."

Snorting, Cory rolled her eyes. "Oh, yeah. Like that's gonna make me take it back." She stuck out her tongue and swiped the pearl of pre-cum off the tip. "Mmm. I am not taking it back. Punish me if you must."

Remy chuckled and leaned over her, his cock thrusting effectively into her mouth. He began a shallow rhythm as he moaned. "Yeah. Take that punishment, sweetheart."

Cory struggled and finally got her arms free. She grabbed Remy's ass as she enjoyed the feel of his cock thrusting in and out of her mouth. Running her finger around the tight ring of muscles, she thrust two inside without lubrication.

"Oh, fuck." Remy's stomach muscles began contracting as he pumped his seed into Cory's throat. He gave a little shiver as she milked him dry. When he was thoroughly clean, Remy pushed himself back down the bed. He laid his head on the pillow next to hers and kissed her. "I love you, Mrs. Boudreaux."

"I love you too, Mr. Boudreaux." She rested her head next to his and just looked at him. "Thank you for giving me a life that I love living. Well, except the whole Anton coming back from the dead thing. I would've been just fine without that."

Remy ran his hands down her side. "We need to go down and get the bar ready if we're going to open it today. Did I tell you we've actually had an offer already?" Remy played with one of her long black curls as he spoke.

"Well, you told me that someone had looked at it but I didn't know they'd put in an offer."

"Yeah. I got the call a couple of days ago when you were on bed rest. The offer is under our asking price though. I guess it depends on how much we really wanna sell it."

"It's early yet. Let's give it a little more time and see if we get a better offer. We'll need every penny of the asking price if we're going to build a new life in New Mexico."

Sitting up, Remy swung his legs over the side of the bed. He reached back and popped Cory on the butt. "Up and at 'em. If we still own this place we've got to run it. I'll call Lester and see if he wants to work this week. I'm not sure if he will or not. I think he's probably getting used to the whole retirement thing." Remy stood and walked to the bathroom.

As soon as Cory heard the shower start she stretched and sat up. Deciding to forgo a shower before she did her chores, she quickly dressed and headed down to the bar. She had the tables wiped down and the floor half mopped before Remy came down the stairs.

"Hey, I figured you'd join me in the shower. I was kinda lonely in there by myself." Remy gave her his best little boy face.

Shaking her head, Cory started mopping again. "We've got too much to do. We need to open by lunch if we're gonna make any money on the shoppers today." Cory looked at the clock above the bar. "It's almost nine o'clock. If you're going to call Lester you'd best get to it." Cory flung the dishrag off the table at his head.

Remy caught the rag in midair. "Slave driver," he mumbled, disappearing into the office to call Lester.

* * * * *

The bar was jumping and the beer was flowing, a perfect night in Remy's book. He was glad he'd called a couple of their part-time waitstaff to come in and help out. Evidently the people of Key West didn't realize what they had until they thought it was gone.

Remy looked around at the crowded bar. He knew most of the people in here were locals and not tourists. It made him feel good. He spotted Cory carrying a large tray of sandwiches to a table. He could tell her hand was bothering her a little, but just like a SEAL, she did her job without complaint. Lester had agreed to come in but said he'd

only do simple foods until he could get a proper menu together. It appeared no one really seemed to mind because the sandwiches seemed to be flying out of the kitchen.

Cory sat the sandwich plates down in front of the customers and smiled. Hefting the empty tray back over her head, she easily weaved her way through the growing crowd. She looked at the clock as she passed the bar on her way to the kitchen. *Twelve-fifteen? Really?* It seemed she'd been going nonstop all day and she was worn out.

Loading the next order onto her tray, Cory looked at Lester. "Is this the last of them?"

Lester laughed. "That's it, girly. Kitchen officially closed fifteen minutes ago. I'm gonna wash dishes and head out."

Cory saw the fatigue on the seventy-two-year-old man. "You go on home, Lester. I'll make Remy help me with the dishes later."

Looking relieved, Lester took off his stained white apron. "Really?"

"Yeah, really. I promise the kitchen will look good as new by morning. Now you go on home. I want some shrimp jambalaya on tomorrow's menu."

Lester waved and walked out the back door. Cory finished loading the tray and took it out to the waiting customers. After delivering the food, she stopped by the bar. Remy was charming some women as usual. She cleared her throat and put her hand on her hip. Remy turned around and raised his brows in a questioning manner. "I told Lester I'd do the dishes tonight." Remy nodded and winked. Cory rolled her eyes again and went back into the kitchen.

* * * * *

At two o'clock, Remy ran the last of the customers out of the bar. He closed and locked the wall of sliding doors and turned the open sign off. Making his way back to the kitchen, Remy stretched and yawned. Cory was at the sink doing almost an entire day's worth of dishes. He came up behind her and wrapped his arms around her waist. Kissing her neck, he yawned again. "You sure you don't want me to stay and help?" He turned her to look into her light green eyes. The look he gave her spoke volumes but Cory was determined to get this job done.

She kissed him on the cheek as he yawned again. "Go on up, Remy. You look like the walking dead. I'll be up in a little while."

Keeping a close watch on her eyes, he kissed her. "I love you."

Cory nodded. "I love you."

When once again, Remy yawned, Cory swatted him with her towel. "Go. I'll be fine." Remy nodded and left.

Cory continued to work on the dishes. From the stack of plates and glasses still to be washed she figured she had about another half-hour of washing. At least she didn't have to dry the darned things. They'd invested in a sterilizing dishwasher a couple years earlier but Cory didn't like the way the dishes came out unless she washed the

food off them first. Although usually, she did them a little at a time throughout the day, but with the heavy crowds, she hadn't had a break. She finished washing the plate in her hand and gave it a quick rinse before putting it in the sterilizer rack.

Quickly working her way down the stack, Cory could finally see the end in sight.

"Hello, *cherie*."

Cory dropped the glass in her hand and spun around. Anton stood just inside the back door. Cory was so frightened she couldn't speak.

"What be wrong, Corrine? Did ah scare ya?" Anton walked closer.

Cory tried to focus on the man that had been her abuser for seven years. "What-what do you want, Anton? Why aren't you dead?"

Anton stepped up in front of Cory and ran the barrel of a handgun down her cheek. "Ah want what's mine, Cory. De book and ma wife. And ah plan on getting out of here wid at least one of dem."

Cory pulled her face away from the gun. "I don't have the book. Remy gave it to a friend of his." She saw the madness in his eyes at her statement. "Why now? Why come looking for it after all this time?"

"Ah've been livin a pretty good life een Europe since ma untimely demise. Unfortunately Europe is more expensive dan ah had predicted. Ah need dat book back to...persuade certain people ta give me more money. Widout de book ah have no proof." Anton held the gun under Cory's chin. "De day ah came back to get de book guess what ah saw? Ma lovely widow practically humping ma best friend on de beach. Needless ta say, ah was not happy."

Anton bent down and placed his lips next to her ear. "He was supposed to die een dat explosion ta his ohm. Den ah would have had ya all ta myself again."

Cory thrust her chin up, momentarily forgetting about the gun. "You never wanted me. You wanted a punching bag and you wanted me away from Remy. You're nothing but a two-bit thief and a murderer. Who did you kill in the boat explosion, Anton? Whose ashes did I bury in Louisiana?"

"Unfortunately fa him, de man killed een de explosion was a beach bum lookin fa a free boat ride. Ah merely gave him what he begged me fa. De men ah worked fa were getting a little too demanding fa ma taste so ah needed a way out and ah found it. It's really as simple as dat. No need te call me a murderer, for God's sake." Anton grabbed the back of Cory's hair and pulled her closer to his face. "Git dat book fa me."

Cory reached down and pulled out the knife she had stuffed in her apron pocket. The thought of stabbing someone caused bile to rise in her throat, even if that someone was the man who'd beat her for years. Just as she was about to plunge it into Anton's stomach, a shot rang out and blood blossomed on Anton's side.

He spun around and fired two shots. The first one hit Mac in the shoulder, spinning him around while the second shot struck him in the side. Mac went down immediately.

Cory turned back to Anton just in time to see a shot planted in the middle of his forehead. Anton fell forward right into Cory's knife and knocked them both over.

All hell broke loose. Nicco was screaming for someone to call 9-1-1 as he slumped over Mac's still body.

Remy pulled a dead Anton off Cory and cradled her in his arms. When he looked down and saw all the blood on her, his face went white as a sheet. She touched his face and shook her head. "No, Remy. It's not my blood. I'm okay."

Remy held her so tightly she thought she'd pass out. He continued to rock her in his arms as the sirens grew louder in the background. Amir was shouting orders to Jake as he let the police and EMTs in.

Jake and Amir were in the corner of the kitchen still talking with the police when the ambulance left with an unconscious Mac and a distraught Nicco. Jake's eyes continued to watch Cory and Remy as he dealt with the growing group of detectives. He finally nodded to the police and walked toward Cory and Remy. He knelt down and wrapped his arms around both of them. "We can leave for now but we'll all have to go to the police station tomorrow."

Cory tried to sit up but she was bound too tightly. "We need to get to the hospital to be with Nicco."

Remy nodded. "Yeah, but I think we need a few more minutes of holding you. I'm sure Nicco will understand." Remy kissed his way up her neck to whisper in her ear. "I love you."

Jake kissed his way up the other side. "Me too." Remy looked at Jake. "What about Amir?"

Jake looked over his shoulder at Amir. "He's going to finish up here and then he'll most likely go to the hospital. I guess he and Mac are pretty close friends."

Remy grinned, "Oh, really? Just how close a friend?" He waggled his brows.

Cory slapped Remy's arm as Jake answered. "Wake up, Remy. Nicco's been in love with Mac forever. He just won't admit it to anyone. No. I think Amir became friends with Mac in Afghanistan. After Amir came to the United States, Mac gave him a job."

Releasing their hold on Cory, they helped her stand and walked her upstairs. Cory walked into her bedroom and sat on the bed. She felt so drained. Looking at the clock on the nightstand, she knew why. Not only had she almost been killed by her supposedly already-dead husband but it was four-fifteen in the morning. Cory looked at the two men standing in the doorway with their arms wrapped around each other. She could tell they were giving her a few minutes to decompress and she was grateful but they needed to get to the hospital.

"Remy, could you get me something out of the dresser to wear?" Cory started to smooth her hair when she noticed the dried blood on her hands. Then she saw the bloodstains on the front of Remy's shirt. "You need to change your shirt too. Jake, would you mind helping me to the bathroom? I need to wash up a bit before I put on clean clothes."

Given a task, the men sprang into action. Remy started pulling clothes out while Jake helped Cory to the bathroom. He put her hands in the sink and lovingly washed them for her. Jake took a washcloth off the shelf and ran hot water over it. He gently wiped the blood off Cory's face.

Cory looked at herself in the mirror as Jake took her bloodied shirt off. "I look a fright."

"No, sweetheart," Remy said, coming into the bathroom. "You look alive. The rest we'll all get through together."

When Jake started to kiss and nuzzle her neck she closed her eyes. It felt so good to be cherished but she knew they didn't have time. She laid her hand on Jake's cheek. "Hey, cowboy. As much as I want both of you right now we can't do this. Nicco's at that hospital alone, while the man he loves is fighting for his life."

That seemed to snap Jake out of his meandering kisses. "You're right. Let's get you cleaned up and go." They finished undressing Cory and with all the concentration they could muster they washed her down with the washcloth and helped her dress.

When they were finished, Cory looked into the mirror. Typical Remy. He'd chosen her only pair of sweatpants and a baggy t-shirt. When she questioned him he just shrugged. "I didn't really wanna spend the day trapped in the hospital with a hard-on."

Jake seconded that feeling. "I agree totally. There's plenty of places a nice stiffy comes in handy but a hospital is definitely not one of them."

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They sat with Nicco for several hours until a doctor finally came out to talk to him. He took Nicco into a private room just off the waiting room and the rest of the group watched through the glass.

Finally, Nicco shook the doctor's hand and the doctor came out. He looked back at a dazed Nicco. "It's all right for you to go in now. He'll probably need all the support he can get."

The doctor left and the group filed into the room. Nicco looked at them and shook his head. "The shoulder injury should heal just fine. He'll need to wear a sling for a week or so but there wasn't any severe damage. The other shot did most of the damage. They've repaired the internal injuries but the bullet passed close to his spinal cord. There's too much swelling to know for sure, but they think they'll know more in a couple of days. Right now, the surgeons hope his condition is only temporary but at least for a while he won't have the use of his legs. They think his condition is due to trauma to the spinal cord. Given time he should regain the full use of his legs but he'll be wheelchair-bound for several months, most likely."

Nicco stopped and looked at the group. "He's been asking for me. He knows the extent of his injuries but I'm not sure he understands them yet. He's still sedated so I

might have to tell him all this again later today. He should be in a private room in a couple hours. They said I could see him then."

Nicco finally broke down and Amir pulled him into his arms. "It'll be okay. We'll take care of him."

Cory noticed that Amir seemed to be crying almost as hard as Nicco. It was a strange look for the stoic warrior she'd come to know.

* * * * *

They sat with Nicco and Amir until Mac was in his private room. Because he was still in and out of consciousness, they didn't stay long, but they gave strict instructions to both men to call them if they needed anything.

Jake, Remy and Cory decided to get a couple of hours' sleep before flying home to the Triple Spur. They went back to the bar, which was by now littered with crime scene tape and, after getting permission from the police sent to guard the scene, went upstairs. Cory and Remy packed their bags and all three of them fell asleep within seconds of curling up together.

Several hours later they woke to voices coming up through the air-conditioning vents. The crime scene guys were back in full force, it seemed. Remy groaned and stretched. "As much as I wanna make love to both of you, I don't really care for an audience. Why don't we go to the station and get that taken care of before we stop by and check on Mac?"

Cory and Jake nodded and got dressed. Cory chose her normal wardrobe of a short skirt and halter top. Looking over at her two men, she smiled to herself and purposely left off her underwear and bra.

Jake borrowed a change of clothes from Remy and the three were out the door.

After they left the police station they stopped by the hospital one more time on their way out of town.

Remy knocked lightly and opened Mac's door. He spotted Nicco and Amir on either side of Mac's bed. They were both asleep and Mac was just starting to wake up. The threesome walked closer to the bed, trying to be as quiet as possible.

Cory leaned down and kissed Mac's cheek. "How're you feeling today?" She smoothed the blankets on his chest.

"Sore as hell." Mac looked at the men sleeping in the chairs. "These two knuckleheads refuse to leave." A smile crossed Mac's face. "I have to admit, I kinda like it."

"They've been worrying about you. In their own ways they both care for you." Cory touched Mac's hand.

Mac squeezed her hand as much as he could. "What happened to Anton?"

Remy stepped forward, looking over at Amir. "Right after Anton shot you, Amir took him out with a bullet to the forehead."

Nodding his head, Mac closed his eyes. "He's saved my life twice now. Did I ever tell you Amir was the one who carried me to safety after I was almost killed by that land mine in Afghanistan?"

Remy shook his head. "I knew the two of you were over there together, but I never heard any real details other than you were injured. That was when Nicco quit the SEALs."

Mac nodded and looked at Nicco. "He quit the career he loved so much to come home and take care of me." He looked into Remy's eyes. "I wish I didn't have to ask him to do it again but from the sound of it, I'll be pretty dependent on him for a while. Not really sure yet where I'm gonna stay though. Our apartments aren't really set up for wheelchairs."

Jake stepped forward and put his hand on Remy's shoulder. "Why don't you take a break and go stay at Gabe's? His whole ranch is set up with wheelchairs in mind."

Shaking his head, Mac looked at Jake. "I've got a business to run. I can't just take off for a couple months to Oklahoma. Nicco doesn't like the whole office thing so I could never ask him to do that."

"You wouldn't get that far away from me anyway." Nicco sat up and stretched. He took Mac's other hand. "Why can't you do some of the work you do now via the internet? You can appoint Bram to take your place at the office and back him up from a computer at Gabe's."

When Mac started to argue Nicco held up his hand. "Mac, we both know we've got competent men working for us. We've got enough money in the bank regardless of whether the business goes down or not. Right now, you need a break from Manhattan and I need to be with you. Hell, who knows, maybe I'll even become a cowboy."

Mac started to laugh but stopped and held his stomach. "I'd pay good money to see you in a cowboy hat." Mac looked over at Amir, who was now awake and sitting quietly. "What about you? You going back to New York or do you feel like some more time in the country?"

Amir looked at Mac for a long time. He bit his lip and looked down at his hands. "I think it would be better if I went back to New York, at least for a while. I can get things lined out at the office for you and see about shipping some of your stuff to Oklahoma."

Mac looked from Amir to Nicco. "That sound okay to you, Nicco?"

Nicco was looking at Amir's down-turned head. "Yeah. That sounds fine." Amir looked back up and Nicco cleared his throat. "You'll come out after that though, won't you? I mean...I know, Mac would like it if you were there too."

A wealth of information seemed to pass between the three men. Cory suddenly felt out of place. "Well, we're on our way to the airport to catch a flight. We just needed to make sure you were okay before we left. We'll get to Gabe's soon for a visit." Cory stood and kissed Mac lightly on the lips. She smiled at the growl emanating from both Remy and Jake. She decided to push her luck and gave a quick kiss to Nicco too. When she walked up to Amir she took his face in her hands. "Thank you." She leaned up to

kiss his cheek and whisper in his ear. "Grab the life you want." When she pulled back she saw tears pool in Amir's eyes.

He took her hands and bowed his head. "You're a fine lady, Corrine Boudreaux. May you find the rest of your days peaceful and happy."

Chapter Twelve

Remy carried a sleeping Cory into the house, as Jake and Cree started unloading the luggage. They'd made arrangements to have the rest of Cory's things delivered by a moving company in the next week. She had finally agreed with him that they should accept the offer on the bar. They took the offer of the lower figure due to the shooting. The buyers agreed after being assured that the violence wasn't a normal occurrence. Neither of them wanted to ever go back to Key West.

It was only a little after eight o'clock at night but Cory had been asleep since they left the Santa Fe airport. Remy tried not to wake her as he carried her upstairs to their bedroom. Jenny was just turning down the bed when he entered the room.

She stopped and looked up. She came over and gave him a quick kiss. Jenny looked at a sleeping Cory and gestured to the bed. "Put her in bed and then come talk to me."

Nodding, Remy laid Cory down on the crisp white sheets. He took off her sandals and tucked her feet under the covers, pulling them up to her chest. Remy bent over and placed a kiss on her forehead. He turned off the bedside lamp and walked out.

Downstairs he found Jenny in the fridge. She was bent over and Remy couldn't resist rubbing his arousal across her backside. Jenny leaned back into his cock and moaned. She stood with a beer in her hand and gave it to Remy. "I wanted to talk to you about Cory but this is nice too." She wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him, pushing right in with her tongue.

Remy groaned and picked her up off the floor. He carried her to the kitchen chair and sat down with Jenny straddling his lap. He kissed her deeply while separating the robe from her body. "Talk to me, honey." As Jenny started to talk, Remy made his way down her neck and chest kissing and licking.

Throwing her head back and arching her back, Jenny tried to carry on a conversation. "I just need to make sure this is what you both want. I think everyone's feelings are getting deeper than we'd ever thought possible. I'm in love with you, Remy, and I need to know that's okay with Cory. Cree said basically the same thing to me while you both were gone. We've even talked about a commitment ceremony between the five of us." Remy stopped his wanderings to look into her eyes. "Did I say something wrong?"

Thrusting his tongue deep into her mouth, Remy closed his eyes. *This was more than he could have ever hoped for.* He pulled back and ran his hands through Jenny's silky black hair. "You said everything just right. I'm in love with all of you. Deeper than I ever thought possible and I would love to get committed."

Jenny licked her lips and laughed. "Well, once our friends and the cowboys find out about us, we just might be committed. Let's go find Jake and Cree. I think I saw them disappear into the study."

Remy stood with Jenny still in his arms. He had his hands firmly on her bare ass as he carried her toward the study. Just as they were about to knock twin wails broke the silence. Remy looked at Jenny and stopped. "Babies are awake. Can I help you with them this time?"

"Of course. You're a daddy now." She stopped talking and looked up the staircase. "How can we include Cory more fully with the twins without hurting her?"

Making his way up the stairs, Remy kissed her neck. "Why don't we teach the boys to call her Momma Cory? She needs time alone with them as much as possible to bond. I think the time she spent with them while on bed rest did her a world of good. She realized that the babies didn't need to come from her body to love them." Remy set her down when they entered the nursery. Remy scooped Carson up as Jenny lifted the tiny Cash into her arms. She took the baby over to the loveseat and sat down. She propped Cash on a pillow at her side and he quickly attached himself to her breast.

"Bring Carson over to me, Remy."

Remy carried Carson over and laid him on the pillow. Once he was also busy suckling, Remy touched Jenny's cheek. "You're so beautiful." Remy sat down on the floor at Jenny's feet and ran his hand up and down her calf as he whispered words of love. While he talked to her in his sexiest Cajun dialect, Remy gave her a much-deserved foot massage.

Cory woke when the babies started to cry. By the time she came awake enough to go to them, she saw Remy and Jenny walking into the nursery. She stood in the doorway and listened to their soft murmurs. It was strange. She should probably feel jealous but she didn't. Cory was glad that Jenny was including Remy in the babies' lives. He deserved that and she now knew he didn't think any less of her because she could have children.

Deciding to let Remy have this time alone with Jenny and the twins, Cory went downstairs. She heard noises coming from the study and smiled. Opening the door she saw Cree sprawled out on top of the desk with his pants down and his cock deep in Jake's throat. She moaned at the sight and Cree turned his head toward her.

"Hey, darlin'. Did you have a nice nap?" He reached down and grabbed Jake's hair. Cory could tell by the tightening of his stomach muscles he was ready to come. He pumped up into Jake's mouth and came. "Fuck, I missed that."

Jake licked Cree's still-hard cock. "I guess so, Sheriff. You're still hard enough to drive a nail." Jake stood and pulled Cree up to a sitting position. He held out his arm to Cory and she gratefully joined them. "Where are Jenny and Remy?"

Cory moaned as Jake's hand found her pussy under her skirt. "Upstairs taking care of the boys." Cree began pinching her nipples through the thin material of the halter.

Untying the top, he let it slip down her body. Cree ran his fingers around her areolas and watched them pebble under his touch. "I've missed you."

Still rubbing her wet pussy, Jake thrust two fingers inside her. "You would have been proud of our girl. She followed the plan exactly, although we didn't anticipate Anton holding a gun under her chin."

Cree stopped touching her breast and put his hands on her cheeks. "Oh, darling, if something had gone wrong..."

Jake soothed Cree with a kiss. "Don't think about it. It'll only drive you crazy, believe me. Think instead about the fact that Anton's finally dead for good and our Cory is in our arms safe." Jake slipped his drenched fingers out of her pussy and ran them around her puckered hole.

Cory moaned and leaned just enough into Cree to give Jake better access. "Make love to me." She looked at Cree but they both knew what she meant.

Cree looked over Cory's shoulder at Jake. "Get your fingers out of her ass and let's take her up to bed." Jake pulled out and Cree picked her up.

"It's not fair that you get to carry her, Cree. I had to sit next to that naked pussy all day on the plane and she wouldn't even let me play." Jake followed Cree up the stairs to Cory's room.

Cory looked over Cree's shoulder at Jake. "I didn't really think the rest of the people on the plane would have enjoyed the smell of your and Remy's desire for the rest of the trip."

Laughing, Cree set Cory on her feet and began to undress.

Moving as one, the two men joined Cory in bed. She welcomed them with a passionate kiss. "I love you two."

Jake kissed Cory and then Cree. "We love *you*. We want you to join with us. All of us."

Cory chuckled. "I thought that's what we were about to do?"

Taking over the conversation, Cree pulled his fingers out of Cory's pussy and stuck them in his mouth. He licked them clean, eyeing Cory the whole time. "We want a ceremony between the five of us. We want you both to be married to us as we would be to you."

"What about the twins? Won't that seem a little strange to them once they start growing older?"

"We'd like to raise the children together as a family. You've said you wanted to adopt? Would it be the same to you if you adopted our children into your heart? They would call all three of us daddy and you and Jenny mommy. As long as we don't hide our love for each other I think they'll grow up just fine. We know it's a different kind of family from the norm but it's a family who loves each other nonetheless."

Cory thought about being allowed to love the twins as if they were her own. She longed for it more than she would ever say. "Is Jenny all right with the boys calling me

mommy? I don't wanna intrude on her family just because I can't have children of my own."

"Do you honestly think a child can be given too much love? Two mothers can only mean twice as many hugs and kisses. We'd like to have a few more someday too, although Jenny wants to wait a couple of years before that happens." Jake kissed her neck and ran his hand down Cree's strong back.

"What about Remy? What happens if he fathers a child with Jenny? Will he start to love her more than me because she was able to give him something I wasn't?"

"Absolutely not." The brusque voice came from the doorway. Remy and Jenny joined them on the bed. Remy pulled Cory into his arms and kissed her. "I love you, sweetheart. More than my own life. I always have. Nothing that you can or can't do is going to change that." He brushed the thick curls away from her face. "Never. Never again do I want to hear you question my love for you."

"I'm sorry. I love all of you so much." She took Jenny's hand in hers. "The idea of a wife doesn't really appeal to me, Jenny, but how about becoming my sister?"

Patting her hand, Jenny leaned in and kissed Cory's cheek. "I've never had a sister. Can we stay up late and talk about sex and men and stuff? I always wanted someone to do that with."

"I'd love it. Although with these lugs around I have a feeling we'll be doing it, more than talking about it." Cory heard all three men grunt in agreement.

Chapter Thirteen

Four Weeks Later

Cory had been given strict instructions to bathe and put on the gown left for her on the bed. Stepping out of the tub, Cory wrapped a large warm towel around her and walked into the bedroom. Jenny was sitting on the side of the bed with Cash in her arms.

Jenny held him up when Cory entered. "He's fussing because he wanted Mommy Cory before he had to go over to Auntie Kate's for the night. I swear he can't go to sleep until you sing to him."

Taking the baby, Cory sat beside Jenny. She looked down at the black-haired, blue-eyed little angel. "In the beginning the only way I could tell the boys apart was from their cries. I always remembered that Cash had the loud demanding scream, while Carson's was softer, gentler. It all seems so silly now. They're both so different. I don't know how I couldn't tell from the start." Cash started to fuss, so Cory stood and walked around the room, bouncing the baby up and down in her arms.

Kissing the top of his head, Cory breathed in his smell. "You, little guy, are already too darned demanding for your own good. Why can't you be laid-back like your brother?" Cash let out another wail and Jenny and Cory laughed. "All right, little man, I'll sing you one song and then it's off to Auntie Kate's for you."

Singing the lullaby that used to bring such heartache, Cory watched Cash settle in against her chest and drift off to sleep. She took him back over to Jenny and handed him over. "I'll let you take him so I can finish getting ready. Did the guys tell you what they had planned for your first night back in the sexual thick of things?"

Jenny blushed and took Cash. "All I know is we're going to have our ceremony first and then there had better be some major action going on. It's been almost four months for me and I plan on making up for lost time."

Cory laughed as Jenny left carrying a sleeping Cash. She finished drying off and slipped into the sea foam green silk nightgown that Remy, Cree and Jake had picked out. They said it matched her eyes and when she looked at herself in the mirror she had to agree. Cory applied her makeup and ran her fingers through her curls. She was just slipping into the matching shoes when a knock sounded at the door. "Come in."

Remy, Jake and Cree entered the room. All three men stopped and stared. They were all wearing white silk pajama bottoms which were now visibly tented.

Remy closed the distance between them. "Damn, sweetheart, you're a vision to behold." He stopped just in front of Cory without touching her. "I can't touch you or I'll shoot all over my fancy pants." He looked down at his silk pants and shook his head. "Only Cree and Jake could talk me into wearing something like this."

Cree and Jake held out their hands. "Come on you two, Kate and Ben just left with the boys. It's time to get married."

They led Cory downstairs, stopping off on the way to pick up Jenny, who was a vision in cornflower blue silk. When they stepped outside onto the porch, Jenny started laughing. The same white carriage and horses used on her wedding night sat at the foot of the steps.

Jenny turned to Cory and swooned. "Our guys are so romantic." She gave each of them a deep kiss as Remy helped her up into the carriage.

Cory took her turn, kissing all of them as Remy helped her up. He sat between Jenny and Cory and wrapped his arms around them. "Hold on, loves. I hear it's a pretty bumpy ride to where we're going."

Climbing into the front, Cree and Jake looked back at them. Jake picked up the reins. "Ready to complete the circle of our family?"

Cory and Remy looked from Cree and Jake to Jenny. Remy held Jenny and Cory tighter to his side. "The circle is already complete."

About the Author

I've been a reading fanatic for years and finally at the age of 40 decided to try my hand at writing. I've always loved romance novels that are just a little bit naughty so naturally my books tend to go just a little further. It's my fantasy world after all.

When I'm not being a mother to a five-year-old and a six-year-old, you can usually find me in my deep leather chair with either a book in my hand or my laptop.

Carol welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at www.ellorascave.com.

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