Ann Omasta

The Davis Twins Series

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taking CHANCES

book one

Taking Chances

by Ann Omasta

Dedication:

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Chapter 1

“The kiss started softly then slowly built in intensity. His lips were smooth, and his tongue gently grazed mine. I untucked his shirt and eased my hands up his back to his strong, smooth shoulders.”

I paused to refill our margarita glasses from the pitcher and chuckled at my best friend, Courtney. Her big, blue eyes were wide open and she was leaning so far forward that I feared she might topple over. She was normally the one with the sexy stories, so I was enjoying having one of my own, for once.

We were seated at our usual table for our Sunday night ritual – tacos and margaritas at Joe’s Bar & Grill. Joe’s was an island-themed restaurant that reminded me of the thatch-roofed eatery where my parents used to take me when we went on our annual trek to the Florida Keys. Even though Joe’s was located in Harbor Shores, Michigan - about as far from the tropics as could be - it was usually teeming with patrons, both locals and tourists.

Joe let us have the best seats in the house with a fantastic view of the lake, even though we were given “family pricing.” Courtney had been a waitress at the restaurant for over two years, but Joe knew never to schedule her to work on a Sunday night. Our girls’ nights were sacred.

Courtney grabbed the pitcher from my hand and quickly sloshed more of the frozen concoction into our glasses. “Go on,” she demanded.

“My fingers were shaking as I unbuttoned his shirt.” Only Courtney knew of my insecurities in the bedroom and the reasoning behind them. She nodded, encouraging me to continue with my play-by-play.

“I refused to give in to my fears. So, I ran my hands along his flat abs and over his chest as I removed his shirt and tossed it to the floor. As I kissed his neck and nibbled on his ear, he undid the buttons at my shoulder and

lowered the top of my dress. That's when he discovered that I hadn't been able to wear a bra because of the open back style of my dress. I think he liked that." I smiled and chuckled, remembering the look of awe in his eyes as he gazed at my ample breasts.

"I bet he did!" Courtney hooted with laughter. She looked terrific, as usual, with her blonde pixie haircut and huge, sky blue eyes. She oozed sexual confidence, but she had admitted to me on more than one occasion that she was totally jealous of my chestiness. My boobs were, in fact, one of my only body parts that I felt were above average.

"He used just the right amount of pressure as he rubbed his thumbs over my taut nipples. Then he began kissing and licking and nibbling his way down me. My whole body quaked when he suckled on my breast. I ran my fingers through his hair and arched my back toward him as he gently tugged on my nipple with his teeth."

"Everything okay tonight, ladies?" Joe asked. Neither of us had seen him approach the table, and we were startled by the interruption.

"We're fine." Courtney snapped the words, causing Joe to hold up his hands in mock surrender as he made a quick retreat.

Courtney let out a deep breath as if she'd been holding it. "Geez, Abby, this story is making me horny. I'm going to have to find a hot guy to hook up with and work off some of this sexual tension."

I wondered for the hundredth time if Courtney ever wanted a more serious intimate relationship than the booty calls and one night stands that she currently enjoyed. She seemed to be content with her life, so I had never pushed the issue with her.

"So?" Courtney prompted impatiently.

"Where was I?" I asked, perplexed.

"Nipples, teeth, tugging," she reminded me.

"Oh, right. His hands glided down my hips and under my silk panties. In

one smooth move, he slid my dress and underwear off. I stepped out of them and stood before him wearing only those ridiculous Louboutin heels that you talked me into buying. He seemed to like that view, too."

"They are fabulous shoes. I'm glad to hear you finally put them to good use. Did you wear them the whole time?"

I nodded, smiling, before continuing. "I struggled to undo the snap of his jeans as he eased me back on the bed. He lifted one of my legs and rubbed my ankle as he began kissing his way up my calf. He gently rubbed his hands along the inside of my legs. Then those magical thumbs began massaging circles up to the apex of my thighs."

I stopped to take a bite. "Damn, don't stop now!" Courtney commanded. I had already shoveled the food in, so I did a "mouth's full" motion at her and continued chewing. At her exasperated look, I gulped the bite down and continued.

"His lips and tongue followed the path that his hands had taken. I became so worked up that I was writhing and brazenly pushing myself up towards him. His head was between my legs as he used his fingers to spread me wide open. He paused for a moment to look up at me with the most gorgeous green eyes I've ever seen. He looked directly at me and uttered the words, 'You're so beautiful.' I was panting and aching with need as he began to lower his mouth to me."

"Uh-huh," Courtney said, urging me on when I paused.

"Then the alarm went off."

"O-M-Geeee!" Courtney screeched as she pretended to bang her head on the table. "It was all a dream? You've gotta be kidding me. What happened on your blind date?"

"The date was a dud. He spent the whole evening complaining about his exes, and then he wanted to split the check. I mean split the check down to the penny - as in, I ate more of the appetizer than he did, so should pay for more than half of it." I rolled my eyes. "He definitely wasn't the guy of my dreams. Or anyone else's," I added somewhat contrarily.

I’m sure my eccentric boss, Annie, had meant well when she set me up with Marcus, telling me that she was sure he’d be the love of my life, but he was clearly not the man for me. “Maybe there isn’t a man that’s right for me,” I grouched.

“Please tell me you used the battery-operated gadget I bought you to finish off the work that dream-guy started,” Courtney said. She narrowed her eyes at me, assessing, then said, “I can tell you didn’t. You’re too grumpy. There’s nothing wrong with a vibrator, Abby. It can ease some of that tension that’s been building up for way too long.”

“You mean forever?” I quipped.

Courtney smiled at me, but it didn’t reach her eyes. She knew how sensitive I was about this subject. After all, how many 28-year-old divorcees had never had an orgasm? I felt like the only one.

“I can tell where your mind is going, so just stop.” Courtney gave me the look that she uses when she means business. “Don’t go down this path again. There is nothing wrong with you. That two-pump-and-dump bastard, who was married to you for two years but didn’t take the time to learn how to please you, is the one who should be feeling bad about himself.”

I snorted with laughter at the name she had called my ex-husband then started giggling uncontrollably. “You are the one who needs to stop. You’re going to make margarita shoot out of my nose. Where do you come up with this stuff?”

“I’ve been saving that one, waiting for the perfect time to zing it.” She grinned and lifted her glass to clink with mine.

Chapter 2

As I got ready for work the next morning, I was thankful that I had remained coherent enough the night before to drink a bottle of water when I got home. Courtney would appreciate me making her have one as a preemptive strike against a hangover as well, even though she was pissy about it at the time. The second pitcher of margaritas may have been a bit much.

I downed a couple of aspirin and another bottle of water for the slight headache I had. Then I snuck into Courtney's room and quietly left the same items, along with a piece of buttered cinnamon bread and some orange slices, on her bedside table. She looked so peaceful and sweet lying there. It made me wish there was a way for me to make her see in herself all of the wonderful qualities that I saw in her.

On a whim, I tiptoed through her girly bedroom and went to her en suite bathroom to grab a fuchsia lipstick out of her enormous makeup case. I drew a huge heart on her mirror. Inside it I wrote, "You make everything better."

Since it was such a beautiful day, I decided to walk to work. I left the 100-year-old lakeside cottage that Courtney and I shared and headed down the shore side of the sidewalk. The breeze off the lake was a little chilly, but the sun was shining, and the lake was calm. I felt great about leaving those little pick-me-ups for Court.

She was always quick to say that I had saved her life. When she had arrived in Harbor Shores penniless and alone, I had taken her in and given her a place to stay. I knew the truth, though. She is the one who had saved me.

She had arrived in our quaint town just a few months after my parents' deaths in that horrific car accident. They had been taken from this world in the prime of their lives due to a careless drunk driver. I had just left my ex, Larry, after walking in on our real estate agent, Trudy the floozy, sucking his cock in the living room of our condo. We had decided to sell

our condo and move out of the city in hopes of finally starting our family. Instead, I moved alone to Harbor Shores to the cute, lakeside cottage my parents had left me.

I suppose I should thank Trudy because I had been unhappy in my marriage for a long time. It had never crossed my mind to leave him though, because I felt, as my parents had felt, that marriage is forever. Seeing Trudy on her knees, with her fake tits bolstered up by my couch as she cupped my husband's balls in her nasty hands with their blood-red, cheap, press-on fingernails, and her bright red lips sliding up and down his dick, sealed the deal for me on getting a divorce. I couldn't erase that hideous mental image, no matter how hard I tried to un-see it.

When I described the scene I had walked in on to Courtney - including the sight of Larry with his head tipped back, mouth agape, looking at me with a glassy, uncaring stare - unwanted tears had started to well in my eyes.

Courtney patted my knee and said, "Honey, that's just head-face. They all get it when they're getting a blow job." Then she dropped her face into an exact replica of the blank look Larry had given me, and we both whooped with laughter.

The memory made me smile. The message I had left on Court's mirror was perfect. She really does make everything better.

As I walked along the lakeshore, I noticed that tourists were starting to trickle into town. It was mid-April, still early for snowbirds and vacationers, but each year the tourism season seemed to be starting earlier and lasting later into the fall. For a small, quiet town like Harbor Shores, Michigan, that was great news for the local businesses, like the trendy shop that had employed me since I moved here.

As soon as I opened the door to Eck, Meck & Dreck, my wacky boss Annie attacked with questions. "How was it? Did you two hit it off? Was it love at first sight? Are you going out again? Why aren't you telling me all about it?"

"I was waiting for you to take a breath." I smiled at Annie. She looked lovely today with a sunshine yellow scarf tied in her unruly, red curls and

a bohemian skirt flowing around her. In typical Annie fashion, she was wearing turquoise Converse high-tops. The combination would not be flattering on most, but somehow she made it work.

She looked so hopeful that I hated to disappoint her by telling her about my less than stellar date with Marcus. I decided it would be best to rip the bandage off quickly. “It’s a no-go,” I said.

“Not even one more date?” she tried. To her credit, when I shook my head, she let it drop immediately. “No worries,” she said as she breezed past me. “Plenty of sardines in the can.”

I chuckled at the motto she had chosen, as unique as Annie herself. Annie had become like a second mother to me when my own mother had passed away. She had been there to help me through the complete devastation of the loss of my parents, and the crumbling of my marriage in a way that only a mother could.

She knew that the money from my inheritance made it so that I didn’t need to work for financial reasons. I needed to work for my sanity, though, and she insisted on paying me. On the sly, I set aside almost all of the money I earned from working into a mutual fund for Courtney or Annie, should they ever need it. It felt good to know that the two women I cared most about would never have to worry about monetary problems.

I began turning on the myriad of twinkle lights that dotted the store as Annie propped the bright purple front door open, jingling the bells on the handle and yelling down the sidewalk, “Tchotchkes! Get your one-of–a-kind artsy-fartsy treasures here!”

As usual, people couldn’t resist Annie’s magnetic charm, and it wasn’t long until the store was bustling with activity. I liked being busy and helping people find the perfect gift for a loved one or a special souvenir. It was terrific getting to see people when they were at their most relaxed and happy.

I smiled as I watched Annie open a huge cardboard box that contained the new teapot line we would be carrying. The ceramic teapots were animal shaped, and they were beautiful. Annie exclaimed over each one like a

child on Christmas morning. “Look at the giraffe! Oh, I think the dolphin is my favorite! Such beautiful colors on this parrot! Oh, Abby, look. The cow has a calf.” She bubbled with uninhibited joy as the crowd that had gathered around her leaned in to see what she would discover next.

Suddenly, I felt almost overwhelmed with gratitude. Courtney and Annie were two of the most wonderful people on Earth, and they were my family now. I was healthy and had a terrific job that I loved. My parents had left me a magnificent cottage within steps of the beach in a beautiful town, which I had been able to escape to after my divorce. I was an incredibly lucky lady.

The only thing missing was a man in my life, but who needed one of those, anyway? In my brief history with them, they seemed to be far more trouble than they were worth.

Chapter 3

The next morning when I stumbled into my bathroom, I found a message scrawled in pretty, light pink lipstick on my mirror. “Say ‘Hi!’ to a cute guy today.” The words were followed by a huge, winking smiley face with long eyelashes.

Oh, Courtney, I thought, *I just came to the conclusion that I don’t need a man*. I left the message on my mirror, though, as a reminder to have fun and not take things so seriously.

Since I had the whole day off, with no special plans, I decided to go for a workout in the park. After a quick shower, I donned my capri yoga pants and a sports tank, then I coated my exposed skin with sunscreen. I knew my mother was smiling down on me for that. She had always insisted on moisturizing and protecting. I pulled my thick, brown hair back into a simple ponytail, skipped makeup (other than cherry Chapstick, of course), and tied my bright purple tennis shoes.

Looking at my reflection in the mirror, I decided that I was a solid six with my glossy, chestnut hair and big brown eyes. I wasn’t going to win any beauty contests, but with make-up and a sexy dress, I could pass for a six-and-a-half, maybe a seven. At least I wouldn’t scare anyone off. “Ready as I’ll ever be,” I said to no one in particular, since Courtney likely wouldn’t roll out of bed until it was time for the lunch shift at Joe’s.

Buster, one of Courtney’s strays that she was constantly taking in, shifted his head along the floor to watch me go. I told myself that it would be a much better workout without him, but the spotted basset hound had such sweet, sad eyes that I couldn’t resist him.

“Do you want to go?” ‘Go’ must have been the magic word because he thumped his tail twice and started to maneuver his squat little legs in an attempt to gain enough traction to stand up on the hardwood floor. It was such an operation that I was tempted to go help him, but instead I grabbed the leash and waited for him to join me at the door. Looking at his pudgy little body, I decided that a lack of food was definitely not a problem in

Buster’s life before Courtney rescued him.

I set my iPod to play “Brown Eyed Girl,” which was the song my Dad used to sing to me. As I walked, I relished the memory of him using a toothbrush for a microphone as he serenaded me. Buster and I made our way to the park at Buster’s pace. I found that I liked being forced to slow down a little. It felt like I was always rushing somewhere, even though I didn’t know why I was hurrying. Habit, I guess.

Almost everyone we passed smiled at Buster. I could see why Courtney had fallen for him so quickly and taken him in. He was cute in a droopy kind of way. Unlike that awful yellow cat, Tabitha, who skittered off or had a hissing fit any time I came near. I think Courtney believed, at first, that I was mean to Tab behind her back. Now that we had become so close, Courtney knew that I would never intentionally harm an animal. That cat just didn’t like me for some reason. She probably just wanted Court all to herself.

As Buster and I walked along, I lifted my face to the sun and enjoyed the light breeze off the water. It was a truly glorious day. I heard him before I saw him. “Buddy, come!” he yelled. Just then, a big golden retriever barreled towards him with an orange Frisbee in its mouth. I was walking up behind them, so I couldn’t see if he was a ‘cute guy,’ but his broad shoulders and great ass suggested that he probably was.

When the dog reached him and he bent down to lovingly ruffle its ears as he took the Frisbee, I made a snap decision to say hi to him. It was completely out of character and to-the-moon-and-back out of my comfort zone to walk up and speak to a stranger. I kept reminding myself that it was only one word as I forced myself to walk towards him.

When Buster and I got within a few feet of him, his dog gave a quick “Woof!” in greeting. He turned, and I was met with one of the most gorgeous men I had ever laid eyes on. His dark hair was just a smidge too long, and he used an elegant hand to swoop it back off his forehead. And those eyes – they were the most amazing green eyes I’d ever seen. They may not have been the eyes from my naughty dream, but they were fantastic and draped by long, dark lashes that most women couldn’t dream of having, even with the help of mascara. He took my breath away.

I felt completely tongue-tied, and we were too close for me to just walk away like I hadn't intended to speak to him. "Ummm," I stalled. *Jeez! What is wrong with me?* My breath was coming fast and I could feel my face flushing. I had to do something. After what seemed like an eternity, but was probably only a few seconds, I finally got the word out. "Hi," I mumbled, crossing my arms awkwardly and intending to make a quick exit.

"Hi!" he responded and flashed me with a grin that just about bowled me over. He was way out of my league, and I just wanted to get away from him before I embarrassed myself further. Of course, Buster chose that moment to plop his butt on the ground and sit for a spell. I coaxed him with a "Come on Buster, let's go get a treat!" I whistled and tugged at him, but the damn dog refused to budge.

Handsome man and his happy, energetic dog stood there watching the whole exchange. Both of them had big grins on their faces, looking extremely amused at my predicament. Taking mercy on me, the man finally said, "It doesn't look like you are going anywhere for a while. I'm Seth. Seth Davis." He extended a hand to shake with mine.

"Abigail Brown, nice to meet you," I said, shaking his hand gently. *Nice to meet you*?? My thoughts screamed at me. *How clever.* I tried to push the negative self-talk out of my mind, but it seemed to be just as stubborn as Buster, who was panting and lolling on the ground as if he intended to stay there indefinitely. "Come on Buster. We need to go," I tried again.

Buster finally harrumphed and started the process of standing up. Sumptuous Seth, as I had decided to call him silently in my head, surprised me by saying, "Wait."

This gave me an excuse to pause and look directly at him. He was a sight – all tall, dark and handsome, but that standard description didn't do him justice. He was all of those things, but he was also one of the most ruggedly good-looking men I had ever seen. His jeans and tee shirt were snug enough to give a hint of the tight, tan body that they covered. I licked my lips and realized that his full attention was focused on me. It was almost as if he was waiting for me to say something. *Oh no! Did he*

ask me a question?

“Huh?” I asked. *Oh, way to dazzle him with your witty repartee, Ab.*

He didn’t seem to be phased by my inner turmoil. “I said that Buddy and I were just getting ready to head to Treats, the bakery on Beach Street. Would you like to join us?”

I knew the place he was talking about. It was a local favorite. They had a few alfresco tables that overlooked the water. People took their dogs there all the time. The bakery even offered specialty dog treats, and they kept water bowls outside for their canine visitors.

I didn’t have to think about it. “I’d love to,” I answered instantly, and the four of us set off.

That is when it happened. He was so handsome, and I was so nervous that my diarrhea of the mouth set in. I started chattering non-stop and couldn’t seem to stop myself.

It only took a few minutes to walk to the bakery, but by the time we arrived, I had already told him about my job, Courtney, and that I was divorced. The only things I knew about him were that his name was Seth Davis, he was super-hot and he had a dog, named Buddy.

I finally took a breath once we had arrived, and Seth took that moment to say, “If you want to stay with the dogs and grab us a table, I’ll go in and order. What would you like?”

“English Breakfast tea with cream and sugar, please.”

“Coming right up, Ma’am,” he said before flashing his amazing smile at me and dashing inside. As I flopped down in an available chair, I shook my head in disbelief at my incredible fortune and the way my non-stop rambling was likely ruining it.

“I’m glad you’re here, Buddy,” I said to the dog. He thumped his tail upon hearing his name. “I have acted like such an ass that I’m quite certain he would sneak out the side door if he didn’t need to get you back.”

It took quite a while for Sumptuous Seth to come back. I almost had myself convinced that he had left out the back entrance and would come back later to collect his dog. I took a deep breath and vowed not to beat myself up like this. If he was gone, I wasn't any worse off than I was when I started my walk, I rationalized; and if he was still here, I needed to slow down and let him do some of the talking.

My breath hitched a little when I saw him opening the door to come out to our table. He was so damn good looking, and I couldn't believe he was here with me. I clearly wasn't the only one who noticed how handsome he was. Every woman - and even a man or two - gawked as he walked past. Seth didn't even seem aware of all the attention he drew.

He had his hands full with two cups, a pink box, and a white bag filled with bakery goodies, so I started to get up to take something from him. In that moment, Buster lunged faster than I'd ever seen him move. He managed to tangle his leash with Buddy's, which caused Buddy to try to dart around me to get out of the way. My legs became tangled in the leashes just as I was taking a step toward Seth, and I started to fall forward. I fell face-first into Seth's chest. He caught me by wrapping both of his strong arms around me – somehow balancing the drinks and goodies - and it felt like heaven.

Humiliation quickly crept in as he helped me get untangled and back to my chair. "I'm such a klutz," I muttered, shaking my head. "And you caught me and managed to keep a hold of all the stuff in your hands," I said as I blew on my tea.

Seth brought a warm blueberry doughnut out of the classic pink bakery box and set it on a napkin in front of me. "It could have happened to anyone," he reassured me kindly. Then he chuckled, "I've never seen a basset hound move that fast."

"I know, right? I wonder what he was after."

"Well, I hate to reward him for almost knocking us both down, but I did enjoy catching you." His eyes twinkled as he grinned at me. He lifted two dog treats out of the white bakery bag. "Do you think he'd prefer peanut

butter or chicken?”

“From the way he licks our jars clean when we are done with them, I know he’s a fan of peanut butter.”

Seth leaned down to give the dogs their bone-shaped cookies, and I took a deep breath to calm myself. Then I shifted the conversation and started asking him some questions. I learned that he was a boat builder, that he loved nature and that he wasn’t just handsome. He was also funny, smart, and sweet.

Mr. Finley, the grandfatherly bakery owner, stopped by our table to see if we needed anything. When he leaned over Seth’s shoulder to refill the hot water in our tea mugs, he caught my eye and waggled his bushy eyebrows, making me smile.

I kept looking for the fatal flaw that must be present in Seth, but I sure didn’t see one. With this level of perfection, women must be throwing themselves at him all the time. It didn’t make sense for him to be spending time with me, while seeming to enjoy himself. I almost had myself convinced that he was gay when he asked if he could see me again.

I made a valiant attempt to control the excitement in my voice as I responded that I could probably work him into my busy schedule, texted him my cell phone number and told him goodbye. Then I proceeded to float on cloud nine all the way home, thinking about what a fantastic day this had turned out to be.

Chapter 4

“Thank you, thank you, thank you!” I said, grabbing Courtney and hugging her as soon as she walked downstairs.

“Umm, you’re welcome,” she said, hugging me back. “What’d I do that was so great?”

“You suggested that I say hi to him, and he is so handsome, but I didn’t know how handsome until he turned around. He’s so dreamy that it nearly took my breath away, but it’s not just his looks. He’s also kind and funny and down-to-earth, and he has a golden retriever,” I gushed, breathless.

I knew the golden retriever part would win her over. “Well, any guy who has a great dog like that has to be somewhat okay, but slow down. Who is this guy, and what do you know about him?”

I took a moment to enjoy how protective she was of me, and then I started about telling her all about Sumptuous Seth. Courtney liked my nickname for him, but decided that SS was much easier to say.

“SS does sound great,” Courtney admitted. “Just be safe and only meet him in public places at first. You never know. He could be an ax murderer or some other kind of freak.”

“We’re coming to Joe’s on Friday night, so you can check him out for yourself. Let me know if you think he has dead bodies buried in his basement.”

We both snickered, but then Court turned serious. “I mean it. You haven’t been out in the dating world for a while, and it’s a jungle out there.”

“Technically, I’ve never been in the dating world, other than that fiasco of a blind date that Annie sent me on.” I had been so awkward with my pimples and braces in high school that boys had barely glanced at me. Larry and I had met during my first week of college. I remembered the thrilling feeling of realizing that he was actually flirting with me.

Larry wasn’t Sumptuous Seth handsome, but he certainly wasn’t unattractive. In the initial stages of our relationship he had been attentive and sweet. He had completely swept me off my feet. We dated the entire time I was in college. During that time, we had some serious make-out sessions. I regularly gave him hand-jobs and had even sucked him off a few times, but I was determined to remain a virgin until marriage, even if I was only a technical-virgin.

The summer after I graduated from the University of Michigan, we got married. That was when I learned about my inability to orgasm. I loved that Courtney was so willing to blame it all on Larry, but deep down, I knew the truth was that in those initial months of our marriage, Larry had truly tried to pleasure me. When he had his fingers or dick inside me, it felt good (sometimes really good), but it never quite sent me over the edge.

We had experimented with different positions, lubricants, nipple stimulation, watching porn and watching ourselves, but nothing worked. We decided to try different locations to spice things up. We fucked in the car, on the floor, on the counter, outside, on his office desk, in the shower, in a restaurant men’s room, at a good friend’s party. Whatever we could think of, we tried.

The final straw came when we rented a sleazy motel room and agreed to meet there. Feeling naughty, I had greeted him wearing a trench coat with nothing underneath. He had ripped it off me and we spent the entire night going at it hard. Our sweat-slicked bodies made smacking sounds as he pounded into me from behind. Suddenly, he surprised me by slowing, then stopping. “You could at least fake it, you know,” he growled in my ear before shoving out of me and slamming the bathroom door.

I felt like I’d been slapped. I couldn’t believe that he would even suggest that I fake it. How would that make anyone feel better? From that night on, our sex life consisted of a weekly missionary-style session of him grunting and ramming into me, while I counted the ceiling tiles and waited for it to be over.

“You still in there?” Courtney was waving her hand in front of my face.

“Sorry, I guess I got caught up thinking about the past for a minute. I do have a question for you.”

“Shoot,” Courtney encouraged me when I didn’t immediately continue.

“Well, as you mentioned, I haven’t dated in a while. So, I wasn’t sure what the current protocol is. I mean, I was wondering, um.”

When I paused again, Courtney gave me a curious look. “Spit it out.”

“When should we do it?” I asked her, squeezing my eyes closed in embarrassment. I opened one eye to gauge her reaction. She wasn’t laughing, so I continued. “I won’t be expected to put out on the first date, will I?”

“Probably not,” she reassured me. “If all goes well, a kiss with a little tongue would be appropriate. Maybe even a little outside the shirt booby action. If all goes fantastic, and you want to bang his brains out, I doubt he would complain, though,” she laughed.

I could handle kissing. It was good to know he wouldn’t learn of my sexual failings on the first date. When Courtney started to leave the kitchen, I called out to her. “Wait. What should I wear?”

Courtney smiled as she put her arm around me and said, “You have asked the right person. Let’s go find you a cute outfit that shows off your perfect ta-tas.” I shook my head as I followed her.

Chapter 5

Time seemed to slowly crawl by while I was waiting for Friday. When it finally arrived, my nerves kicked into high gear. All week, I had been writing pick-me-up reminders to myself on sticky notes, and they circled my mirror. I took a moment to read through them. *Breathe. You are an intelligent woman. Don't chatter non-stop. Smile. Do not worry. You are worthy. You deserve to be happy.* They were simple, but reading them helped me calm down.

I smiled at the new one that Courtney had added in the center of my mirror. *Have fun.* I took a sip from the glass of chilled white wine that she had delivered to my bathroom before leaving for her shift at Joe's.

Since I still had over an hour before I needed to meet Seth at the restaurant, I decided to take a bubble bath. The wine and bath must have been just what I needed because I was almost calm as I donned my denim mini skirt and the v-neck, light pink tee shirt that Courtney had chosen for the occasion. I still couldn't believe that she had loaned me her favorite cowboy boots with the pastel flowers swirling around them, but they looked fantastic, and gave me just the extra boost of confidence that I needed as I walked to Joe's.

Joe's was one of the only full-service, waterfront restaurants in town, and it was bustling with activity when I arrived. Thankfully, Courtney had promised to save us a table. She ran over to greet me as soon as I walked in. "You look fantastic!" she gushed. "He isn't going to be able to keep his hands off you." Her enthusiasm was contagious as she covered my eyes and led me over to the table that she and I normally shared on girls' night.

"Ta-da!" she yelled when she removed her hands to reveal how the table had been transformed. Twinkle lights sparkled from above the booth and along the back of the table, a lit candle created a subtle glow, and a bouquet of fresh wildflowers had been placed in a water glass at the center of the table.

“Oh, Court. It’s beautiful! You treat me like a princess,” I said with watery eyes.

“You deserve only the best,” she whispered in my ear before sliding up to the bar to grab a tray of drinks for one of her tables.

I knew when Seth arrived because the group of ladies sitting across from me stopped talking and turned to gaze at him. He walked to my table and grinned at me. “You’re even more beautiful than I remembered.”

I blushed and then chuckled as Courtney walked behind him fanning herself with a hand, and silently mouthing the words “hubba hubba.” She was right. Seth looked like a Greek god, and I could not believe he was here with me. His dark hair was slightly damp, as if he’d just gotten out of the shower. He was clean-shaven and smelled like Irish Spring. His black tee shirt was just tight enough to show off his flat abs and bulging biceps. And, speaking of bulges, his jeans were snug enough to give a tantalizing hint of his junk. I had to pry my eyes away.

As he sat down, he commented, “Wow, it looks like we scored the best seats in the house.”

I grinned, “I know people.”

Courtney stopped by with a quick, “Hi, I’m Court. Take good care of my girl or we’ll have words.” She waggled a warning finger at Seth with a smile, before hustling off to her next table. She had arranged for one of the other waitresses to take care of us. That had surprised me at first, but being her thoughtful self, she had probably figured I would be more comfortable without her stopping by the table periodically all evening.

Seth and I split a bottle of white wine from a local vineyard and an appetizer platter full of fried, fabulous, fattening goodies. Then we topped it all off with a brownie sundae. It was a perfect evening filled with interesting conversation, laughter, and great food.

Seth surprised me by turning towards the bar and asking, “How long do you think it will be before your friend and the bartender hook up?”

I gave him a sideways look. “Courtney? And Joe? He’s her boss,” I responded, shaking my head.

“Well, they’ve been giving each other googly eyes all night,” he countered.

I sat back in my seat, thinking that one over for a minute. Could he be right? Court loved sex and men, but she had never shown an interest in keeping one around for more than a couple of dates. As I contemplated it, I realized that she did act different around Joe. I had always chalked it up to him being her employer.

I watched Joe working the bar with his customary laid back ease. He was kind of cute, with his slightly scruffy, dirty-blonde hair. His style tended towards tee shirts and flip-flops, while Court was a glamour girl. “Hmm,” I said aloud as I tilted my head, pondering him.

Seth coughed. “Please don’t gaze at another guy while you are out with me. You’re going to give me an inferiority complex.” He smiled after he said it to let me know he was teasing.

“Well, then you better work to keep my attention,” I retorted quickly, openly flirting with him.

“Let’s get out of here then, and find someplace where I can have you all to myself. How about a walk along the water?” he asked.

“I’d love to,” I responded, deciding to give more thought to the Courtney and Joe idea later.

As Seth paid Joe at the bar, Courtney slid behind me and whispered in my ear. “Don’t do anything I wouldn’t do.”

I chuckled as I turned to her and asked, “What would that be?”

“There isn’t much that would be off-limits with that fine hunk of man,” she mumbled under her breath as I turned to leave with Seth. “Have fun!” She yelled the words to both of us, as Seth put a gentle hand at the small of my back and guided me out of the restaurant.

Chapter 6

We walked hand-in-hand along the sandy shore. The nearly full moon glimmered on the water. It was unseasonably warm, so even the breeze off the water wasn't too chilly. I was pleasantly tipsy and happier than I ever remembered being in my entire life.

I was in my own world with Seth and barely took notice of the couple walking towards us, until the man spoke. I would have recognized his voice immediately, even if he hadn't called me by the nickname he had used the entire time that we were married, despite the fact that I didn't care for it.

"Abracadabra." He drew the word out. "Working your magic on a new fellow, I see."

Seth smiled and introduced himself, extending his arm to shake hands.

I almost felt sorry for Trudy the skank when Larry introduced himself as my husband. "Ex-husband," she and I interjected simultaneously.

"Right, of course, we all knew that. What good fortune, to run into you on our little weekend getaway." I had to force myself to refrain from rolling my eyes at his broad interpretation of the words 'good fortune.'

"Well, as you can see," Larry said loudly and with a big smile as he patted Trudy's slightly protruding belly, "I've been busy since the divorce. My Little Love Muffin and I are going to be the proud parents of Larry Jr. in a few months."

I felt like I had been punched in the stomach. Not because I still cared about Larry, but because this pregnancy proved that I was barren. Throughout our marriage, I had longed for a child. I wanted to be a mother more than anything. Larry had been agreeable from the start, and we had never used birth control. As one year rolled into two, it became apparent that something was wrong.

I had always believed, deep down, that he was the one with the fertility issue. Whenever I broached the subject with him to be tested, he became irate and insisted that I was the one whose equipment didn't work, so I was probably the one who couldn't conceive.

I had never gone for the testing because I wanted to hold on to the hope that I could conceive a child. The baby bump protruding from Trudy's too-tight, leopard print mini-dress was proof that I had been the reason we couldn't get pregnant. Not only did my lady parts not know how to have fun, they didn't even know how to do what they were made to do. I felt broken and sad, and I wanted to get away from these two.

I didn't even know what had been said as I stood there reeling, and I didn't care. "Okay, take care. Buh-bye." I grabbed Seth's arm and stalked off, wondering how Larry was still able to ruin things for me.

Seth waited until we were a safe distance away before saying, "You still care about him, huh?"

"Larry? Ick, no! I just was caught off-guard with the whole baby thing." I was determined not to let Larry and Trudy ruin my wonderful date with Seth. I would think about the dire implications of Larry being able to impregnate Trudy later. Tonight was about Seth, and I wasn't ready for it to end. I wanted to forget all about Larry and his baby momma and thoroughly enjoy my time with Seth.

In what was likely the boldest statement of my life, I turned to him and said, "How about showing me your place?"

Seth was clearly surprised, but he smiled. "It's not much, but I do have big plans for it someday."

"I'm sure it's great," I said as I locked arms with him and marched him back up the gravel path to the parking lot of Joe's.

He showed me to a dark green Jeep Wrangler with no doors and helped me climb in. As we drove, I cleared my mind as the wind whipped through my hair. It was a clear night and there seemed to be a million stars twinkling above us.

I was surprised when he turned down a wooded lane that angled towards the lake. Seth seemed almost nervous as he parked the Jeep. “I told you it wasn’t anything special.”

I don’t know what I had expected, but it wasn’t the Airstream trailer that sat before me. “Oh,” I gulped. “It’s nice.” It came out almost like a question, even though I hadn’t meant for it to.

Once the surprise wore off, and I began to look around, I realized that this was the perfect spot for Seth. The lot was full of trees and had a beautiful view of the lake. At the edge of his land was a huge pole barn where Seth built his boats. It was an ideal place for Buddy to roam I noted, as he came over to greet me with a sniff before taking off to chase a leaf.

Seth had built an amazing cedar deck on the front of the trailer, so we sat down to relax and talk in his rocking chairs. I looked out over the water and said, “Okay, this really is nice,” with more conviction this time.

“The trailer is temporary. I just fell in love with the location, so I’m going to build here one day,” he told me.

“Build it yourself?” I asked. “Do you already have plans? How exciting to be able to make it exactly how you want.”

“No plans yet.” He became quiet, and I wondered if he was going to elaborate. He looked right at me with those gorgeous green eyes and said, “I’ve been waiting for the right woman to come along, so we can decide on our dream house together.”

I almost melted on the spot. What I wouldn’t give to be his ‘Ms. Right.’ He was absolutely ideal, and I didn’t feel worthy of being with him, but I decided to enjoy every moment I had with him, even if it meant I was just his ‘Ms. Right Now.’

I blurted out, “Want to take this party inside?” I wondered where this newfound boldness was coming from.

“Oh, uh.” He ran his fingers through his hair.

He doesn't want me. He's just being nice. My inner voice panicked.

"I'm not exactly prepared." At my perplexed look, he elaborated. "I didn't think we'd be in this situation tonight, so I don't have any condoms."

"Oh." Relief flooded over me. Since I hadn't had sex until I was married, I had never had to worry about condoms. In fact, I'd never seen one other than during the banana demonstration that every teen suffers through. "Okay, we don't have to." I paused before adding, "But I know I don't have any diseases because I got tested after I found out Larry had been with that ho-bag we saw tonight." *Ho-bag?!?* My mental critic screeched. *How classy.*

He looked down at me and smiled. "I know I am disease-free because I always wear a condom, but I don't want to get you pregnant on our first official date."

"Apparently, I can't get pregnant, so that's not an issue." I looked down, determined not to let negative thoughts creep in and ruin my night with Seth.

That's when what he had said really began to sink in. If he always wore a condom, then mine could be the first hoo-ha that this perfect man's penis touched. I was sure that I would spend a lot of time being upset about the fact that I couldn't conceive a child, but I had just discovered the only benefit of it, and I wasn't about to ignore this opportunity. Without wasting any more time, I lunged at him.

He caught me, and I wrapped my legs around his waist as he kissed me hungrily. He threw the door of the Airstream open and we toppled inside, laughing into each other's mouths. We were on the floor, and I was still straddling him when he tilted his head back, breaking our kiss. "I don't want to ruin this with sex." Then he added gently, "You've had a lot to drink tonight, and I don't want to take advantage of you. Are you sure you want to do this?"

Touched by his sweet thoughtfulness, I placed both hands on his cheeks and looked directly into those piercing green eyes as I said, "I've never

been more sure of anything in my whole life. Now hurry up and rip these clothes off me!”

“Yes, Ma’am. Happy to oblige,” he said in my ear as he nuzzled my neck. He eased the pink tee shirt over my head as I worked to free him of his clothes. My eyes opened wide in surprise as he undid my bra with one quick flick of his long, capable fingers.

We were still in the doorway of the trailer with our legs hanging out. It should have been uncomfortable, and I should have been concerned that someone would see us, but my mind had been taken over by my body and my body had been taken over by pleasure. Whatever his mouth was doing to my breast made me ache for more, and his hand was slowly working its way up my leg, past the hem of my mini skirt.

I ran both of my hands over him. I had managed to dispose him of his shirt, but his jeans were still in the way. I got them loosened, and I lowered the waistband of his underwear so that he sprang out. Instantly, I wrapped my hands around him. His skin was velvety smooth, and he was rock hard and huge. I ran my fingers along his length and moaned with pleasure at the feel of him.

He grabbed my hands and pulled them to his lips for a kiss. “Abby, that feels amazing. A little too amazing, actually.” As he rolled us over, he informed me, “I am a gentleman, and gentlemen always let ladies go first.”

I almost confessed that he didn’t have to bother with trying to pleasure me, but I forced myself to stop.

He lowered his hands to undo my skirt and quickly yanked it off me. He cupped his hand over my soaked panties and groaned. “You’re so wet.”

“For you,” I whispered in his ear. I lifted my hips and he ripped my panties down. I panted as his fingers slid down the front of me. He slowly spread me apart and began making slow circles. My legs fell wide open. His other hand played with my nipple until it was a hard nub, and he gently kissed me on the mouth. It was too many wonderful sensations at once. I felt like I was going to explode.

My hips began bucking of their own accord. I didn’t know what was happening, but I knew that I didn’t ever want it to stop. My nerve endings were electrified and my breath was coming fast. I turned my head to the side, unable to think of anything but how good this felt. My breath caught, and pleasure surged through me. I threw my head back and gasped, mouth wide open as the first orgasm of my life ripped through me.

Just then, Seth plunged into me. His moan of pleasure spurred me on, and my body continued thrashing wildly beneath him. He reached a hand down between us to rub over me. The friction of his finger, along with the feeling of his cock driving into me, sent me over the edge again. As I pulsed around him, Seth pumped faster and groaned as he came.

He collapsed on top of me, still breathing hard. He was hot and heavy, and it felt wonderful. As the reality of what had just happened sank in, I began to laugh.

“Laughter at a time like this isn’t great for my ego,” Seth muttered.

“I’m not broken!” I said, still laughing.

“Broken? You thought I would break you?”

“No, I thought my lady parts didn’t work because I have never had an orgasm before.”

Seth’s eyes widened in surprise. “Never?” When I shook my head in answer, he said, “I can vouch that your lady parts work quite well. Now, it sounds to me like you have a lot of orgasming that you need to catch up on, and I’m just the man to take on this task.” He had a big smile on his face as he added, “If you’re up for it.”

I nodded and giggled as he picked me up and carried me to the back of the trailer. After he tossed me on the bed, we removed the rest of our clothes, and he kissed his way up my body to lie beside me.

He placed his lips on my forehead in a gentle kiss. “I’m going to recuperate a little, but feel free to wake me as soon as you’re ready to

raise that total orgasm count.”

“Will do,” I agreed, as I snuggled into his naked, perfect body. I couldn’t believe that I had just had sex with this amazing man. I smiled at my thoughts as I realized that if I had known that orgasms felt that fantastic, I probably would have broken down and tried out the vibrator that Court had given me.

When I felt his breathing steady, I quietly got up to find my cell phone. I sent a quick text to Court, ‘*Won’t be home tonight*.’ I added a smiley face after it so she would know everything was okay, since it wasn’t at all like me to stay out all night.

As I stood there, naked, breathing in the fresh air, I could not stop smiling. What a marvelous night and a wonderful man. It was such a relief to know that my body was capable of that much pleasure.

I wanted to pay him back in some way. I snapped my fingers as the idea came to me, and I snuck back into his room. He was going to wake up with his dick in my mouth, and I was going to give him the best blowjob of his life.

Being a gentleman, he was happy to return the favor.

Chapter 7

I awoke to the delectable smell of sizzling bacon. “Could you be any more perfect?” I asked as I devoured the sight of him working in the kitchen. I watched the muscles in his bare back flex as he turned the bacon. Clad only in perfect fitting jeans, he looked completely at ease in the kitchen.

When he turned to hand me a mug of English Breakfast tea, he asked, “Cream and sugar, right?”

I could see by the color of it that he had already added the ingredients, and I was beyond touched that he had remembered. “I hope you don’t mind that I borrowed a shirt,” I said, indicating the long, navy blue tee shirt that I was wearing.

“Looks way better on you than it ever did on me.” He smiled. “Mind buttering that toast? Then we can head outside to eat. It’s a beautiful morning.”

He was right, the sun was glistening on the water and the air was fresh and clear. We ate in companionable silence, and I kept finding myself gazing at him. He was so handsome it almost hurt my eyes. When he tossed his last bite of bacon to Buddy, then flashed a smile at me, an idea popped into my head.

It was still early and this place was secluded, other than the lake. I did a quick scan and didn’t see any boats or other signs of life, so I walked over and stood directly in front of Seth’s chair. He sat forward to press his cheek against my belly in a warm hug. His hands slid under the long tee shirt, and he quickly discovered that I hadn’t bothered with panties this morning. “You’re going to be the death of me, woman,” he groaned, but he looked up at me with a huge smile.

“Third time is the charm, right?” I asked as I climbed onto his chair, straddling him. I pulled the shirt over my head and enjoyed the look of pure desire that washed over him as he gazed at me, fully nude, in the

early morning light. I was normally one to hide my nakedness in the dark, but Seth made me feel safe and sexy.

He ran his hands down my bare back and cupped my bottom. My head fell back as he kissed my neck. I rose up on my knees and arched my back to allow his mouth full access to my breast. When he bit lightly on my nipple, pleasure shot through me and I let out a whimper of delight.

His hands, still cupping my rear, began to move forward. He slid his fingers along the slick surface at the front of me. I was panting with need. “I want you inside me. NOW.”

I worked his jeans loose and smiled when I saw that he had opted to skip underwear this morning, as well. He raised us up so I could lower his jeans. Then I eased myself onto him with a groan of satisfaction.

I started riding him, circling slowly as his fingers worked their magic on me. I leaned my head back, closed my eyes, and let the pleasure wash over me. The chair rocked to our rhythm.

I shifted the angle, took him inside me all the way to the base and enjoyed the sensation of having the head of his penis rub the most sensitive area deep inside me, while he used his fingers on my sensitive, swollen clit.

When he lowered his head to take my breast into his mouth, my hips began pumping faster. I let out a cry of pleasure as my body shuddered around him, and I felt the hot burst of release from him.

After a few seconds, Seth exclaimed, “Now that’s a phenomenal way to start a day!”

Still breathing hard, I climbed off him to retrieve the tee shirt I had tossed. Later I would probably be surprised and slightly embarrassed by how brazen I had been, but right now, I was just satisfied and happy.

“Last one in the shower is a rotten egg!” I goaded him before running up the stairs and into his trailer. I hadn’t quite anticipated how small the trailer’s shower would be, but there was no turning back now.

I had thought that nothing could be sexier than Seth, but I was wrong. Slick, soapy Seth rubbing his hands over me in a tight shower was a sight to behold. The stall was so small that our naked bodies were touching in all the right places.

When I felt his erection poking towards me, I was already wet and ready again. I used my hands to guide him in as he backed me against the wall. I sighed with pleasure at the full feeling of having him inside me as the warm water beat down on us.

Seth looked down and gave me a long, deep, wet kiss. I wrapped my legs around him and began thrusting my body onto his for all I was worth. I pushed my cheek into his shoulder as we both came loud and hard.

I stayed in the shower after he got out to dry off. My body felt slightly sore, but as relaxed as a limp noodle, and it was fabulous.

Before leaving, I found a pink, heart-shaped Post-It pad in my purse. I jotted down the word “Wowza!” and left the note on his bathroom mirror for him to find later.

That was by far the best night of my life, I thought as he drove me home. For the first time, a bit of doubt about my time with Seth began to creep its way in. *What if it wasn’t anything special for him? What if it’s the last time I see him?* I watched him driving and smiled. *Even if we don’t see each other again, this was so worth it.*

When we stopped in my driveway, he kissed me. It wasn’t just a peck. It was a real, toe-curling, perfect amount of tongue, feel it all the way to your hoo-ha, kiss. “When will I see you again?” he asked.

I slid out of the Jeep and said, “Text me,” before whirling around and heading into the house, beaming.

Chapter 8

I could not stop smiling. Last night had been the best of my existence. It felt like a giant weight had been lifted from my shoulders, knowing that my body was capable of experiencing so much pleasure. Now I could see what all of the fuss was about.

The only mar on our perfect night was seeing Larry and learning that I was the reason he and I had never conceived a child. I had wanted a baby for as long as I could remember, and I would not give up on that dream. Perhaps I would just need to explore other options, like adoption. I decided to put off thinking about it for now. It's not like I had to be in a big hurry. I wanted my life to be more settled before I made a plan for my child.

Settled with Seth? The possibility popped into my head. I attempted to nudge it down, realizing that I might be skipping ahead way too quickly.

I ran up the stairs two at a time towards my bedroom. As I rounded my doorway, Tabitha, Court's bitchy cat, skittered out of the room as if I had just kicked her. "Well, if you hate me so much, what were you doing in my room?" I stuck my tongue out at her.

I walked over and added two more Post-It reminders to the collection on my mirror. *Slow down. Enjoy the moment.*

Just then, Court peeked her head around the corner. Her short, blonde hair was a spiky mess and the ratty, faded lavender robe she was wearing had seen better days. In spite of that, she looked adorable. "I think you're incapable of looking bad." I wrinkled my nose at her, playfully.

"What's going on?" she croaked in a sleepy voice. "Tab came running into my room like the devil himself was chasing her." She rubbed the yellow cat's ears as Tabitha glared at me from her arms.

"I had the audacity to walk into my room when she was in here. *That* is what's going on. I don't know why she hates me so," I added as I walked

over to my closet.

“Maybe because you hate her.” Courtney started to shuffle off, but stopped and turned, eyes narrowed. “How was your all-nighter with Sumptuous Seth?”

“Good,” I said quickly, trying to keep it light.

She tilted her head, studying me. “You had a Big O!” she squealed.

“A few,” I admitted, laughing. “It was so amazing. He is so amazing,” I gushed.

“I told you there was nothing wrong with you. It was just that pencil-dicked ex-husband that couldn’t please you.”

I considered telling her about seeing Larry and learning of the floozy’s pregnancy and my latest failure, but I decided not to ruin this happy time.

“Look at you, glowing,” Courtney teased me. “Orgasm-ing agrees with you.”

“I think orgasm-ing agrees with everyone.” I laughed as I went to my bathroom to get dressed for work.

Before I made it fully inside the door of Eck, Meck & Dreck, Annie hooted from across the store, “Oh honey, he stoked your engine, didn’t he?”

I looked around to make sure we didn’t have any customers before answering her. “I have no idea what that means, but yeah, he sure did!” Then I asked, “Am I wearing a sign or something? How does everyone know?”

“No sign,” Annie answered, breezing by and patting my cheek. “It’s your aura. It’s absolutely radiant.”

I didn’t know about this aura business, but I felt flippin’ fantastic. Checking my phone had become like an incessant tic, though. I checked it

for about the fortieth time in the last hour. Still nothing. I briefly considered turning it off and back on to make sure it was working, but I decided that would just be silly.

I bought a sandwich and took it to the park on my lunch break in an attempt to get my mind off it for a while. Couples strolled by hand-in-hand and riding bikes. I smiled at them and checked my phone.

I considered sending him a text. I could invite him on a date. Nothing said that a girl had to sit around and wait for a boy to contact her. I started the text numerous times, but deleted each one.

In the end, I put the phone back in my purse and decided to wait it out. Thankfully, he didn't make me wait long. My phone started ringing before I had finished my walk back to work. I panicked and almost dropped it. I hadn't been expecting a call. I could think about a witty response to a text, but I'd be on the spot on the phone. *What if I say something dumb?* I had almost decided not to answer when I ordered myself to pull it together.

"Hi, this is Abby," I squeaked, my voice too high.

"Hi, Gorgeous. It's Seth." His voice was low and sexy. "I wanted to see if you'd like to go to a charity auction with me next Saturday evening. It's a black-tie event. I should warn you, though," he added, "my whole family will be there."

The thought of Seth wearing a tuxedo made my mouth water. The fact that he was inviting me to an event with his family was so exciting that my knees almost buckled. "I'd love to," I managed to get the words out.

I focused my attention on the details of where and when, while my mind reeled with excitement. Then I agreed to meet him there and hung up.

"Annie!" I screeched running into the store. "We need to find a fabulous dress."

Chapter 9

We decided on an elegant, black, form-fitting cocktail dress. When paired with the super-high, shiny, black stilettos that Court had loaned me, the look was classic and stunning. I just hoped I didn’t fall down, especially considering what I was wearing underneath my ensemble.

The thigh-highs, garter and racy thong were not my traditional type of undergarments. It made me feel sexy, though, to know how scantily I was clad underneath my demure outfit. I shivered in anticipation as I imagined how Seth’s eyes would sparkle when he discovered my naughty secret.

As I climbed the steps to the museum, I wished again that Seth had picked me up instead of asking me to meet him here. I had waited until fifteen minutes after the event started, hoping that there would be plenty of people here, so I could slip in unnoticed. I despised walking into parties by myself.

The great room of the museum had been transformed into a sparkling fairy forest and the effect was magical. Six-foot tall mushrooms painted red with white polka dots were scattered around, giant colorful butterflies dangled from the ceiling and the entire room had an overhang of moss that draped between enormous trees that towered over everything. There were what appeared to be a million twinkle lights glimmering from all angles.

I gasped as I took in the amazing transformation of the room. Then I felt him more than saw him. My eyes were drawn to him. Seth was standing by the bar, looking dashing in a black tuxedo. The gentleman he was with was talking animatedly, but Seth wasn’t paying any attention. He was completely focused on me.

His eyes bored into me as they slowly traveled down my entire body, then back up to my eyes. The hair on my arms raised as he openly perused me. My whole body tingled as his eyebrows lifted and his lips turned up slightly, indicating he liked what he saw.

I wanted him then and there, but I forced myself to look away. This was neither the time, nor the place for ripping his clothes off, but I vowed to get him naked soon - very soon. I felt him watching me as I found a seat at a table that had a direct view of where he was standing near the bar.

I grinned as I decided that it was time to torture him a little and make him want me as much as I wanted him. Knowing that my cleavage looked fantastic in this dress, I deliberately dropped my black clutch near the chair I had chosen. Then I slowly bent to retrieve it, giving him a full, long view of my dangling breasts nearly bursting out of my dress.

I had the satisfaction of seeing his mouth fall open as I raised back up, eyes riveted on his, to let him know the peep show was exclusively for him.

When the waiter came by, I ordered a Pepsi, not wanting any alcohol to be numbing my body when Seth was inside me later. Feeling him watching me, along with the unfamiliar sensation of the thong pressing against me intimately, had me wet with anticipation.

I attempted to make small talk with the guests at my table, but all I could think about was Seth and how much I wanted him. His eyes were like a magnet for mine, and every time I glanced at him, he was openly looking at me. He looked at me as if I was the only woman in the room, and it made me feel sexy and completely hot for him.

I turned to thank the waiter when he brought my Pepsi. That is when I saw the sign at the auctioneer's podium that read, *The Davis Family's Free the World of Cancer Gala*. I briefly wondered if Seth Davis was part of the Davis family who was sponsoring this amazing party. He certainly didn't seem like he came from that kind of money.

When I returned my attention to him, I found that his eyes were still riveted on me. There were plenty of beautiful women here tonight, so the way he was focused completely on me sent a thrill down my spine.

Looking at him, I picked up my glass and used my tongue to slowly swirl the straw. His fingers tightened around his glass and his whole body tensed as if he had just sucked in air as he watched me. I relished the

thought that I could cause this kind of reaction in him.

I turned in my chair, crossing my legs so that a tiny bit of the garter peeked out. I toyed with it absently. When I chanced a look at him again, the gentleman who had been talking to him had given up on getting his attention and left. Seth was leaning against the bar, alone, watching every move my fingers made on the garter.

I glanced around the room, wondering if anyone else was watching the show. No one appeared to even notice, except for Seth who was totally engrossed in my every move. I inched my dress higher, exposing more of my thigh, as I continued rubbing.

A handsome, older gentleman walked up to Seth and said something in his ear. Seth nodded, gave me a quick wink and followed the man. As they walked off together, I looked at their shoulders and the way they each moved and decided that the man was likely Seth's father.

Since Seth was evidently busy for a few minutes, I excused myself from the table and left the ballroom to find a powder room. Once inside, I locked the door and checked my appearance in the mirror. My cheeks were flushed pink from being so turned on. I was normally my worst critic, but looking at my reflection, I had to admit, I looked sexy.

Just then, a quick knock on the door startled me. "Just a minute," I called.

"It's me. Let me in." His voice was deep and sexy.

I twisted the doorknob to unlock it, and he came in. The air between us tingled with electricity as he clicked the lock back into place. Then he lunged for me.

I watched him in the mirror as he stood behind me, kissing my neck and bare shoulder. His thick penis was hot and hard, pushing into my back. I reached behind us and grabbed his ass, pulling him into me, not wanting any space between us.

"I've wanted to get my hands and mouth on these tits all night," he growled into my ear as he lowered the zipper on the back of my dress.

His words shocked me and turned me on. My entire body was thrumming with excitement.

“Fantastic,” he whispered as he watched in the mirror while my breasts sprang out of the top of my dress. He brought one hand up to play with them, while the other hand eased up my thigh, raising my dress. He traced his fingers along the garter, following the same path that I had teased him with earlier. We both watched in the mirror, completely aroused.

By the time he cupped his hand over me, my thong was completely soaked. I pushed back into him, panting with need. His huge cock pressed into my back as his teeth nibbled on my ear. I reached behind me to palm him over his tuxedo pants. When he smoothed his fingers up and down the front of me, I moaned with pleasure. “Mmm, Seth.”

He froze, as if someone had dumped a bucket of cold water on him. He backed away from me and ran his fingers through his hair. “You know Seth?” he asked.

I was completely confused. Did he have multiple personalities? I knew he was too good to be true. My face must have registered my lack of understanding because he tossed the explanation over his shoulder on his way out of the bathroom. “I’m his identical twin, Sam.”

Chapter 10

Identical twin? My mind reeled. *How could Seth have failed to mention that? And what had I just done?* Thank goodness it hadn't gone any farther, but I would never be able to face Sam again.

And what about him? I wondered disdainfully. *Was he just going to screw a stranger in the bathroom? Well, he is a guy*, my mind retorted. *And I was totally coming on to him out there. It's not like a man to turn down easy sex*.

I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror. My boobs were hanging out and my dress was askew. I quickly went over and snapped the lock into place before someone walked in on me in this state of complete disarray.

I splashed cool water on my face and patted my chest with a damp paper towel in an attempt to calm down. Never in my whole life had I been that excited, or this humiliated. What a difference a few seconds can make.

As I attempted to fix my appearance, I thought about Sam. He really was identical to Seth physically, but he was darker, more dangerous. The bathroom had felt electrified when he was near me. I touched up my lipstick and vowed to steer clear of him. *He's exactly what I don't need*, I thought as I breezed out the door. I was, however, prepared to give Seth an earful for not warning me about him.

Returning to the great room-turned fairy forest, my eyes were immediately drawn to Sam. He was standing near the stage with a bevy of lovely ladies hanging on his every word, including a life-sized Barbie doll who had her arm possessively curved around him. I shook my head, immensely grateful that our fooling around in the bathroom had stopped when it had.

"There she is." Seth approached me, smiling. He had a dark-haired beauty with him. The woman's enormous green eyes were accentuated by the longest, thickest, black eyelashes I had ever seen, outside of a magazine. She was stunning in her floor-length midnight blue gown, and I

recognized the family resemblance immediately. “Abby, this is my sister Jessie. Jess, meet Abby.”

“Abby! Seth has told me all about you. It’s great to meet you.” Jessie extended her hand and flashed a dazzling smile directly at me. She seemed friendly and kind, and I liked her immediately.

“You’ll have to tell me what he said.” I smiled trying to hide the rush of excitement I felt at finding out he had mentioned me to his sister. “And I have tons of questions for you about what he was like growing up.”

“I have plenty of answers.” She gave Seth an ornery grin before adding, “I know all of his secrets.” Then she finger waved at me and said to track her down later.

After she fluttered off, I turned on Seth. “Told your sister all about me, huh?”

“She has a huge mouth. I’ll get even with her one of these days,” he added in my ear as he kissed my cheek. “Sorry I was late. Did my family take good care of you?”

I coughed, thinking of how Sam had almost taken care of me. I wasn’t sure how to bring that particular topic up with Seth. I finally settled for, “I met your brother because I thought he was you. You didn’t feel the need to mention that he is your identical twin?”

“Didn’t I mention it?” He seemed truly surprised.

“No, I’m positive I would have remembered that.” I tried to figure out how to continue. How does one tell her lover that she almost banged his twin in the bathroom? It wasn’t a problem that I had encountered before, so I wasn’t at all sure how to broach the subject.

“You really do look *exactly* alike,” I hedged.

He smiled as he answered. “We are identical on the outside, except for a scar that Sam has on his shoulder. We’re very different on the inside, though,” he added. “Oh, and I’m older by a few minutes, which really

gets his goat," he chuckled.

It was clear by Seth's expression how much he loved his twin. My eyes were drawn involuntarily to Sam. He wasn't looking at me, but something inside me felt like he recently had been. I didn't know how to tell Seth what had happened, but I knew I needed to. The words just wouldn't form in my head. It had been an honest mistake. I knew he wouldn't be angry, but I couldn't bring myself to tell him.

Maybe we will laugh about it someday. My mind was hopeful, probably a little too hopeful.

Seth asked me to dance and whisked me onto the dance floor. I spent the next few songs with my head against his broad shoulder, relishing the feeling of being enveloped in his strong arms.

I felt that he was near before I heard or saw him. "May I cut in?" Sam's voice was deep and clear, and so similar to Seth's. Seeing the two of them standing together like reflections in their dashing tuxedos nearly took my breath away. They were perfection. Seth gave a mock bow and walked away, unaware of the tension radiating from me.

Sam's eyes slowly perused me from head to toe, and then back up again. My body burned under his gaze. I could feel my nipples puckering under my dress when his eyes paused at my breasts and his mouth turned up slightly, knowingly. When he finally made it back up to my eyes, he held open his arms in invitation as he lifted his brows and said, "Shall we?"

I didn't want to be in his arms again, but I couldn't cause a scene. His eyes twinkled as he sensed my reluctance. *That bastard is enjoying making me uncomfortable,* my mind screamed as I vowed not to let him see how much he affected me.

I stiffened myself into a formal dance pose as he expertly guided me around the dance floor. My body was acutely aware of the places where he touched me. The nerve endings in my hand, lower back, and waist were all teeming with activity. I consciously slowed my breathing because it had become quick and shallow. I attempted to keep my face a passive mask as the rest of my body betrayed me. My eyes scanned the room,

desperate to look anywhere but at Sam.

He drew me in closer, and I sucked in my breath. “Since I didn’t get punched in the jaw, I am assuming you didn’t tell Seth about our little tryst in the bathroom,” he growled near my ear.

“It was hardly a tryst,” I snarled back at him. “More like an unfortunate mistake.”

“I didn’t find it unfortunate at all. In fact, I rather enjoyed myself, until you called me by my brother’s name.”

He had the audacity to grin. Then he continued. “I don’t generally share my brother’s taste in women, but with you he did okay.”

“Okay?!?” I spluttered. Then I lifted my chin, deciding not to let him push my buttons. “You know, instead of rating me, you might think about how hurt Seth would be if he knew about us.”

“Us?” he asked. “So, now we’re an ‘us’? I didn’t know you cared so much.”

“You know what I meant.” I glared at him. This man was exasperating.

He leaned forward to whisper in my ear. “When I’m fondling my date’s fake tits tonight, I’m going to be thinking about your real ones.”

That did it. My mouth fell open, appalled. My eyes felt like they might pop out of my head. I whirled away from him and headed for the bar. I needed a glass of wine. Pronto.

“Your brother is a pig!” I said loudly when Jessie hopped up on the bar stool next to me.

“I take it you’ve met Sam,” Jessie chuckled. “Yes, he can be a bit of a pig. But he can also be generous, and kind, and hilarious, and a pain in the ass, but I love him to pieces. I love both of them to pieces,” she gushed. She leaned in as if telling me a secret. “You definitely picked the right one to date, though. Seth is the real deal, and Sam leaves behind a trail of broken

hearts.”

By the way her words were slurring together, I could tell the glass of wine she ordered wasn’t her first of the evening. “I think that’s why Sam settles for the never-ending stream of gold-digging ‘I’ girls,” she continued.

“What’s an ‘I’ girl?” I asked her.

“Oh, you know,” she waved her hand around. “Candi with an I, Terri with an I, Sandi with an I, Cami with an I. The parade of leggy blondes with enormous jugs that he shows up with always introduce themselves that way.” She mimicked shaking a hand and began fluttering her eyelashes. “Hi, I’m Bambi with an I.”

She started cracking up at her own joke. Her laughter was contagious, and I soon had the giggles as well. I was enjoying being with her and laughing at her despicable brother.

“You know what else,” she went on, leaning in further. “He doesn’t ever kiss them on the lips. They all think they are going to win him over and marry him and take his fortune, but he gets tired of them after a few dates and sends them along their merry way. Then POOF,” she snapped her fingers for added affect, “he finds another one just like the last 412.”

I had the feeling she wouldn’t be telling me all of this if she wasn’t tipsy. I wondered why Sam treated women like they were disposable. Thankfully, I didn’t have to worry about figuring him out because I had Seth, and he was wonderful. I decided to see what Jessie had to say about him.

“So tell me about your sweet brother.” I nudged her elbow gently.

“They are both sweet to me,” she replied. “But since I know you’re talking about Seth, he’s one of the good ones, Abby. Please don’t hurt him.”

Her sudden rush of sincerity surprised me. “I won’t,” I reassured her, and I meant it.

“Speak of the devil.” Jessie smiled at Seth as he came up behind me and

wrapped his arms around my shoulders. “I’ll let you two be, since you’ve barely seen each other all evening.” With that, she hopped off her stool and disappeared into the crowd.

“I’m almost afraid to ask what you two were talking about.” Seth slid around and plopped down on the stool Jessie had just vacated.

“You, as a matter of fact,” I answered. “Your sister seems to think rather highly of you.”

“Maybe I shouldn’t have interrupted then, but I feel like my siblings have had more of you tonight than I have.” I attempted to push the unwanted thought of Sam having a whole lot of me in the bathroom out of my mind. “Is it my turn to get to hang out with you?” Seth asked, batting his dark eyelashes playfully.

“Absolutely,” I answered. “Can we get out of here or do your family duties require you to stay longer?”

Before I finished the question, he had already downed the last of his drink and was standing up. “Let’s go. I’ve been wanting to rip that little black dress off you all night.”

“Deal.” I stood, taking his hand. As we exited, I tried to ignore the electrifying chill that went up my spine. I knew, without a doubt, that Sam was watching me leave with his brother.

Chapter 11

I looked in my rear view mirror to make sure Seth's Jeep pulled out of the museum lot behind me. We had decided to go to my house, and I was suddenly nervous about having him in my space.

Courtney had worked the dinner shift tonight, so she wouldn't be there when we arrived, but she would be coming in later. I wasn't sure how to let her know not to disturb us. I wondered if I should tie a 'we are screwing our brains out' scarf to the doorknob, but decided that was a little crass. She would just have to draw her own conclusions when she saw Seth's vehicle parked in our driveway.

I was hornier than I ever remember being. In fact, I briefly considered pulling over and having my way with Seth in his Jeep on the side of the road. I pictured myself climbing through the door-less driver's side and mounting him in one smooth move. I could have him inside me, easing this aching desire within seconds. I tapped the brakes, but at the last minute decided that we would have more room to fool around at home.

I refused to acknowledge the idea that this extreme randiness might be in any way related to my encounter with Sam in the bathroom. *Besides*, I told myself, *I thought he was Seth when we were in there. Any lust that I felt for Sam had to be due to the fact that he looked exactly like his brother.*

Even though it only took a few minutes to drive to my house, it felt like an eternity. I was so excited that my fingers shook as I tried to work the keys in the lock of our mahogany front door. When I managed to open the door, Buster thumped his tail a couple of times, but didn't bother to get up. Tabitha lit out of the room as if her tail were on fire.

As soon as Seth shut the door behind us, I turned and pushed him back against it. I kissed him, plunging my tongue into his mouth. When I reached down, I happily discovered that he was already hard and ready. His groan of pleasure at my touch increased my urgency.

“I need you inside me now,” I pleaded as I worked to loosen his tuxedo pants. I freed him and wrapped both hands loosely around his thick cock, enjoying the velvety smoothness as I stroked up and down the length of him.

He whirled us around, lifting my dress and yanking my lacy thong down. I stepped out of the panties and leaned my back into the door as he lifted me over him. My hand guided him to my opening. I was so slick with desire that he slid right in. I tilted my head back and wrapped my legs around him as he kissed my neck and started circling his hips.

He held me against the front door with one arm as his other hand reached down to rub over me. I was strung so tight that a few quick brushes of his thumb over my clit had me convulsing around him. I cried out as I came hard, wrapping my arms around his neck and ramming my body onto his dick with every fiber of my being. His orgasm was powerful, and he yelled my name as his body tightened and he spilled into me.

We stood there like that for several seconds, breathing hard. Once my brain started to operate properly, I marveled at how strong he must be to have held me like that. I wasn’t a large woman, but I certainly wasn’t a waif. I preferred the word curvy, and he had held me with one arm and a very large penis. *Impressive.*

After he lowered my feet back to the floor, I did a hand motion indicating the rest of the house, beyond the entryway and said, “So, this is my place.”

“I love it so far,” he replied, and we both chuckled as we straightened our clothes.

Chapter 12

When I showed him the kitchen, he grabbed a half-empty package of Nutter Butters. “I’m starving,” he admitted. “We snuck out of the auction before they served the rubber chicken.”

I had seen the menu and knew it entailed filet mignon and other fancy-schmancy cuisine, but was happier to be sharing stale cookies with Seth. As I poured us each a glass of milk, I decided that this was a great time to ask about his family. “So, Seth Davis, are you a part of the Davis family who put on that fabulous shin dig tonight?”

He seemed almost embarrassed, but he nodded and answered. “Yes, it’s my mom’s pet project. My grandmother died of breast cancer when I was young, and my grandfather lost his battle with throat cancer a few years ago.” He sighed, but continued. “It really took a toll on Mom. She became depressed - to the point that we were concerned that we were going to lose her, too. Then, one day, she decided to fight back. She came downstairs to breakfast dressed and enthused about stamping out cancer. She started planning the first fundraiser that morning. It was a huge success. Since then, she makes sure it gets bigger and better every year.”

It was the most he’d shared with me about his family, and I was impressed by his mother’s perseverance. “What a way to turn things around. Your mother must be quite a lady.”

He smiled with pride. “She is. My whole family is amazing. You met Jessie and Sam. They are the best siblings anyone could ask for, and Jessie’s little girl, Katie, is the light of my life. I call her Katiedid. I can’t wait for you to meet her.”

Thoughts were flying through my head as he spoke. I was surprised to learn that Jessie was a single parent. The way Seth spoke of his niece made me fall for him even more. I was touched that he wanted me to meet her and thrilled by the confirmation that he assumed we would keep seeing each other. I noticed that he didn’t mention his father. That seemed a little odd, but I was even more curious about Sam. I thought this might

be a good time to fess up about my risqué incident with him in the restroom.

“I’d love to meet Katie,” I answered honestly. I paused for a few seconds, and then I dove in. “I can’t imagine having an identical twin.”

Seth smiled. “I can’t imagine not having one. Sam and I give each other a hard time, but he’s my other half.” He shook his head. “That sounded weird. We’re not soul mates or anything.” He grinned before continuing. “I don’t know how to explain it, but there isn’t anyone who is there for me or understands me like Sam does. He even saved my life once. That’s how he got the scar on his shoulder.”

I was completely intrigued and wanted to know more. “Go on,” I encouraged him when he stopped.

“When we were in college, we were partying with a group of friends on a boat by a little island out on the lake. The waves were really starting to kick up, so we decided to head in. The anchor was stuck and we couldn’t get it to come up, so I dove in to swim down and loosen it. I didn’t realize the place where I dove was a shallow ridge. I hit my head hard enough to knock me out. The rest of the people on the boat were too wasted to realize I didn’t come right back up, but Sam knew something was wrong. I don’t know if it was twin intuition or what, but he jumped in and grabbed me. When we surfaced, a big wave was rolling in. Sam put himself between me and the boat, and he was body-slammed into the ladder. If he hadn’t sensed that something was wrong that day, I wouldn’t be alive. I feel like I owe him everything.”

The conversation had taken a serious turn, so he lightened the mood by adding, “Doesn’t stop me from teasing him about being younger, though. He hates that,” he chuckled.

I smiled, but couldn’t get the picture of that pig of a man jumping in to save his brother out of my head. Seth obviously thought of Sam as a hero, but I wasn’t willing to think that highly of him. I wanted to think of him as the ass that I knew him to be. *Anyone would jump in to save a sibling,* I told myself. *It doesn’t mean he’s not a jerk.*

“Well, I’m glad he was there to save you, or I wouldn’t be able to do this.” I leaned over to give Seth a sweet, slow kiss. I was trying to think of a way to say that I had almost fucked Sam in a public bathroom, but my mind couldn’t focus on anything but Seth when his tongue began swirling around mine.

Seth pulled back and asked, “Do I get to see your bedroom?” I ran for the stairs and giggled as he playfully grabbed my rear end, following close behind me.

We slammed my bedroom door shut and grabbed each other, groping to remove clothes as we fell into my bed. I didn’t give Sam another thought. I spent the entire night rolling around naked with Seth’s glorious body in a tangled mess of sheets.

Chapter 13

I awoke alone and immediately missed the feeling of Seth's warm, bare skin against me. I turned to find a lavender Post-It note on the pillow beside me. It had a giant heart drawn on it and was signed simply, "S."

He had obviously been in my bathroom and seen my circle of encouraging reminder notes on the mirror. A wave of embarrassment overcame me as I realized how silly that must seem to someone who had every reason to be completely self-confident.

Shaking my head at myself for not remembering to take down this humiliating display of my inferiority complex, I padded into the bathroom and added Seth's heart to the mirror. He had seen one of my quirks and hadn't left the room screaming. In fact, he had added a sweet note for my collection, so I decided to do my best not to worry about it.

I stretched and grinned at my mussed reflection. I looked like a woman who had spent the entire night cuddling and screwing, which is exactly who I was, and it felt grand.

I was in such a great mood that I had to share it with someone, so I went to Courtney's room and pounced on her bed. Tabitha scampered off the bed as soon as she saw me coming, then whirled around to give me a quick hiss before stalking out of the room.

Court pulled her pillow over her head and told me to go away unless I had brought caffeine with me. I chuckled at her morning grumpiness and burrowed under the covers beside her. When she finally opened one eye to look at me, she said, "You look like you've been well-fucked."

I had never heard that term before, but it described me perfectly. So I responded, grinning. "Very well."

Court grunted as she flopped over on her side. "I haven't been well-fucked in over a week. Or even decently-fucked. Or so-so-fucked," she grouched. "I guess my vajayjay has to live vicariously through yours

now.”

I smiled at her. “You know a one-week dry spell isn’t really that bad.” I decided this might be a good time to delicately bring up the Joe idea to gauge her reaction. “If it really bothers you, though, maybe you should look for a longer term relationship where you get well-fucked by the same guy on a regular basis.”

“I can’t seem to find a man that I can put up with for any length of time. Besides,” she added, “spend too long with one person, and it quickly transforms into getting boring-fucked. I’m not interested in the same old, same old for the rest of my days.”

I decided to jump in with both feet. “Yes, but if you’re with someone you really care about, that can keep the spark alive. For instance, what if you were with someone like Joe?”

I watched her reaction closely and was surprised to see her eyes soften, even though her words contradicted them. “Joe?!? He’s my boss. That would be totally inappropriate. Besides, he would never be interested in someone like me.”

“Since when do you care about inappropriate? And what do you mean someone like you? Someone who is kind, loving, generous, gorgeous, funny, smart and sweet? Yeah, why would he be interested in someone like that?” I rolled my eyes to emphasize the sarcasm of my last comment.

“You’re biased because you love me.” She shoved my arm playfully, but then turned serious. “Joe deserves to be with someone better than me. Someone who is pure, good, and solid.” She paused to look at me. “Someone like you. I’m white trash from the wrong side of the tracks, and I have the physical and emotional scars to prove it.”

“Sweetie, I wish you could see yourself through my eyes. I hate that you have this warped view of yourself. You are the most amazing person I know.” We both had teary eyes, so I grabbed the tissue box from her bedside table and sat it between us. “Joe sees it.” I nodded in confirmation, at her questioning look.

As we hugged, I decided not to ruin this great conversation with any talk about my lewd encounter with Sam at the museum. There would be plenty of time to tell her about that fiasco later.

Lightening the tone of our conversation, Court said, “If you’re going to wake me up at the butt-crack of dawn, the least you could do is bring coffee.”

I shook my head at her as I got up. “9:30 is hardly the butt-crack of dawn, Lazy Bones.” I tossed the words over my shoulder on my way to make her brew. Then I ducked and easily avoided the pillow she threw my way.

Chapter 14

I had just delivered Courtney's coffee and returned to the kitchen to scrounge up some breakfast when Seth called. "I know it's short notice," he started, seeming almost nervous, "but would you have any interest in joining me at my family's weekly brunch?" He paused a second then added, "You really don't have to if you don't want to. I wouldn't go if my presence wasn't required."

"I'd love to," I responded. "When?"

"Pick you up in an hour?"

"Sure." I tried not to let the panic ring through in my voice as we said our goodbyes. As soon as I touched the End Call button, I screeched up the stairs, "Court! What does one wear to a fancy Sunday brunch?"

"Hell if I know," she grouched. Clearly her caffeine hadn't kicked in yet. I took the stairs two at a time, so we could have this discussion in person.

I peeked around the corner of her doorway. "Help. His whole family will be there, and I have no idea what to wear."

"He must have the serious hots for you, calling for another date half an hour after he leaves," she mumbled. "You gonna be back in time for girls' night?" She looked accusingly at me.

"Of course! I would never bail on you for a boy." It was usually Court turning away men to maintain the sanctity of our weekly girl time. This was the first time I had the choice. Not that it was a choice. I loved spending time with Seth, but Sunday nights at Joe's with Court were our sacred ritual.

She seemed to think about it for a second, then she huffed. "All right then." She started digging in the back of her closet. She was so far back into her closet that I wondered what relic she was going to pull out. "Don't laugh," she ordered as she surfaced with a dress that shocked me.

It was white with a flared skirt, which was covered with brightly colored flowers. The low cut bodice was a deep purple and it had a large, bright pink belt. It was perfect for my brunch, but so not Courtney.

“It’s beautiful!” I said honestly, smiling and trying not to laugh at my mental picture of Courtney wearing this ensemble. “It’s just not exactly your style.” I tried to be tactful.

“I went through a phase,” she rolled her eyes, “but I’ve never actually worn it.” She dove back into her closet and this time came out with a pair of strappy sandals with jewels that matched the flowers on the dress.

I shook my head at her. “Perfect. Thank you. I’m so glad I gave you the room with the big closet,” I said, giving her a quick hug. Then I grabbed my goodies and ran to my bathroom to shower.

Forty-five minutes later I came downstairs looking like someone who brunches. My hair was in a cute topknot and I had even put on makeup. I had the pink lips and cheeks to prove it. The dress and shoes really were perfect, except for one tiny problem. Well, not so tiny. Courtney’s chest was nowhere near the size of mine. I had managed to squeeze my upper half into the dress, but all of the extra flesh had to go somewhere, and it had chosen to billow up and out. I had fidgeted with my boobs for five of the forty-five minutes, and then tried to convince myself that no one would notice.

“Whoa, your cup runneth over.” Courtney grinned.

I whirled around and started to head back up the stairs, humiliated. My clothes weren’t nearly as cute as Court’s, but at least my tits stayed in them.

“Wait! You look fantastic. I’m just jealous. He’s not going to be able to pry his eyes away from you or your fantastic jugs.”

I turned. “Are you sure it’s not too much?” I asked, grabbing them.

“It’s just right,” she reassured me. “Now let’s go sit on the front porch swing because I want a front row seat when he sees them. I mean you,”

she quickly amended when she saw my concerned look.

She wasn’t disappointed. When Seth hopped out of his Jeep and walked up to greet us, his eyes nearly popped out of his head. I was embarrassed, but then he smiled a huge, sweet, happy, sexy smile, and I was truly grateful for my bodacious tatas for the first time in my entire life.

“You look fantastic,” he said sincerely. “Ready to roll?”

“Let’s go,” I said. Deciding to enjoy this a little, I bent down pretending to fix something on my shoe and looked up to see him openly gawking down the deep cleavage I had just bared to him. I stood and turned to grin at Court and give her a thumb’s-up before walking hand-in-hand with Seth to his Jeep.

Chapter 15

Even though I had figured out that Seth's family was wealthy, I was not prepared for the estate that we pulled into. The stone mansion was massive and gorgeous, with clean lines and a classic look. The house paled in comparison to the grounds, though.

The perfectly manicured yard had the feel of an English garden with an abundance of comfortable sitting areas, bright flowers, and quirky fountains. I laughed in surprise as we walked down the brick path to the backyard and a charming, winking baby elephant statue sprayed a mist of water on us.

Seth shook his head, "My mother enjoys searching for the most whimsical oddities."

"We should introduce her to my boss, Annie," I answered. "She's the most whimsical person I've ever met. They would probably get along famously."

It seemed like Seth was about to disagree with that when he opened the gate to the backyard, which caused me to completely forget about our conversation. It was the most breathtaking setup I had ever seen. From the amazing view of the lake and marina, to the full outdoor kitchen and infinity pool, this was a backyard that was meant to be in magazines.

My eyes drank it all in, and then I felt him. He had just stepped out of the sliding glass door at the back of the house. I didn't have to look to know. The hair on my arms was standing up and my body felt tingly. I swept my gaze quickly past him, just to confirm what I already knew. Sam was standing there, looking amazingly gorgeous, just like his brother. He lifted his glass in greeting, and Seth nodded at him.

Seth's mother walked over to welcome us. Janice was classy and lovely, and I felt like a frump standing next to her. She tsk'd me for stealing Seth away from the charity auction before dinner had even been served, and I started stammering my way through an explanation. Seth gallantly saved

me by saying he had wanted to leave early, due to a headache. Thankfully, she seemed to buy that.

Janice told me to make myself at home and glided off to check on the caterers. I shook my head, pondering the idea that anyone had caterers for a weekly family brunch. It was beginning to feel like I had somehow stumbled my way into the Kennedy compound, yet they all seemed so down-to-earth and likable, with one glaring exception.

Sam was making his way towards us when a little girl came running to him at full speed. “Kit Kat!” he said as he picked her up to twirl her around, both of them beaming. *That’s kind of likable,* I admitted, grumbling silently to myself.

Jessie walked up the path, carrying a Barbie backpack. “Abby, I’m so glad you’re here,” she said, smiling kindly. Then she leaned in to whisper, “It will give me a break from having to attempt to make small talk with the latest ‘I’ girl.” She snickered, nodding her head to the left.

I followed her eyes and saw the longest, tannest, most perfect pair of legs I’d ever seen sticking out from a lounge chair by the pool. I couldn’t see the rest of her from my angle, but could only assume that these gorgeous legs belonged to Sam’s date. I don’t know why my stomach did a little flip-flop at that idea.

Sam set the little girl down and she quickly ran over to greet Seth. He kneeled down to her level and said, “How’s my little Katiedid today?”

I watched her tell him about her many adventures since she had last seen him. She talked animatedly, and he seemed to hang on every word. The little girl had huge blue eyes and long blonde hair. She didn’t look like her dark-haired mother and uncles, but she had inherited their striking beauty.

Suddenly, she took notice of me. “Who’s that?” she demanded.

Jessie jumped in to answer. “Katie, this is Uncle Seth’s date, Abby.”

Katie squinted her eyes, looking me over, then gave a ‘humph’ and asked Seth to push her on the swing. He gave my hand a squeeze before

following the little girl to do her bidding.

Her mother chuckled and said, “Don’t mind her. She’s just not used to Seth bringing women around. That’s usually Sam’s forte. She’ll warm up to you once she gets to know you,” she reassured me. “She doesn’t usually bother with Sam’s friends because he never keeps them around long enough for us to get to know them.”

I wondered why Seth didn’t bring women around more often, but Sam walked up to join us, so I didn’t have a chance to ask. “Hello, ladies,” he greeted his sister and me, slinging an arm casually around Jessie.

Before we could answer, the blonde goddess in the lounge chair bellowed, “Sam Darling, the wait staff hasn’t bothered to check on me. I’m parched. Would you be a dear and have someone fetch me a mojito?”

“Of course,” he responded and turned on his heel to go track down someone.

Jessie raised her eyebrows, but refrained from saying anything about the exchange. She smiled as she watched Seth playing with her daughter.

“He’s really sweet with her,” I observed aloud, thinking silently that he would make a terrific father someday.

“He is,” she agreed. “They both are.” We watched Sam personally deliver the requested mojito before walking back to where we stood.

“Are you a waiter now?” Jessie teased her brother.

Sam shrugged a shoulder. “She likes to be pampered, and I humor her.”

The hair on my arms was already prickling from being this close to him, so when his elbow brushed lightly against mine, I almost jumped out of my skin. *Did I hate him so much that he literally made my skin crawl?* I wondered. It didn’t feel like hatred, though. As much as I wanted to dislike him, I knew that deep down, I didn’t. *It must just be confusion because he looks so similar to Seth,* I decided. I refused to think about the fact that I didn’t have this strong of a physical reaction when Seth was

nearby.

“I’ll go rescue Seth from kid patrol, so he can spend some time with you,” Jessie said to me as she left for the playset.

Sam turned and my skin heated as his eyes bored into me. With every pore, I could feel how close he was. “Alone at last.” He grinned and raised his eyebrows at me. “Did you tell Seth about us yet?”

“I didn’t feel it was important enough to mention,” I lied.

“Or too important to mention,” he guessed correctly.

He was so cocky and infuriating. I willed my body not to react to him, even as I could feel my barely-covered nipples puckering as if they were reaching out to him.

His eyes travelled slowly down to my breasts and lingered there. I prayed that my erect nipples weren’t visible through the top of my dress.

Seth walked up to us, saving me from Sam’s intense gaze. He casually put his arm around me, completely unaware of the tension vibrating between his brother and me. “Hi, Gorgeous,” he said giving me a quick peck on the cheek. I smiled at Seth, glad for the distraction from Sam.

All three of us had our attention diverted when the long-legged beauty arose from her sunbathing chair. I couldn’t blame the boys for gawking because I couldn’t look away either as she stretched her gorgeous, lean body. She was a vision with her long, golden hair; perfect, pouty lips; and lovely, tan legs peeking out of her barely-there sarong. Her voluptuous, perky breasts were covered by the tiniest red triangles that I had ever seen claim to be a bikini top.

As she walked towards us, all three of us were openly staring. She must have been used to such attention because she didn’t seem to notice as she placed an arm possessively on Sam and whined, “When will the servants bring the food? I’m starving.” I cringed inwardly at her condescending choice of the word ‘servants.’

“Soon, Baby.” He soothed her with a kiss on the cheek then introduced us to Jenni. I tried to ignore the twinge of jealousy in my gut by telling myself silently that I was just envious of her astounding good looks.

Jessie rejoined us, indicating that Grandpa had taken Katie for a walk down to the pier. She greeted Jenni with an obvious lack of enthusiasm, and I was surprised by her near-rudeness.

The surprise wore off when Jenni spoke next. She turned to Seth and told him that he was just as handsome as ‘her Sam.’ He smiled politely, but didn’t respond. Unfazed, she continued. “I’ve never been with twins before, but I have enough holes to entertain you both. You would never forget the experience.”

I was completely astounded. I had never heard anyone say anything so outrageous, especially to someone she had just met. I was also a little hurt that she would say this right in front of me, as if I didn’t even exist. I did feel invisible next to her radiant beauty, but there was no reason for her to openly come on to Seth with me standing right there.

The three siblings all looked as taken aback by the brash statement as I felt. Jenni giggled, then added, “Another time, then. Come on, Babe,” she said to Sam. “Let’s go crack the whip on this incompetent wait staff.”

“That will be the end of her.” Jessie shook her head after they walked away. “Did you see the look on Sam’s face? I’m surprised he didn’t ask her to leave right then.”

Seth said, “I can’t escape the mental image of being with her while my brother fills another of her holes.” He gave an exaggerated shiver of disgust. It was just the comic relief we needed, and the three of us started laughing uncontrollably.

Chapter 16

The brunch was going well after our hysterics calmed down from Jenni's scandalous and outlandish comment. She and Sam were seated at the far end of the table from Seth and me, so I pointedly ignored them. I was a firm believer that women need to stick together, but this chick had seriously crossed the line.

The conversation became boisterous as Seth and Sam got into a competition of one-upmanship. For each story that Seth told, Sam told one that was a little bigger and better. They both looked so handsome as they tried to top each other with their tall tales. We all laughed as the tone of the game switched and they started telling stories on each other.

We heard about the time in high school when Sam yanked down Seth's shorts and shoved him in the girls' locker room. "Joke was on you," Seth taunted him, "because seeing me naked is just like seeing you naked." I shifted in my chair, trying not to think about that.

"It must not be exactly the same, or I wouldn't bag all of the hottest babes," Sam quipped, making Jenni preen. His mother inhaled a sharp breath, shocked by his words. "With the exception of one, apparently." He turned and looked directly at me. I could feel my cheeks burning red as the whole group turned their eyes towards me.

Seth narrowed his eyes, clearly not liking where his brother had taken things. "No matter what you win, you'll never be older."

"You always make sure it comes back to that, don't you?" Sam sat back in his chair looking annoyed that Seth had brought up their miniscule age difference.

"Boys." Their father's deep voice made the simple word a warning.

Seth lightened the mood by saying, "No, what it comes back to is that you saved my life, and I wouldn't be here if it weren't for you." He held up his glass and said sincerely, "Here's to Sam, my hero."

“Here, here.” The group clinked glasses and the merriment of the day resumed, but my eyes were drawn to Sam. His gorgeous, green eyes had taken on a dark look, and I wondered why. He caught me looking and raised his glass towards me, but his smile didn’t reach his haunted eyes.

After eating more fantastic food than I remember ever ingesting in any three full days, I excused myself from the table to go find the bathroom. The pool house was larger than most people’s homes, so once I was finished in the powder room, I decided to have a look around. The décor was island-y and comfortable with a plethora of wicker and Bahamian artwork. It was the kind of place where you could plop down with a good book and take a nap.

I was studying a family portrait from when the boys were toddlers, when I felt him come in. It was so strange how my senses of sight and hearing took a backseat to some sixth sense of heightened awareness where Sam was concerned.

He looked so handsome standing in the tall archway of the entrance. *Just like Seth*, I reminded myself, annoyed that I was so drawn to Sam. I couldn’t make myself stop looking at him as he sauntered over. “Can you tell us apart?” he asked, leaning over me. I could feel his hot breath on my ear, and it made me tingly.

“You’re the one on the left,” I responded confidently. My voice sounded remarkably calm, considering the visceral reaction my body was experiencing from having him so near.

“Impressive.” He seemed surprised that I had been able to determine which one he was in the photograph. “Or was it just a lucky guess?”

“I knew it was you.” I didn’t offer further explanation.

“We confused caretakers and teachers for years. Hell, half the time our family couldn’t tell us apart. So, Miss Brown, do tell how you were able to know me from my brother.”

I pointed to his face in the photo. “It’s something about your smile. You

have a slightly crooked grin. Seth's is perfectly straight."

"Oh, I should have known you'd find a physical flaw in me that perfect Seth, my *identical* twin doesn't share."

"It's not a flaw, necessarily. Some people might find a slightly crooked smile to be attractive," I told him honestly.

"Do you find it attractive?" He grinned at me.

"There it is now." I pointed at his mouth, trying to avoid answering his question.

He took my silence about it as an affirmation and started chanting and dancing around the room, "Abby thinks my crooked smile is hot. H-O-T. Hot." The last word was whispered in extremely close proximity to my ear, and it sent a chill down my spine.

I forced myself to glare in his direction and say, "You're such a child." Despite my words, I couldn't tear my eyes away from him. When I looked at him, all I could think of was mounting him and riding him to completion. My mouth fell open as I visualized myself climbing on top of him and taking his thick cock deep inside me. I knew his dick was huge because I had felt it pressing urgently into my back in the restroom at the museum. Besides, he was sure to be impressively hung, since Seth was. Realization dawned on me then that I technically knew what Sam looked like naked. The mental image surfaced and made me damp. Sam's eyes travelled to my mouth and stayed there as I nervously licked my lips.

We stood there, eyes locked, for several seconds. I hoped that he couldn't sense the horny turn that my thoughts had taken, even though he had to feel the sexual tension that was zinging between us. Finally, he spoke. "Sorry, I didn't mean to bother you." Then he turned and darted outside.

I leaned back against the wall and released the breath that I didn't realize I had been holding. *What the hell is wrong with me?* I wondered, placing a cool hand on my forehead. *I have finally found a handsome, sweet, wonderful man, and I have the hots for his pig of a brother.*

It has to just be his similarities to Seth, I told myself. *Seth is so perfect, and Sam looks just like him. Of course it's confusing. Even the chickipoo that looks like a Barbie doll out there is attracted to both of them.* I snorted, remembering just how attracted and willing she was. At least I wasn't that bad.

I took a few deep, calming breaths. It all made sense when I thought it through. They were both physically attractive. Scratch that, they were both physically perfect. Seth was the one who was sweet, funny, kind, and thoughtful, though. He was the one I cared about, not Sam.

The reaction I had to Sam was purely physical, and I had a strong physical reaction to Seth as well. Beyond the physical, though, I had real feelings for Seth.

Feeling renewed, I went back outside. I found Seth, and we walked down the path to the bluff overlooking the lake and marina. Seth stood behind me with his strong arms wrapped around me. I felt safe and happy in his embrace, and I staunchly ignored the tingling feeling deep down in the pit of my stomach that told me Sam was watching us.

Chapter 17

It was still early afternoon when we left the party. I had a few hours before girls' night with Courtney would begin, so I wanted to spend that time with Seth. I'd been dying to see the pole barn where he builds his boats, so I asked him to take me there.

He seemed surprised, but delighted by the request. We drove there in silence, holding hands. Seth would occasionally look over and smile at me, and I would grin back at him, perfectly content.

The building was even bigger than it had looked from Seth's camper. I don't know what I had been expecting to see, but it wasn't what I found when we entered the huge structure.

The enormous wooden boat in the center of the room was breathtaking. I stared at it in awe that Seth was able to build something so impressive. I had imagined that he made canoe-like boats, not anything as grand as this behemoth.

The building was pristine, with a freshly swept floor and each tool in its spot. It was clear from looking around that Seth took great care and pride in his work, and he had every reason to.

"This is amazing!" I exclaimed, walking around the stern. "I had no idea."

He looked truly happy at my compliment. "Did you think I spent my time making makeshift skiffs?"

"No, but I had no idea how grand your boats are. May I?" I asked, indicating the ladder that led up to the hull.

"Of course, but she's not finished," he replied. I had already kicked off my jeweled sandals and scrambled up, so he followed me.

I smoothed my hand along the glossy side of the vessel. "People must be lined up wanting to purchase one of your boats."

“There is a bit of a waiting list.” He looked down, seeming slightly embarrassed.

I sensed there was more, so I asked, “How long is a bit?”

“About two years.” He beamed at me, and his beautiful, perfectly straight smile nearly knocked me on my butt. He went on, “But I don’t compromise quality. If people want one of my boats, then they have to wait for it.”

“I bet they do, too.” I grinned back at him.

He nodded. “I’ve had people try to bribe me to rush or to go to the front of the line, but I don’t want any part of that. It wouldn’t be fair to the people who have waited.”

This man was good, solid, kind, fair, gorgeous, smart, and sweet, and I wanted him in the worst way. I tried to put on my sexy voice as I said huskily, “This boat needs to be broken in.”

“She’s not quite ready to put in the water,” he answered, misunderstanding my meaning.

I decided that I would have to be more direct, so I removed my wide belt and unzipped the floral dress that I had borrowed from Courtney. My breasts had been straining for freedom all day, and they spilled out as the dress pooled at my bare feet. I slipped out of my panties and laid back on the long bow, offering my naked body to Seth.

He licked his lips and then sprang into action. He quickly ripped the golf shirt over his head. In one smooth move, he shed himself of his khakis and boxers. Then he joined me on the ship’s bow. We ran our hands over each other as our tongues tangled. I was almost manic in my hunger for him.

We melted together, our bodies completely entwined. He was hard, pressing into my belly. It wasn’t nearly enough, so I reached my hand down between us and guided him to me. He groaned as he slid inside me.

I left my hand between us, touching us both as he pumped over me. My other hand reached around to grab his ass, pulling him into me harder.

I cried out as I came. Pleasure pulsed through me. As I squeezed, Seth buried his head into my shoulder. His thrusts quickened until he released with a loud groan.

We stayed that way for a while. Seth was still inside me as I rubbed a hand lightly over his back. “You’re amazing,” he said, nuzzling into my neck.

I was happy. There was no other word for it. I didn’t recall ever having felt so complete, so satisfied. “I love you.” The words bubbled out before I had a chance to think through voicing them out loud.

Seth stiffened, and I immediately regretted saying it. He stayed frozen for a while, but I felt him emotionally disconnect. Then he slipped out of me and said, “We should probably get going. You don’t want to be late for girls’ night.” He grabbed his clothes and went down the ladder.

I had a burning lump in my throat. I felt like crying, but was afraid I wouldn’t be able to stop, once I started. *How could I have proclaimed my love so soon?*

I sat there for a while, stunned, and then I slowly put on my clothes and went to find Seth. He was sitting in the Jeep waiting for me. We didn’t talk the whole way back to my house. When we arrived, he turned to me and said a brisk, “Take care.”

I couldn’t even respond. I nodded and quickly exited his vehicle, focusing on not allowing the tears to start flowing. As I walked up the sidewalk to my front door, a sob escaped, but I didn’t have to worry about him hearing it because he was already backing out of my driveway.

Chapter 18

“How could I have said something so stupid?” I asked, plunking my head down on the table for the umpteenth time.

“Telling someone that you love them isn’t stupid.” Courtney defended me, as she always did.

“It sure feels that way. What if I scared him off? What if he doesn’t want to see me again?” I moaned as I checked my phone again, sighing at its blank face staring back at me, mocking me.

“If those three little words scared him off, then he doesn’t deserve you, anyway.” At my sad look, Courtney grabbed my hand and continued. “Stop worrying. He’ll call. You just took him by surprise. That’s all.”

Joe stopped by the table with our tacos, and I suddenly wondered why he always waited on us, rather than having one of the waitresses serve our table. Maybe there was something to this Courtney and Joe idea that Seth had suggested.

I decided that thinking about the possibility of the two of them hooking up would help keep my mind off Seth for a while, so I dipped my toe in the water. “Joe looks especially hot tonight.” I waggled my eyebrows playfully at her.

He did look rather handsome, with his unkempt, surfer-dude look. Court responded to my prompt with a non-committal “Mmmhmm.” So I pushed on.

“He has his own business, he’s kind, he’s smart, he’s funny, and he’s crazy about you, Court. A girl could do a lot worse.”

“Did he ask you to talk to me?” Her face crumpled as she said it. “I told him to let it go.” As she slid out of the booth, she added, “It will never work out, so just drop it. I need a tissue. I’ll be right back.”

I was shocked that Courtney and Joe had talked about the possibility of a relationship and was slightly hurt that Court hadn't mentioned it to me. *How could she think of herself as unworthy of being happy? What kind of demons was she carrying around with her*?

When she returned to our table, I weighed my words carefully before saying, "Sweetie, I don't care if you want to be with Joe, or with someone else, or with no one. I just want you to be happy." She smiled, so I continued, "You are a wonderful person, and you deserve happiness. I hope that you are able to find peace with yourself because you shouldn't be carrying this heavy burden. If you aren't able to talk to me about it, maybe we should get you an appointment with a professional."

"A shrink?" Courtney snorted. "Been there, done that. It didn't work for me." At my concerned look, she continued, "I'll be fine. I just have some things from my past that I'm not proud of. I need to work through them in my own way and in my own time."

"In other words, you want me to butt-out." I smiled to let her know I wasn't angry. "You take your time. I'm always here for you if you need anything. You know that, right?"

"Same goes for you, Sister. Hug it out?" Court stood and extended her arms to me.

"That is soooo hot, but a kiss would really seal the deal for me," Joe said near our ears as we hugged, ending the sweet moment. Court balled her napkin and threw it at him as he swaggered away with a big smile on his face. I shook my head with an exasperated, "Men!"

Chapter 19

I was at work. It was Thursday, and I hadn't heard from Seth since letting the dreaded three-word salute fly on Sunday. I checked my cell phone again. Nothing.

I had started to text him more times than I could count. I had pulled him up in my contacts to call him numerous times, as well. Each time I chickened out, wondering why he hadn't contacted me.

I pulled my phone out again, and then I put it back in my pocket with a sigh. "Oh for Peter's sake," Annie shook her head, "just text him."

I had been around Annie so much that I barely noticed anymore how she butchered idioms. She looked like she was completely exasperated with me. "Give me the phone," she glowered, holding out her hand.

I tried ignoring her, but she shook her hand, indicating she meant business. I tentatively moved it towards her. She snatched it up and quickly typed a message. "There, let the chocolate chips fall where they may," she said handing the phone back to me.

I looked at the words she had texted to Seth from my phone. '*I'm off tomorrow. Want to go on a picnic?*'

"I'm not off tomorrow, Annie."

"You are now. I'm sick of looking at your gloomy mug of root beer." I tilted my head at that one, but she continued on. "Get out of here and go fix yourself up. You look like a ragamuffin. Relax in a nice, warm bath, or take a yoga class or something." She placed a hand on my shoulder and gently pushed me toward the door, accentuating her point.

From anyone else, her brutal honesty might have hurt my feelings, but I knew Annie loved me unconditionally and had my best interest at heart. So, I followed her not-so-gentle nudge and waved behind my head as she yelled after me, "Don't worry. He will call, or he'll have me to deal with."

I smiled at the thought of the tiny firecracker that was Annie trying to take on big, strong Seth. He probably wouldn't know what hit him if she shook her finger at him and defended me with her characteristic, nonsensical zingers.

When I got home, I took Annie's advice and pampered myself a little. I put my cell phone on silent and hid it in a drawer, so that I wouldn't be tempted to check it compulsively. Then I relaxed in my sudsy tub, letting the jets massage my achy body for nearly an hour. After that, I slathered myself with the thick, body cream that I save for special occasions.

I went to Courtney's room for nail polish and beat Tab to the punch by hissing at her when she glared at me from Court's bed. I settled on deep blue for my toenails and seashell pink for my fingernails. Once my fresh mani and pedi were dry, I glared at the drawer with the cell phone in it.

Surely he had called or texted me back, right? It would be rude not to. But what if he hadn't? I was almost scared to look, but knew that I needed to. "Here goes nothing," I muttered as I blew out a breath and looked at the phone. Nothing.

I plopped down on the floor as the tears started to roll down my cheeks. I tried to think of any other logical explanation for why he wouldn't have contacted me. I knew that if he was sick or had been injured, his family would have contacted me. I wondered if maybe he had lost his cell phone with my contact number, and almost became hopeful, but there had been plenty of time for him to stop by to let me know.

I devised numerous scenarios to try to come up with a valid excuse for his silence, but shot each one down. I didn't want to admit what I knew the truth to be. I was being blown off. That was the plain and simple explanation, but it hurt like hell to face it, especially knowing that it was completely my fault for saying too much, too fast.

A sob escaped my throat as I curled into the fetal position on the floor, devastated. I fell asleep that way and didn't wake until morning. My body was sore and my eyes felt like they'd been rubbed with sandpaper. I stretched and scowled at my cell phone.

I hadn’t turned it off silent mode, so maybe I had missed something. I couldn’t keep the hope at bay, even though I knew it would be in my own best interest. I took a deep breath and pushed the button. Nothing. It was like having my heart ripped out.

I knew that I should enjoy my day off, but I just didn’t feel like doing anything. I climbed up on my bed and went back to sleep. Courtney’s knock aroused me from a deep sleep. She entered my room with a tray of food. I rolled away from her and tried to re-enter the sweet oblivion of sleep. “You need to try to eat something.” Her voice was filled with concern, but I steadfastly ignored her, and she left me alone.

I slept and slept until I had no concept of what time it was. The next time Courtney knocked on the door, she came in and sat on the edge of my bed. She saw the untouched tray of food and chastised me. “Ab, you didn’t eat any of this.” I didn’t respond, so she tried a different tact. “Time to get up. You need to get ready for work.”

“I’m off,” I grumbled at her.

“I talked to Annie and she told me she gave you yesterday off,” she responded. “Today is Saturday, and it is time to rise and shine.”

I was shocked that I had slept through an entire day, but I didn’t have any desire to get up. “Call Annie and tell her I’m not coming in today.”

“You never call in sick.” Her eyes were filled with concern.

I didn’t want her or Annie to worry, so I said, “I just need some more time, Court. Tomorrow is Sunday, and the shop is closed. I’ll be back to my mean-old self by Monday, I promise.” I made an effort to smile at her, but ended up just wincing. I hoped that I would be able keep my promise to her, but it didn’t feel possible.

After she left, I went back to sleep. It was the only place where the weight of sadness didn’t feel like it was crushing the breath out of me. Even my dreams were troubled though, and I awoke in the dark, covered in sweat.

I tried to sleep more, but my stomach was rumbling. I rolled over and grabbed a couple of stale potato chips from the tray Courtney had left, then I took a few sips of water and sat up.

My cell phone was sitting on the table, mocking me. Court had plugged it into the charger for me. I vowed not to get my hopes up, even as I felt my heart rate increasing when I reached for it. I cringed as I pushed the button. Nothing.

I curled back up on my bed and pulled the covers over my head, seeking oblivion.

When I awoke again, it was daylight, and I was starving. *Life has to go on*, I reasoned with myself. So, I got up, threw the duvet over my bed, picked up the tray of leftover food and went downstairs to make some breakfast and try to get over Seth Davis.

Chapter 20

I was showered and somewhat presentable when it was time to go meet Courtney at Joe's for girls' night, and I had transformed from being desperately sad to totally pissed. *How could he not at least give me some closure??*

Being angry was probably overkill because Court was mad enough for both of us. "What an ass!" she grouched as soon as I joined her at our booth. "Give me your phone. I'm going to call and give him a piece of my mind."

I tucked my phone deeper into my purse, determined to guard it from her reach. "I'll call him later," I promised her. "I deserve better than being ignored."

"Hell, yeah!" she agreed. "If he wants to stop seeing you, then he needs to at least have the balls to say so."

"Talking balls tonight, ladies?" Neither of us had heard Joe approach the table. He seemed to have a knack for sneaking up on us and hearing key phrases.

"Yes, we are, and I'd like to have a pair on a platter." Court crossed her arms angrily as Joe visibly winced and took an exaggerated step back.

"I think I'll keep mine at a safe distance, then. I'll bring you the usual."

We laughed as he pretended to place a protective hand over his nether region and turned to flee. "I can't even imagine all of the crazy topics he has overheard us discussing at this table every week." I shook my head.

Court laughed in agreement and started listing some, "Tampons, sex toys, purses, bubble butts, shoes, boobs."

When she paused, I listed a few. "Don't forget about waxing, plucking, trimming, manscaping. And those are all just about pubic hair!" By this

time we were both cracking up with laughter.

When our giggles subsided, I turned serious. “My non-existent sex life and my brief, but fantastic sex life, which I seem to have ruined with my big mouth.”

Court looked down as she added, “My way too promiscuous sex life.”

“Nothing scares Joe off, though.” I reached for Court’s hand. “I think he’s one of the good ones.”

“Too good.” She nodded with tears in her eyes.

“Oh, rubbish!” I declared in my best English accent, and we both dissolved into hysterics again.

Chapter 21

When we finished off our margarita pitcher, I told Court I wanted to walk along the water for a while, rather than ride home with her. She looked concerned that I was going to slip back into depression mode, so I reassured her with a hug. “I just want some alone time, so I can work up the nerve to call him to get some much-needed closure.”

She still looked skeptical, so I added, “I’m okay. I promise.”

I must have seemed sincere because she hugged me, whispered the words “Love you,” and jogged off to hop into her beat-up, little car.

I moseyed along the beach until I found a good rock to sit on. I stared at my phone for a long while and finally decided that I just needed to get it over with. Without knowing exactly what I was going to say, I pushed the button to dial Seth before I could chicken out.

It rang several times before his voicemail picked up. *He’s probably screening his calls, and I didn’t make the cut*. After the beep, I almost hung up, but I knew that I needed to get this out.

“Hi Seth, it’s me. Um, Abby,” I stammered. This wasn’t sounding at all like I had hoped it would. I wanted to come off as confident and perturbed, so I changed my tone. “Listen,” I commanded, sounding much more forceful. “It has become obvious that you don’t want to see me anymore. You should have just told me, instead of keeping me waiting and wondering. I deserve better.”

With that, I hit the *End Call* button without saying goodbye, let’s stay friends, or kiss my ass. Overall, it was a pretty good message. Watching the phone shake in my hand, I was grateful that my voice hadn’t betrayed my nervousness.

I decided to go for a long, cleansing walk. The shoreline was beautiful in the twilight, and I took deep, long breaths of the detoxifying fresh air.

I don’t know how long I walked, but I made it to a section of the sandy beach that I was not familiar with. When I noticed the long trail of boulders leading out into the lake, I couldn’t resist exploring it. The wet stones were slippery, so I made my way carefully. The rock path jutted way out into the water.

When I reached the end, I turned to look at the beach. With the water splashing up over the rocks, it almost felt as if I were standing out in the middle of the lake. I turned a slow circle, admiring the view from all angles.

That’s when I saw the house on the cliff. It blended so well with the scenery that I hadn’t noticed it before. I craned my neck to get a better view of the beautiful, gravity-defying stone and slate structure that seemed to be impossibly placed, hanging out over the water.

It was an amazing house and I wondered briefly if the owners would mind if I took a closer look. I didn’t see any lights, but it was so secluded that I was apprehensive about approaching.

Just then, a big wave crashed over the boulder I was standing on and knocked me sideways. As I fell, my ankle twisted painfully. I went completely under in the frigid water and surfaced spluttering, cold, mad, and with a searing pain in my ankle.

I managed to climb back up onto the slick rock and lay down. When I looked at the sky, I realized why the waves were kicking up. A huge storm was rolling in.

“Great,” I muttered as I tried to stand up. I wasn’t able to put any weight on my injured ankle, so I tried hopping on one leg. I realized the rocks were too slippery for that when I almost slid in again.

I sat down and reached for my cell phone. It was waterlogged and completely dead. *Guess I should have sprang for the expensive, waterproof case,* I chastised myself.

I looked around, considering my options. Realizing there weren’t many, I started scooting on my butt towards the shore. After what seemed like an

eternity, I looked up, only to see that I didn't appear to be much closer to land than when I had started. I was cold, and frustrated, and my ankle hurt. I just wanted to go home and relax by the warm fireplace, but it didn't appear that I would be doing that any time soon.

The closest house was the one on the cliff, but I had no way to climb up there. My ass would be raw if I tried to scoot all the way there, and the rocks were too slippery to try to hop on one foot. I really wasn't sure what to do. When the rain started, my tears started as well. It was just too much.

When I saw the big, black head, my self-pity quickly turned to panic-stricken fear. I wasn't sure what kind of animal it was from this distance, but I could tell that it was huge, and it appeared to be looking in my direction. We stared at each other for what seemed like a long time as I tried to figure out what it was.

Do we have black bears in this part of Michigan? I wondered. My second guess was a wolf. I really didn't want to come face to face with either of those animals, especially in my injured state.

Suddenly, it began to run towards me. Fear took my breath away until it got closer, and I could see that its tail was wagging. *A dog? This huge monster is a dog?* Relief flooded over me, but I almost couldn't believe it because I had never seen a dog of this magnitude. It appeared to be some sort of black lab on steroids.

By the time it reached me, I could tell by its body language that it was friendly. It plopped its big butt down right next to me and began licking my face. "Stop that!" I turned away, but the silly animal was adamant.

I laughed and started scratching its ears and chest. We were getting along quite well, until I saw the figure of the man standing at the edge of the lake looking at us. By now the rain and wind had kicked up enough that I was having trouble deciphering if he had a friendly stance.

At this point, he was my only option, so I lifted a hand to wave. He didn't wave back. Instead, he started walking towards us. I wondered briefly if the dog would protect me from an attacker, but then I saw it's purple

collar and realized the dog was probably the man's pet.

As he stalked closer, I tried to determine if he was a threat. His hooded, yellow rain slicker obscured his face, but I could see by his walk that he was angry. When he came closer still, recognition began to set in. "Seth?" I didn't understand how he had found me or why.

The glare he gave me could have frozen hot coffee. His voice oozed annoyance as he replied with an adamant, "No."

Chapter 22

Sam. My body was having its usual reaction to his nearness, but I had chalked it up to fear. My breath had quickened noticeably, so I attempted to slow it.

“What the hell are you thinking?” The level of anger in his voice shocked me, and I reared back as if I’d been slapped.

What right did he have to be mad at me? “I’m thinking that I’m cold, wet, and injured; and the last person I want to see right now is you,” I snapped. It was probably a little harsh, but his unjust irritation with me had set me off.

“Well then, I guess I’ll leave you alone.” He turned to make his way back along the boulder path to the shore. The giant, black dog gave me a bewildered tilt of its head before turning to follow its master.

He’s bluffing. I told myself as Sam continued to walk away. *He wouldn’t really leave me stranded out here, would he?* I began to think he might do just that when he reached the beach and continued on without so much as a backward glance at me.

I was stubborn and pissed off, but I wasn’t stupid. I didn’t want to take my chances out here alone and Sam was quickly moving out of earshot. I cupped my hands and yelled, “Wait!” in his direction. He stopped, but didn’t turn. “May I use your phone to call for help?”

He shook his head as if trying to talk himself out of something, and I began to wonder if he really was going to leave me out here. The rain had begun coming down in sheets, and I was already soaked to the bone. Finally, he turned and walked back down the boulder path to me. The black dog followed a couple of paces behind him.

When he reached me, he just stood there looking down at me. I reached my hand up and said simply, “Phone, please?”

“I don’t have my cell with me. Where are you injured?”

I raised my affected ankle to show him. It was already swollen to twice its normal size. “Jeez, Ab,” was all he said before removing his parka and zipping me into it.

I was basking in the familiarity of the nickname when he wrapped his hands around my waist as if to pick me up. “Whoa! What are you doing?” I demanded.

“I’m carrying you to safety. You can’t walk on that ankle.” At my frustrated look, he asked, “How would you propose that we proceed?”

I rather liked his idea, but I wasn’t about to admit that. “I was thinking you could call someone for me when you get to a phone,” I answered.

“You want to sit out here freezing in the pouring rain, rather than go with me?” I could tell he was completely exasperated with me. “Fine, have it your way,” he turned before continuing, “I’ll go call my brother and have him come rescue you.”

Shit! I can’t have him call Seth, only to be told that he’s actively avoiding me. How humiliating. “No, will you call my friend Courtney?”

I had barely rattled off her number before he turned, muttering, “Screw this.” He hauled me up over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes. I had never been manhandled like this, and I smacked at him hard. I whacked the only part of him that I could reach and was rewarded with a handful of his firm, mouth-watering ass.

“You like it dirty, huh?” he growled back at me. “I can be a bad boy.” I was sure that he could, and I tried not to picture him being bad, very bad, with me. I couldn’t seem to stop the images from popping into my head, and they were hot.

I was on the verge of struggling for freedom when I decided that this was probably the best-case scenario for my situation. I’d let him carry me to a phone, then thank him and send him on his way.

My body had almost relaxed when I felt him start climbing. “Where are we going?”

“To my house,” he answered, pointing up to the amazing house on the cliff. The dark, angular house suited him perfectly.

“You can’t carry me up this incline. I’m too heavy,” I protested.

His pace didn’t slow as he answered me only with a quick sigh. Rather than fight with him, I watched the big dog loping along behind us as we made our ascent.

He wasn’t even breathing hard when we reached the front porch. I looked at the glider and matching rocking chairs and imagined what a fantastic place this would be to spend an afternoon reading and watching the lake.

He pushed the unlocked front door open and carried me inside and up a set of stairs. “Um, you can set me down now.”

He ignored me and continued on to a huge bathroom. He used a foot to flick the lid closed and plopped me down on the toilet. “I don’t really have to go right now,” I told him as he continued ignoring me and started the tap on the biggest sunken garden tub I had ever seen. He went to a cabinet and retrieved a giant bottle of bubble bath and a couple of fluffy, light blue towels.

I enjoyed watching him move. He was sleek and graceful, and I wondered what he was up to. He took one of the towels and placed it at the back of the tub for a headrest. Then he went back to the tap to test the stream of water and adjusted the temperature before dumping a generous dollop of bubbles into the water. He used a long, tan hand to swirl the concoction around. The scent of the bubble bath was heavenly.

Once he was satisfied, he turned and caught me staring. I looked away quickly and saw that the dog was sitting nearby watching his every move, as well.

“Do you need help getting undressed and into the tub?” he asked me.

All of this was for me? Wow. “I think I can manage,” I responded.

“Happy to help,” he responded with a knowing smile, the first remotely friendly look he’d given me all evening. I shook my head, so he headed for the door saying, “Come on, Miss Dixie. I guess we aren’t needed here.”

I snorted with laughter. He slowly turned to look at me with a questioning raised eyebrow. “That behemoth’s name is Miss Dixie?” I couldn’t help it, the giggles bubbled out.

“Spanking me and laughing at my dog’s name?” he cocked an eyebrow at me. “I might just have to get even with you later,” he promised before slipping out the door with Miss Dixie hot on his heels. She was probably relieved the bath wasn’t for her.

I wondered what he meant by getting even with me later. *Was it a sexual innuendo*? *You wish*, I laughed at myself. I couldn’t get a clear read on him. He probably flirted with everyone that way. He was a lady-killer. Besides, I had been with his twin brother.

I peeled off my wet clothes, hopped on my good foot over to the tub, and sighed as I sank into the warm, soothing bath. It felt like heaven and was just what my tired, sore body needed.

Chapter 23

I was so warm and relaxed that his soft knock on the door startled me. “Umm. I’m still in the tub.”

He opened the door but didn’t cross the threshold. I quickly moved to make sure the bubbles were covering all of my important parts and was relieved to find that they were. “What are you doing?” I asked, annoyed that he had opened the door when he knew I was naked in here.

“I brought you some clean clothes.” He held up some neatly folded black sweats to emphasize his point. “Your clothes are soaked. I can come back with these dry ones later, when you are standing there with just a towel to cover your wet, naked skin, if you like?”

My whole body tingled when he said the words ‘wet, naked skin.’ “No, just leave them over there, please.” I pointed to the antique dresser where he had retrieved the towels and bubble bath.

He pointedly ignored me, setting the clothes next to the sink and then walking over to sit on the floor beside the tub. I was unnerved by his nearness and overly aware of my nudity. “You can’t stay in here,” my voice sounded shrill.

“Sure I can. Besides, your girly bits are covered, and I won’t climb in there unless you want me to.”

I snorted with laughter at his reference to my girly bits, surprised by his word choice. He leaned his head on the tub and smiled at me. I felt my traitorous nipples pucker into hard nubs and looked down to verify once again that they were covered.

I needed to put some distance between us, so I said, “Would you please bring me the phone, so I can give Courtney a call as soon as I get out of the tub?”

“Already done,” he responded.

I was pleasantly surprised that he had listened and remembered the number, but that quickly wore off when he continued. “I told her you would be spending the night here, and that I would drive you home in the morning.”

“Absolutely not!” In my alarm, I started to sit up, but promptly remembered my state of undress and hunkered back under the water. A mental image of spending a hot, sweaty night rolling around in Sam’s bed flashed through my mind. I fought to suppress it as I added adamantly, “I will not be spending the night here with you.”

“You are as stubborn as a mule, Woman.” He shook his head at me. “You saw the storm rolling in out there. The road to town from here isn’t great in the best of conditions. It’s certainly not safe to drive it tonight.” As if to prove his point, lightening flashed and thunder boomed, shaking the whole house.

“You are my brother’s girlfriend, and I won’t touch you,” he reassured me, as I attempted to ignore the sinking feeling in my stomach. “No matter how much I want to,” he said so quietly I wasn’t sure if he had actually uttered the words, or if I had imagined them.

He feels it too! I was elated and confused. I didn’t want to like him. I didn’t want to crave him with every fiber of my being. I didn’t want him to want me and, at the same time, I wanted him to want me like no other. None of it made any sense.

We dropped the subject of where I was staying tonight, knowing that I didn’t have a valid argument, and that it was settled. My body felt electrified by his nearness. I didn’t know how I would survive an entire night in the same house with him, especially if he felt remotely the same way I did. I would just have to make sure we stayed as far apart as possible.

Chapter 24

Staying far from him was not going to be an easy task, especially considering he had made himself comfortable right next to the tub where I was currently soaking, completely naked. My body was achingly aware of his proximity, and my mind worked furiously to devise a reason why he needed to leave the bathroom.

I finally decided on, “Please excuse me, the water has gone lukewarm, so I’d like to get out of the tub.”

I was appalled when he reached down between my feet and pulled the drain up. “What are you doing?” I spluttered, panicked. I tried to scoot my body down to reach the plug without raising up to expose myself, but my arms weren’t quite long enough. “This sudsy water is the only thing that is covering me.”

“Believe me, I know.” He chuckled, obviously enjoying himself. He reached up to turn on the tap, tested the running water and adjusted it to his liking, then dropped his hand into the water and retrieved my foot.

He began rubbing my heel, so I jerked it away from him. “You are supposed to be relaxing,” he reminded me as he grabbed my foot again and set it on the edge of the tub. I wanted to protest more, but when he started circling his thumb from my heel up over the arch, I decided to let my defenses down and enjoy it for a minute.

I eased further down into the tub and let the relaxation wash over me. Despite my sore ankle, this was the best I had felt since I had last seen Seth.

As if sensing the change in direction of my thoughts, Sam said, “So, what’s up with you and my brother?”

“What do you mean?” I stalled for time, not wanting to admit that whatever was between Seth and I was over.

“Well, for starters, he showed up at our family brunch without you today.” I felt like I had been punched in the gut at this confirmation that Seth was alive and well and just avoiding me, but I tried not to let it show on my face. I had been hoping that there was some other logical explanation, even though I hadn’t been able to think of one.

Sam didn’t seem to notice my inner turmoil as he continued on. “And since you would rather spend time with the twin that you hate than to have me call him, I’m guessing that there’s trouble in paradise.”

“I don’t hate you,” I answered automatically. He raised his eyebrows, waiting for my response about Seth. I struggled to find the right words, and finally settled on, “We’re taking a break.”

I didn’t miss the sparkle that lit Sam’s eyes before he was able to mask it. “Hmmm,” he murmured noncommittally.

I was glad that he didn’t question me further and decided to use the opportunity to question him a little. “Enough about me, what’s with you and the ‘I’ girls?”

“Whatever do you mean?” He smiled and batted his dark lashes, letting me know that he knew exactly what I meant. He lowered the foot he’d been rubbing and gingerly lifted the injured one to give it the same treatment before continuing. “They serve two purposes. They look good on my arm and they feel good in my bed.”

I was surprised and rather taken aback by his blatant honesty. “So, women are just playthings to you, meant to be shown off and used, then tossed aside?”

He stopped rubbing as he looked directly in my eyes to answer. “Make no mistake. They are using me every bit as much as I am using them. They know exactly what they are getting into. I make no pretenses about it.”

“And that makes it okay?” I wondered aloud. “So, that’s why you never kiss them on the lips? You don’t want to give them any false hopes?”

If he was surprised that I knew this little tidbit of information about him,

he hid it well. “It’s something like that, I guess. I don’t want anyone getting too attached.” I wondered if he was referring to the never-ending parade of women or himself.

The discussion had taken a serious turn. He still had my foot in his hands, but his fingers had stilled. I gently nudged him with my foot, and he smiled as he resumed the fabulous, relaxing massage.

“It’s a good thing you picked Seth,” he said somberly. I hadn’t even met Sam when Seth and I started dating, so I didn’t really have a choice, but I wasn’t about to point that out to him.

When he continued, his words surprised me. “Sometimes I think I’m the evil twin.” This uber-confident, stubborn man was opening up to me about his insecurities. I wanted to proceed carefully, lest he clam up or, worse yet, put up his overbearing, obnoxious façade.

“I wouldn’t say you’re evil.” At his grin, I decided to tone it down a little, “Ornery, and vain, and annoying, but not evil.” I smiled to let him know I wasn’t being too serious.

“Ornery, vain, and annoying – yep, that pretty much sums me up. I need to write a theme song.” He gently laid my foot in the water, turned off the tap, restored the drain plug and situated himself beside me at the head of the bathtub. I lowered myself further into the water. I felt as relaxed as a bowl of noodles, with the exception of my heart, which was about ready to beat out my chest, as it always did when Sam was near.

I had sensed the return of his façade, so I shifted the conversation. “Why would you think you are the evil twin?”

“Because Seth is so good, and I am so bad.” His answer was simple.

“Seth wouldn’t agree with that. He was quick to tell me that he wouldn’t be alive, if it weren’t for you and your ‘twin sense.’”

“Well, what he doesn’t know, what no one knows, is that I hesitated that day out on the boat.” He peered up at me from lowered lids as if concerned that I would be shocked by his confession. I wasn’t sure what

to say, so I waited for him to continue.

I didn’t have to wait long. “Seth was born first, and ever since, I have been trying to catch up with him. He’s always been a little faster, a little smarter, and a little better at everything. The really annoying part is that he doesn’t even try. He doesn’t have a competitive bone in his body and couldn’t care less if he wins, but somehow he always comes out on top. I try not to let it bother me, but sometimes it gets to me.”

He ran a hand through his shiny black hair before forging on. “When we were out on the lake that day, no one else noticed that he didn’t surface right away. I could feel that he was in trouble and, I waited. I stood there imagining what life would be like without him, rather than immediately jumping in to save him.”

The tortured look on his face said more than his words. I grabbed his hands with mine before saying, “You did save him, that’s the important part. Anyone might have had wayward thoughts, but you overcame them and did the right thing.”

“I shouldn’t have hesitated. What if something had happened to him because I didn’t jump in right away?”

“Nothing bad happened. It all worked out in the end, so you need to stop beating yourself up about it. We all have thoughts that we aren’t proud of, but it’s our actions that matter.” I pictured the sexy fantasies that I imagined whenever I was with Sam.

I wondered if he could read my mind when he said, “What if I have naughty thoughts about my brother’s girlfriend?”

Was he teasing me? I couldn’t read him very well, but he certainly seemed sincere. I decided to play it off as a joke. “Oh please, I’m not your type at all.”

“How do you know what my type is?” he countered. “I’ve been thinking about you non-stop since our unbelievably hot make-out session in the bathroom at the charity auction.”

“I thought you were Seth,” I responded automatically.

“I know, and that makes it even worse. He always wins. Why did he get to you first, too?” He was looking down, shaking his head. “Now I sound like a whiny brat,” he muttered.

I realized what this was. He wasn’t interested in me. It was just another way to compete with his brother. “I won’t be a pawn in your rivalry with Seth.” I spat the words out.

“I thought that too, at first, but it’s more than that.” He placed my hand directly over his heart and I could feel it thumping wildly. It was beating almost as frantically as my own.

I yanked my hand back. “That is a purely physiological reaction. My heart is racing, too.” He held up a hand and wiggled his brows, indicating his willingness to feel mine. I shoved his hand away, chuckling at his naughtiness.

“I’m very attracted to you, Abby, and believe me, it has nothing to do with my brother.”

I felt flustered by his direct gaze and blunt words. I could feel my body reacting to him, wanting to pull him to me. I didn’t dare to admit, even to myself, how much I wanted him, but there was no denying that my body had a magnetic reaction to him.

He shifted so that he was face to face with me. “I do have one question before I jump your bones.” His words filled me with anticipation as arousal zinged through me. “Are you and Seth finished?”

I wasn’t sure how to respond. I desired this man more than I had ever wanted anyone, even though he had made it clear that he uses women for sex. I was appalled that I wasn’t utterly revolted by his attitude.

My brain wanted to tell him to buzz off, but every pore in my body was screaming at me to go for it. The rational side of me couldn’t fathom being intimate with brothers, especially not twins; but the lusty side of me just didn’t care. I wanted him. My body craved him.

I wondered if Seth would mind if he found out. I was pretty sure he wouldn't like it, but hadn't he given up the right to say anything about whom I slept with when he unceremoniously dumped me?

It's just wrong, my brain screamed at me. *Do you want to end up on a sleazy talk show?*

"I'm waiting for an answer," Sam reminded me.

I took a deep breath, still struggling to formulate my response.

Chapter 25

“So?” Sam prompted me again.

“I think Seth and I are done, but I still can’t sleep with you,” I finally answered him.

“Why not?” Sam seemed genuinely perplexed.

“Because you’re his brother. You’re his TWIN brother. It’s not right. It wouldn’t be fair to Seth, and it’s kinda creepy.”

“Creepy? From the taste of you that I had that night in the bathroom, I can tell that our sex life will be a lot of things, but creepy is not one of them. I can promise you that.”

I was annoyed that he referred to “our sex life” as if it were a given, but my body was not annoyed. My body was utterly turned on, and it wanted me to pull Sam into this tub with me.

I shifted to answer him and realized that he was openly staring at my bathwater. When I followed his gaze, I saw that my bubbles were nearly gone and he was getting an eyeful of my underwater naked peep show. I quickly moved my arms to cover private parts and glared at him. “Out!”

He chuckled, but got up. He went to the sink and retrieved the towel, then walked back to the tub and held it open for me.

“Not happening.” I glared up at him.

“You can’t blame a guy for trying.” He laid the towel on the side of the tub for me and grabbed my wet clothes before leaving with Miss Dixie loping slowly behind him.

I let out a deep breath once he was gone. *How am I going to make it through an entire night with that infuriating, annoying, sexy man?* I wondered.

Once I dried off, I donned the soft, black shirt and sweatpants that he had brought for me. The clothes were baggy and warm, and they smelled fabulous. The scent was pure Sam, and I wondered briefly if I would be able to keep them as a little souvenir of this adventure. *Contemplating stealing just to have a piece of him?* I shook my head over where my thoughts had gone.

Nothing good can possibly come from sleeping with Sam, I reminded myself. *Well, other than the night of hot, passionate, mind-blowing sex.*

I decided that I needed to list off all of the reasons not to have sex with Sam as reminders to myself in case I was tempted to give in to my lusty body's demand later tonight. *Okay, the elephant in the room is that he's Seth's brother, and that's just icky and wrong. That should be enough reason to steer clear of him right there.*

As if that weren't enough, he treats women like objects. He doesn't care about me. He's probably only interested me as some screwed up way to compete with Seth. The self-conscious side of me began to rear its ugly head. *Besides, I'm not nearly as pretty as the women he's usually with. I'd probably disappoint him sexually.*

I ticked off the problems with fooling around with Sam in my head and resolved to remember them even if temptation struck. Okay, *when* temptation struck.

"I can do this." I gave myself a pep talk. "Don't give in. He's not right for me." I ran through my reminders verbally, since I didn't have my Post-it notes to put on the mirror.

"You okay in there?" Sam knocked lightly on the door. "Sounds like you're talking to yourself."

I was mortified that he had heard me. "I'm fine. You must be hearing things." I lamely tried to put the blame back on him.

I quickly went through my reminders once more, silently this time, before hopping on my good foot over to open the door. He looked as handsome

as ever, but I had renewed my conviction to ignore how attracted I was to him, and I was determined not to give in to the undeniable, magnetic pull I felt towards him.

He made that difficult by bending down and swooping me into his arms. “What are you doing?” I asked shrilly.

“I’m taking you downstairs. Unless you’d rather hop on one foot or slide down the steps on that fabulous ass?”

“This will be fine. Thank you.” I turned away from him as I said it, keeping my face a mask of indifference and ignoring the five-alarm fire that was burning inside me from being cradled in his arms.

When he deposited me on the deep, brown leather couch, I fussed with the quilt to hide the shakiness I was experiencing from being so close to him. He gently placed my injured ankle up on the pillow of the couch, telling me it was a good idea to keep it elevated.

Once I was all situated, he smiled down at me, then lifted the blanket and plopped down right next to me, pulling the cover over both of us. “This isn’t what I had in mind,” I grouched.

“It’s exactly what I had in mind,” he responded, sighing with pleasure as he reached behind us for the television remote. I didn’t see the television, but he pushed a button and a huge flat screen lowered from the ceiling in front of the massive stone fireplace.

Miss Dixie decided that she needed to cuddle too, so she climbed up on the couch and plopped down on Sam’s feet and my non-elevated foot. Surprisingly, even as big as she was, her weight wasn’t uncomfortable.

Before long, I was warm and snuggly. Sam started a romantic comedy movie from the ‘New Releases’ section of his On-Demand library, but I wasn’t paying attention to it. All I could think about was how near he was, how comfortable it was to lie beside him, and how I hoped he would touch my girly bits soon.

Chapter 26

His breathing settled into a regular rhythm, and I could tell he had fallen asleep. *How could he sleep when I was so worked up? Men!?!*

I couldn't focus on the movie that was playing. My mind was completely preoccupied with my proximity to Sam. He and his dog were sprawled across me as if they owned me, and it was nice. No, it was way beyond nice. It was fantastic and warm and comfortable.

My hands were itching to touch him. I could easily reach under his shirt and run my hands over his chest and belly. Maybe I could even do it without waking him.

What if he did awaken, though? I wasn't prepared to deal with the idea of sleeping with Seth's brother. Unfortunately, my Jiminy Cricket-like conscience didn't seem to be willing to let this one slide, but my body simply wasn't listening.

My nipples were erect and swollen. I didn't remember them ever being this taut for this long. They were achy and needed to be touched. I shifted slowly and carefully to lightly rub my breast along his arm. I wanted more, much more, but I didn't dare.

My legs were spread apart, since my ankle was elevated on the back of the couch. I could feel wetness at my core. One of Sam's legs was sprawled across my leg that remained down. I moved slightly to the left to bring the weight of his leg closer to the pulsing need at my center.

I was so tightly wound and turned on that if he moved his leg another inch, I was sure I would come. *How did I go from being unable to orgasm to flying over the edge with a fully clothed man's leg near my vagina?*

This attraction I had to Sam was not logical. My body was humming with excitement at his nearness. I was contemplating another stealth move, when I noticed that his breathing had changed. It was no longer the deep, regular breaths of sleep.

I froze, wondering if he had felt me trying to use his body to satiate my need. I didn't have to wonder long.

"Trying to take advantage of me in my sleep?"

"Don't be absurd," I answered automatically.

He shifted to his side, and I felt his erection at my hip. Before I could cover my reaction, I gulped in a breath and closed my eyes, relishing the feel of him against me. I released the air shakily.

"I can tell that you want me, and I have wanted you since I first laid eyes on you," Sam murmured in my ear. "Say the word, and I'll scratch that itch for you."

He gently bit my earlobe, and I felt it all the way down my spine. I shook my head, trying to be strong and resist him. He ran a hand up the shirt I had borrowed from him and hovered over my breast. I arched my back, yearning for him to touch me.

His fingers were so close that I could feel their warmth, but he didn't touch my skin. He looked directly in my eyes, "Say the word, Abby."

I reached out to smooth my hand under his shirt, but he used his free hand to stop me. He pinned down my errant hand over my head. Somehow, his achingly close fingers never touched my breast, even though my nipple was puckering out towards him.

He lowered his face to mine and brushed a whisper of a kiss across my cheek. "Say it," he demanded once more.

I had known this was inevitable since I'd first felt this insane attraction to him. I just hadn't been willing to admit it. I thought about trying to deny him, but knew that I just wasn't capable of it. Having him so close, teasing me was more than my sexually charged body could take.

I decided to completely let go of my inhibitions and doubts. For the first time in my life, I was just going to savor the pure pleasure of hot, dirty,

mind-blowing sex. My body was already completely turned on, desperate for him to touch me. All I had to do was tune out the worries and negative self-talk, and enjoy the oblivion brought on by all-consuming sexual desire.

I had the pleasure of seeing the flicker of surprise in his eyes when I looked directly at him and croaked the word. “Yes.”

Chapter 27

His pupils dilated noticeably, but he held back to confirm once more. “Yes? You’re sure?”

“Yes. I want you.” I said it confidently this time. He rewarded my positive response with a dazzling, crooked grin. Then he lowered his head to run his lips and tongue behind my ear.

I was desperate to touch his skin, but he still had one of my arms pinned. I used my free hand to raise his shirt and shuddered with pleasure as I smoothed my palm up his defined abs. I smiled when I felt his nipples harden as I grazed over them.

I continued my exploration of his skin with my free hand. It found its way around to his back, then down toward his rear. He sucked in a breath when I slid my hand under his jeans and cupped his bare butt cheek. With his buttock firmly in my grasp, I yanked my hand forward, pulling him into me. His thick cock ground into my side.

“We have way too many clothes on,” he murmured the words at my ear. “I want you naked now.”

He didn’t have to ask me twice. I fumbled with getting his shirt off, so he released my pinned hand. I quickly moved to relieve him of his jeans, popping open the buttons at his fly. Since he wasn’t wearing underwear, the tip of his cock peeked out at me. As I undid each button, more of it’s fabulous length was revealed to me. He stood to make the job easier when I tried to ease his pants down, and I had the pleasure of seeing his entire glorious, naked body.

His massive erection stood at attention, poking out towards me. I was aching to touch it, but my hands were occupied as Sam bent to lift the borrowed shirt over my head.

He gazed at my bare breasts before bending to swirl a tongue around each one. I arched my back, craving more. He took advantage of my position to

swoop the sweatpants down and off me.

He had taken my panties along with my other wet clothes, so I was completely nude. I felt slightly self-conscious at his slow perusal of my body. My angst quickly disappeared at his joyful look when he cupped a hand over me and said, “A landing strip to guide me home.”

I smiled at the obvious pleasure in his voice. I would have to thank Courtney for insisting that I go with her to that ridiculous waxing salon. I had cursed her loudly when they ripped off the wax strips along with most of my pubic hair. In fact, it had been so painful that I had maintained the barely-there look with trimming scissors and hair removal cream just to ensure that I never had to go back to that awful place ever again.

Sam seemed to be a big fan of the look, though. In fact, his penis looked like it had grown even larger, though I didn’t see how that was possible.

He sat beside me, rubbing his palm up and down my landing strip before plunging a finger inside me. I threw my head back and gulped in a deep breath.

Something about this man drove me absolutely wild. I was dripping wet with anticipation and almost came just thinking about him climbing on me and replacing his finger with his dick.

He stretched the length of his naked body along mine while circling his fingers at my core. While he was shifting, I used the opportunity to take his massive cock into my hands. I stroked up and down the length of him until he was panting with need.

My legs were spread wide as his fingers massaged me. I was hot and ready and didn’t want to wait any longer. So, I reached down with one hand to gently cup his balls, while I used my other hand to guide him inside me.

That was all the invitation Sam needed as he rolled on top and plunged deep inside me. He froze there enjoying the moment. I wrapped my arms and legs around him, anxious for release.

He didn’t move and I could see his jaw clenching with the effort of it. I wiggled my hips trying to entice him to ride me, hard. He grabbed both of my arms and held them with one hand over my head. Then he whispered in my ear, “Try not to move, Baby. I want to savor being inside you for the first time.”

I tried to stay still, but it was so difficult as he dropped kisses along my neck and nuzzled my ear. The full feeling of having him inside me made me desperate to move. I tried a couple of times to grind against him, but he used more of his weight to hold me still.

When he used his free hand to tease my nipple, I let out a pathetic mewling sound and tried to arch against him once more. It was more than I could handle when he nipped my shoulder with his teeth. My body began to spasm out of control and I came violently, gasping for air.

He let out a loud groan and released while I pulsed around him. “Oh, Ab!”

He stayed inside me, and I enjoyed the full, heavy feeling of having him there. It had been the most intense sexual encounter I had ever experienced, and we had barely even moved.

He lifted his head to ask, “I didn’t hurt your ankle, did I?”

“Nothing on me hurts right now.” I chuckled at my honest answer. My whole body felt fantastic.

We stayed connected like that for a long while, and I relished the dead weight feeling of him on me. Then it was almost as if an invisible wall went up between us. I could feel the cool change in his demeanor and his distance, even though he was still inside me.

When he spoke, his words shocked and enraged me. “My brother’s sloppy seconds aren’t usually my style, but this time it worked out quite well.”

I was so appalled that I couldn’t even see straight. *How could he have said such a hurtful, horrible thing?* I was furious, and I lashed out at him in the only way that I could in our current position. “You Bastard!” I

ground the words out through clenched teeth, and then I smacked his bare ass. Hard.

His penis hardened inside me instantly.

Chapter 28

I wanted him off me, so I could put as much distance between us as physically possible, but he held me securely underneath him. “Get off!” My words were filled with venom.

“I’m trying, Baby, but you aren’t being very cooperative.”

I turned my head to the side, unwilling to acknowledge his double entendre. He used the opportunity to whisper in my ear, “You’ve spanked me twice tonight, and I liked it. Do you like it naughty, Abby?”

Did this guy not understand English? I was working to formulate an appropriately disgusted response when he slowly slid out of me and back in. I was furious with him and appalled with myself for having had sex with him, but God help me, it felt magnificent when his penis moved inside me.

It was all too much. I couldn’t believe that I had slept with my ex-boyfriend’s identical twin, or that he was such an unbelievable pig. I wanted nothing more than to get far away from him and lick my wounds. To top it all off, he was still inside me and my body reacted to him like a moth to a flame.

What the hell was wrong with me that my brain could be so repulsed by someone, and my body could be so completely turned on by him?

To my horror, the emotion I was feeling welled up, and I burst into tears. It wasn’t the cute trickle kind of crying either; but the sobbing, blubbering kind that makes a complete mess of your face.

I was completely embarrassed, but the tears kept coming, and I couldn’t stop them. Sam had pulled back and was looking at me with that fearful look in his eyes that men get when a woman cries.

“Don’t cry, Ab.” He tried to soothe me, but I was beyond consolation. “I shouldn’t have said the ‘sloppy seconds’ thing. I didn’t mean it at all.” He

paused before adding quietly and seriously, “I don’t know what’s wrong with me.”

“You didn’t mean it?” The words were barely recognizable because I hiccupped on a sob as I asked the question. I wasn’t about to let him off the hook that easily, and he was probably only saying it to get me to stop crying, but it was still nice to hear him say it.

“Of course I didn’t mean it,” he answered. Then he continued, saying, “I’m very sorry I said it, and that I hurt your feelings.” He bent his head down and began gently kissing the tears off one of my cheeks. “I don’t know why, but I always push people away before I start to care too much about them.” He continued his sweet, soft kisses on my other cheek.

“You care about me?” I was surprised at his revelation and wanted confirmation.

“I care about you, Abby.” He gazed at down at me. “I care about you a lot, and it scares the hell out of me.”

He placed a sweet, tentative kiss on my lips. I gasped in surprise. “I thought you didn’t kiss on the lips.”

“I don’t.” His words didn’t match his actions because he kissed me on the lips again, slowly. This time his tongue dipped in to touch mine.

“Yes, you do,” I murmured into his mouth between glorious kisses.

For someone who hadn’t had a lot of practice lately with kissing, he was amazing at it. He moved from tenderly brushing my lips with his, to gently lapping his tongue over mine to a thorough exploration of my mouth. When he gently nipped my lower lip with his teeth, I felt the sensation ripple down my spine.

“Do you forgive me?” He looked like a forlorn little boy when he asked, kissing the tip of my nose.

I hesitated. I couldn’t handle his hot-and-cold moodiness. “Don’t ever say anything like that to me again. Not ever,” I demanded. “I will not put up

with that kind of treatment." I raised my eyebrows to let him know I meant business.

"And you shouldn't put up with it, Ab." He looked down before adding, "I wouldn't blame you if you never wanted to speak to me again."

"Right now, I don't want to," I said crabbily, unwilling to forgive him so quickly for making such a hurtful and nasty comment.

"It was a despicable thing to say, and it doesn't reflect my true feelings at all. I'm so sorry I made such an offensive comment, and that I hurt you. What can I do to make it up to you? Beg your forgiveness? Yell from the rooftops about what an ass I am?"

The last one made me smile a little, so he added, "You want public humiliation, huh? Okay, how about if I run through town naked, except for a sandwich board that reads, 'Sam is a jerk. Abby is amazing'?"

"I like that, but I'd rather the sign said you are a titball. Jerk is so passé."

"Titball it is then. Although I'm not sure what that means, I'm pretty sure it's not good." He turned serious. "Can you ever forgive me? I'm so sorry for saying that."

I wasn't ready to let his outrageous comment go, but I knew that I couldn't stay mad at him forever. "Promise me that you'll never say anything like that about me ever again."

"I promise," he said before giving me a deep, wet, toe-curling, mind-numbing kiss.

"Sealed with a kiss on the lips." He gave me a lopsided grin when the kiss finally ended.

His careless words had hurt me, and I wasn't ready to forgive and forget, but his sweet kiss had worked its magic on my body. I was beyond horny and ready to have my way with him. "I'm on top this time," I informed him, wanting complete control of the situation.

“As you wish, Ma’am.” Somehow he managed to whirl us around so that he was lying back on the couch with me straddling him. His hugely erect penis was still inside me, and I began to rock over him. We would have none of that ‘staying still’ business when I was in charge. I tilted my head back and enjoyed the sensation of him filling me.

He used his hands to tease my taut nipples. I glanced down and saw that he was enjoying watching me ride him, so I decided to give him even more of a show. I slowly, deliberately, reached my hand down to rub a finger over my clitoris. His face registered shocked pleasure when I moaned and brazenly ran my tongue over my teeth.

I spread my legs wide and leaned over him as I savored the thrilling sensation of easing his cock in and out of me. My tits were now dangling over him and he stretched up to take one in his mouth, suckling it tenderly.

With his hands free, they made their way around to my rear. His mouth released my breast as his hands gripped my buttocks to pull me down over him harder, faster. I was still rubbing a finger over my clit, and I reached up with my free hand to grab one of my bobbing boobs. I rolled my puckered nipple between my finger and thumb and was delighted by his look of pure desire as he watched me pleasuring myself. I tossed my head back, lost in ecstasy.

One of his hands found its way to the crack at my rear. When he eased his finger down and over the opening, I clinched my buttocks and froze. “What are you…” I stammered. “I don’t think…” I started again. “I don’t…” I wasn’t sure how to finish.

“Yes, you do,” he threw my earlier words back at me. When I shook my head, he continued, saying, “It’s okay. Just relax.” As he said the words, he began gently circling his finger around the perimeter of me. My first instinct was to stop him, but it felt so fantastic that I was powerless to say the word.

As I became lost in the glorious sensation, I began moving over him again. I rode him relentlessly until the orgasm ripped through me. I cried out as I came, my body clinching violently as wave after wave of pleasure

vibrated through me. He let go when I did, pumping his seed deep into me with a loud moan.

I collapsed on top of him, emotionally and physically spent. I fell asleep there, cradled in his strong embrace.

Chapter 29

When I woke, he was lightly rubbing his fingers over my back. It was barely daylight, and I had slept hard. I wasn't certain if he had slept at all. I was still completely naked and sprawled on top of him, but he had somehow managed to toss the quilt over us without waking me.

I shifted slightly and realized that he was still sheathed inside me, and he was rock hard again. I dropped kisses along his chest and shoulder before moving my body to slide his cock in and out of me a few times.

He smiled, "You're already wet."

"And you're already hard," I answered him. "Guess we make a pretty good team."

"The best." He smiled as he rolled us on our sides, staying inside me and beginning to move slowly, sexily, in and out. "This might be a record for how long two people have stayed hooked up."

"Let's not call Guinness. I'm not sure if they have a record for fucking, but if they do, I don't think I want to be known for that." I answered him honestly.

"Fucking, huh? Is that what this is? It felt like more to me." He was still sliding in and out of me, and it felt glorious.

Somehow I managed to keep my wits about me enough to answer him. "Screwing, banging, fooling around, bumping uglies, humping - call it whatever you want. I still don't want to be known for it.

"Doing the nasty?" he asked. By now we were both chuckling.

"If you like," I responded, "but I prefer 'doing the deed'."

He stopped moving inside me and turned serious. "Making love?" He seemed almost nervous asking me the question.

I wasn’t sure how to respond. This was treacherous terrain, and I didn’t want to scare him off by saying too much too soon, like I had with Seth. I finally went with a non-committal, “Some people call it that.”

He refused to let me off that easily. “What do you call it?”

“It depends on the situation,” I hedged. He didn’t seem satisfied with that answer, so I continued. “Let’s just call it having sex. That’s what it was, and it is a simple, straightforward way to refer to it.”

He nuzzled my ear and whispered, “I want to make love with you, Abby.” He enunciated his point by easing gently in and out of me a few more times.

His slow, fluid movements combined with his sweet, sexy words were almost too much for me to take. My vision had gone blurry. I was trying to keep a wall up between us to protect myself, and he was making it very difficult.

He didn’t wait for me to answer. I gasped as he nipped at my earlobe with his teeth. He gently kissed his way along my jaw and up to my lips. He plied my lips with soft kisses. Then he explored my mouth with his tongue. Our tongues slid along each other in the same easy rhythm as his penis moved within me. I could feel a slow, deep fire of desire burning in my belly.

“Kiss that Guinness record goodbye,” he joked as he pulled his hard penis out of me. I immediately felt the loss. That was soon forgotten, though, as he took his time kissing and licking and suckling his way down my naked body.

He stopped to pay proper attention to each of my breasts. When he lightly rubbed the stubble on his cheek across my chest, it sent thrilling chills down my spine. He nuzzled me tenderly, which made it more of a surprise when his teeth tugged gently on my nipple. The thrilling sensation made my hips buck up off the couch.

As if sensing my need for more, he began working his way further down

my body. My back arched when he dipped his tongue into my belly button.

He made his way further down and nuzzled his nose into my landing strip. I was achy with need, desperate for more. I greedily spread my legs, and he carefully placed each one to rest on his shoulders.

It was daylight, and I was completely exposed to him. Normally, that would have made me self-conscious, but I couldn't concentrate on anything except for the anticipation of what was about to happen.

His gorgeous green eyes gazed at me through shuddered lids before he turned his head to the side to kiss the inside of each of my thighs, then he blew cool air on my center. I was so wet, and I could feel the frantic need for more churning inside me. "Please," I finally murmured, begging as I turned my head to the side and dug my heels into his back so I could raise my hips to him.

He didn't make me ask twice. He separated my folds and held me open with his thumbs as he worshiped me with his tongue. The orgasm raced through me as I rode the waves of ecstasy.

When the convulsions stopped, my body fell limp. I felt giddy and relaxed. He moved up to lie beside me, and I stayed like that for a minute, recovering.

Once my breathing began to return to normal, I realized that I wanted to bring that kind of intense bliss to his body. One quick glance told me that he was still hard. His fabulous cock was jutting out towards me. I wetted my lips, formulating a plan.

Without any warning or preamble, I lowered myself and took him into my mouth, all the way in. I was amazed that I was able to do it, and by the sound of his delighted gasp, so was he. I became frantic, sucking him hard, wanting to give him the kind of pleasure that he had just given me.

My head bobbed up and down quickly as I worked my tongue and mouth over him. His hands clinched into tight balls as his hips began to move with my rhythm. His panting and groans spurred me on.

“I’m getting ready to come.” He blurted out the warning in broken words. I didn’t care, and I didn’t stop. I continued sucking on him as he spilled his hot liquid into my mouth.

I looked directly into his eyes and swallowed his seed. Then I deliberately licked my lips and smiled up at him. His pupils dilated and he sucked in a breath at my brazen move. His strong, positive reaction encouraged me to go on, so I used my tongue to lick him completely clean of the semen that had spurted out of my mouth. He watched my every move, completely engrossed.

When I finished, he grinned down at me. “That was the hottest thing I’ve ever seen, Ab. If it were physically possible for a man to come twice in a matter of seconds, I think I would have just done it.”

“I’m glad you liked it,” I purred, pleased with myself, but realizing we needed to get back to reality. “Now, give me a ride to town before I’m late for work.”

“I don’t usually let a woman boss me around like that, but after that blow job, you can have your way with me.”

“I might just take you up on that later.” I responded as he rose to help me up. I tenderly tried putting weight on my twisted ankle and found that I was able to gingerly walk on it. “It’s amazing what good sex can heal.” I grinned over my shoulder at him as I limped to the bathroom.

“Good sex?” He seemed offended. “Try flippin’ fantastic sex.”

“Yeah, it was pretty flippin’ fantastic,” I agreed.

Chapter 30

I don’t know what kind of car I had envisioned Sam would drive, but the convertible, black Porsche 911 Carrera is not what I had expected. The car suited him, though. It was sleek, sporty, and a little dangerous, much like its owner. He backed the car slowly out of the garage, and then he guided it masterfully down the narrow lane from his house.

I was still wearing his black sweats, and I intended to keep them for a while. He had neatly folded my clothes when they came out of the dryer, and they were in a bag in the tiny space at the back of the car.

I looked out the window at the sun peeking up over the horizon. It was still early, and there weren’t many cars moving yet. I would have plenty of time to shower and fix myself into something presentable before work.

He drove the car fast and hard, like he screwed. *Well, not really*, I lamented to myself. I hadn’t discovered a pattern to his fooling around yet. It seemed to be all over the charts, yet always completely mind-blowing. I was more than willing to put more effort into researching the many ways he could rock my world with his body, and I couldn’t wait to see what would be next.

In fact, I was wet just thinking about our night together. I glanced over at him. He was wearing a dark green polo shirt that showed off his pecks as he expertly maneuvered the manual stick of the sports car. His low-slung, well-worn jeans hugged him loosely in all of those sexy places that I had spent the night touching, kissing, licking, and sucking.

I longed to touch him again. It didn’t make sense after having spent the entire night banging him, but I couldn’t seem to get enough of his body. My eyes were drawn back down to his crotch, and I licked my lips. This time he caught me looking and grinned. I was extremely fond of his slightly crooked grin. It gave his otherwise perfect face extra character.

His smile was all of the invitation I needed. I reached over to undo his jeans and release him. He had not bothered with underwear, so his penis

sprang out, already hard. I took him in one hand, releasing my seatbelt with the other. When I was loose, I leaned over the car's console and took him into my mouth.

"Abby!" Sam's voice was shocked, but heavy with desire. I didn't stop. Instead, I wet the length of him with my tongue. "Let me find a place to pull over before I get us both killed in a car accident." He was laughing as he said it.

I grudgingly sat up, but replaced my mouth with my hand, rubbing up and down the length of him. "You're insatiable," he teased me, even as he removed his hand from the gearshift and ran it down my loose sweatpants. He quickly discovered that I had gone commando too. I sucked in a breath when he plunged a finger into my wetness.

I didn't know how it was possible, but I wanted him more now than ever. I couldn't seem to get enough of this man or his body. I didn't want to get enough of him.

He found a grocery store parking lot that looked to be fairly empty and pulled into a parking space in the back. "Damn small car," he grouched as we both looked around, attempting to figure out how we were going to make this work in the tiny space.

"I want more than a hand job," I panted.

"Me too, Baby." He didn't bother to fasten his pants, but held them together for some modesty as he got out and rounded the car to my side. I scrambled out of my pants and tilted onto one side so he could get in the passenger side and shut the door.

He sat low on the seat and pulled me onto his lap with my back to his front. I groaned with pleasure as I lowered myself onto his hard length. He reached his hands around me, slid one up my sweatshirt to squeeze my breasts together, and used the other to circle my clit.

I bounced up and down on him in absolute ecstasy. The danger of fucking in a car in broad daylight - with the possibility of being caught - just turned me on more. The tight space restricted our movement and made me

that much more frantic.

I felt the orgasm building deep inside me, and I increased the tempo of my thrusts. I was manic in my need for him, and I didn't care if the whole town was standing outside the car watching.

"Come with me," I managed to pant just before I flew over the edge. Wave after wave of pleasure vibrated through me as I shouted out and continued moving over him. His teeth dug gently into my shoulder as he came with me tightening around him, squeezing him with my orgasm.

I fell back into him, exhausted. For the first time, I looked around to see if anyone had taken notice of us. It didn't appear that anyone had, which surprised me.

We sat there like that for a minute. He finally broke the silence. "I'm going to have to take you home to give my poor penis a break."

"Poor penis?!? I was just thinking that I'm not going to be able to walk, if we don't give it a rest." We both chuckled as we attempted to get dressed in the miniscule space.

After he somehow maneuvered his way back into the driver's seat of the tiny space, without looking awkward, he leaned over and gave me a deep, mind-blowing kiss with the perfect amount of tongue. "I'm going to be thinking about you all day at work today."

It was a little embarrassing to admit, even to myself, after all the world-rocking sex we had just had, but I didn't know what he did for a living. I cleared my throat before asking, "What do you do for work?"

If he sensed my shame, he didn't let on as he backed out of our naughty parking spot. "I'm trained as an architect." He paused, and I wondered if he had designed his amazing home on the cliff. Then he continued, "But that's not what I do. I'm being groomed to take over my father's acquisition business."

I pondered that tidbit for a moment, surprised. Since Seth was the older twin, shouldn't he be the one taking over the family business? Maybe it

was a personality thing. Acquisitions of other people's companies didn't seem like something that would be in Seth's nature. I pictured Richard Gere's character from the movie *Pretty Woman*, and I could see Sam excelling at it.

He didn't seem to want to expand, so we rode in companionable silence. Whenever we were on an open stretch of road where he didn't have to shift gears, he reached over and held my hand. I realized that I had just discovered another physical difference between Sam and Seth. Sam's hands were smooth and soft, while Seth's were rougher, no doubt from manual labor. I savored the physical connection of our entwined hands, knowing we would soon be apart and worrying about how long it would be before I saw him again.

Sam seemed to know the way to my house, which I didn't question. After he turned onto my street, he looked at me with those gorgeous green eyes and said, "Please go get a new cell phone today. I doubt yours is fixable, and I need a way to get ahold of you."

I was overjoyed by his request, which I made no attempt to mask. "Yes, Sir!" I said jokingly, beaming at him. My mind silently added that he could get ahold of me any time, any place, and any way that he wanted.

The suddenly serious look on Sam's face caught my attention. "What the hell is Seth doing here?" he asked me.

All of the color drained from my cheeks as I turned to look. Sure enough, Seth's green Jeep Wrangler was sitting in my driveway.

Chapter 31

“I… I don’t know,” I stammered. There was a ball the size of a cantaloupe in the pit of my stomach. *What was Seth doing here?*

Even if he had come to do the decent thing to give our relationship closure and apologize for blowing me off the way he had, I didn’t know if I could face him after spending the night banging his twin brother’s balls off. I was suddenly ashamed of my carnal behavior with Sam as the cantaloupe-sized ball made its way up into my throat.

I hadn’t thought through what it would be like to face Seth after being with Sam. What Seth had done to me had been wrong, but nothing compared to what I had just spent the night doing. And doing. And doing.

Sam was glaring at me, watching the emotions roll over my face. “I guess things aren’t quite as done with my brother as you thought?” It was more accusation than question, so I didn’t answer.

“It’s probably best if I don’t go in,” he decided. “He and I will have it out later.” I briefly wondered what ‘have it out’ meant, but my mind quickly turned back to the unpleasant confrontation I was about to be forced into.

I completely abhor any kind of conflict, and even if this went well, it was bound to be one of the most awkward discussions I would ever have.

Maybe I don’t have to tell him. I can just let him say what he came to say and then show him to the door. My mind was searching for any way out of the hideousness that was about to ensue.

If Sam and I were going to have any kind of relationship going forward, I knew that I would have to address it with his brother. *Why hadn’t I planned this out better or at least waited a decent amount of time?* Who was I kidding? What exactly was a ‘decent amount of time’ to wait before bedding your lover’s identical twin brother? I doubted there was one, but even if there was, I definitely hadn’t reached it.

I finally said, “I guess I should go in,” but I made no move to do so. I just wanted to rewind to last night and live the rest of my life in that state of oblivious-to-the-rest-of-the-world sexual euphoria.

Sam’s look finally softened. He reached out to touch my cheek as he said, “It will be okay. We knew this wasn’t going to be easy, right?”

I didn’t want to admit that I hadn’t even thought about what it would be like to face his brother. I had assumed that I was another of Sam’s progression of one-night-stands, so the need to tell Seth would never arise. It made me feel fantastic, though, that Sam felt that we meant enough to each other that we would have to address it with Seth.

After our tender night of lovemaking and the sweet kisses on the lips we had shared, I dared to hope that I might be more than his typical fling. If we were going to be more, I knew that I would have to face his brother. I blew out a breath before saying, “No time like the present,” and moved to get out of Sam’s Porsche.

Sam pulled me back and dotted gentle kisses along my cheek and temple before saying, “Don’t be too hard on him. I’ll give you a call later to see how it went.”

I nodded quickly and moved to get out of the vehicle before I lost my resolve. Like a true gentleman, Sam waited until I had the front door open before backing out of our driveway. I gave him a quick wave before taking a deep, calming breath and stepping inside.

Chapter 32

I could hear voices in the kitchen, so I slowly headed that way. I didn't want to face Seth, but knew that I had no choice. When I peeked in, I saw him sitting at our small kitchen table with his back to me. Tabitha, the cat who hated everyone except Courtney, was sprawled on his lap, purring loudly. She turned to glare at me in the doorway, then jumped off his lap and sauntered away.

Courtney looked up, "Oh good, you're back from Annie's." She used the opportunity when Seth turned to look at me to give me a big, over-obvious wink to let me know that she was covering for where I had been.

I smiled to thank her for attempting to be discreet, and then I turned to look at Seth. That was the only hint that Court needed. She muttered something about heading out to get some exercise, which I knew that she never did, and quickly exited the kitchen.

"Hello," I finally said to Seth. He rose and walked over to stand directly in front of me.

He ran his hand through his dark hair. "I've practiced this a thousand times, and now that I'm here, I don't know where to start."

I nodded, but remained silent. I couldn't think of a kind way to communicate what I needed to say. *Maybe if I just let him break up with me, Sam and I can stay on the down-low for a while.* My brain was working frantically, trying to come up with a way to avoid admitting the truth to Seth.

It had been so easy to villainize him over the way he had dumped me, but now that he was standing here in front of me, I was feeling really guilty. He was clearly struggling with how to let me down easily, even if it was over a week later than it should have been.

He finally broke the silence. "I'm so sorry I didn't call you sooner." I nodded. It had been a shitty thing to do, but he seemed sincere in his

apology. “When I got your message last night, I was frantic to find you.”

I tried to remember what I had said on the voicemail I had left him. Had I sounded suicidal or something? I only remembered being annoyed that he hadn’t given me any closure and telling him that I deserved better. I hoped that I didn’t sound too desperate on the message.

“I shouldn’t have left things the way I did for so long.” I nodded in agreement, and he continued. “When you said that you loved me, it freaked me out a little.”

“I noticed,” was all I said, so he went on.

“I shouldn’t have ran like I did, and I’m sorry for leaving you that way. I just needed time to think.”

I decided to put him out of his misery. After all, it hadn’t been completely his fault, and I’d been far from an angel last night. “Look, I shouldn’t have said what I did so soon. It scared you off.” He shook his head, so I clarified what I meant. “It would have scared off most men. We hadn’t been dating long, and it was too soon for me to be making declarations of love.” Unwilling to let him completely off the hook, I continued. “You should have officially broken things off with me, though.”

“No, Abby, you don’t understand.” He grabbed my hand as he said the words. “I needed time to think because things were moving so fast. I have never been in a relationship where I felt so strongly that quickly, so I wanted to be positive that it wasn’t just lust before I responded. I don’t say those words lightly, and I wanted to be sure that they were true. Abby, I love you, too.”

His words stunned me. I hadn’t been expecting this at all. The cantaloupe-sized lump in my throat now felt like it was the size of a watermelon, a burning watermelon. I could barely breathe around it. Tears welled in my eyes.

Seth misunderstood my reaction and pulled me in for a hug. The tears started spilling over. I stood there stiffly as Seth pulled back to look at me. He bent to gently kiss one of the tears trailing down my cheek and a sob

escaped. *What had I done?*

I was shocked by his declaration and completely speechless. My mind was reeling, seeking both the right words and the appropriate way to say them.

We stood like that for a long while. He had his arms around me, and I was stiff as a board. I opened my mouth to speak, but words failed me. He was rubbing up and down my back, soothing me, when I finally managed to croak out a sentence. “I thought you had dumped me.”

He pulled back to look directly in my eyes. “I know, and I’m so sorry for hurting you, Sweetheart. I reacted all wrong. You are the best thing that has ever happened to me, and it was all moving so fast that I got scared and took a little timeout. I’m here now, though, and I’m not going anywhere.”

I was struggling, unsuccessfully trying to come up with a way to gently say what I needed to tell him. “Why didn’t you call me to tell me you needed some time to process? I thought we were finished.”

“If I could take it back, I would handle it all so differently.” He ran his hand through his dark hair again, obviously feeling guilty. What he had done paled in comparison to what I had done. Okay, who I had done. I just couldn’t seem to formulate the words to confess.

Seth took my silence as anger and continued with his apology. “Abby, please forgive me. I spent the entire week thinking about you as I finished the boat that we christened and took her out on her maiden voyage. I couldn’t wait to get back and call you, but I was already late for Mother’s Sunday brunch when I docked, and she doesn’t react well to tardiness.” I could imagine that Janice would have a frosty side, if things didn’t go precisely her way.

Seth went on, barely pausing to take a breath, “I decided that a family event wasn’t the best place to try to explain things to you; so I waited to call, even though I was desperate to talk to you, to see you, to touch you.” He tenderly ran a finger along my jawline. I closed my eyes and another tear plopped out and trailed down my cheek.

Seth continued his explanation, seeming desperate to make me understand. “Before brunch was over, Jessie asked me to watch Katiedid for a while. I think she and Katie’s dad needed to talk through a few things. Jess rarely asks for anything, so I couldn’t turn her down. Katie and I swam and played outside for a long while, and then she fell asleep on my lap. I had left my phone in the Jeep, so I missed your call. As soon as Jess picked up Katie last night, I went to call you and got your message. I’ve been trying to call you back ever since. You probably have half a dozen messages from me.”

“My phone fell in the water and got ruined,” I responded, feeling numb. Everything that he had said made sense. He shouldn’t have put me through the torture of waiting for over a week with no contact, but considering what I had done last night, I had no right to be angry with him. It didn’t matter anyway. As soon as Seth found out that I had slept with Sam, he would be finished with me for good.

“Ab, please say you’ll forgive me. I do love you, even though I didn’t show it well this week. If you’ll give me another chance, I’ll spend the rest of my life making it up to you. I promise to do my best to make sure our life together is what we have both always wanted.”

I was floored by his glorious words. *Why couldn’t he have said them last week before I made such a mess of things?* I had to tell him before he said anything else. There was no way to say it delicately. I couldn’t sugarcoat it. I just had to spit it out.

My mouth was so dry. I licked my lips and took a deep breath, which did nothing to calm my frantic nerves. “Seth,” I started. He was looking at me, his eyes so full of hope. I hated that I had to do this to him, but I didn’t have another choice. He deserved the truth. My voice was barely above a whisper, but I got the words out. “I slept with Sam.”

Seth moved back as if I had physically punched him in the gut. His face registered shocked disbelief, so I nodded in confirmation as tears ran freely down my cheeks. I saw his features change to disgust, then anger before he whirled around, muttering the words, “I’m going to kill him.” Then he left me standing alone in my kitchen.

It took a moment for my wits to return. I called out for him to stop and chased after him, but he was already gone. I silently prayed that the brothers would be able to forgive each other.

Chapter 33

I had never been so appalled with myself, specifically with my lust-filled body. *How could I have let this happen? How could I have made such a horrible mess of things?*

I had met two of the most sexy, amazing, wonderful men on Earth, and I had managed to screw things up with both of them. I was sure that the twins would fight, and I was also certain that once that fight was over, they would realize that I wasn't worth it.

I prayed that their relationship wouldn't suffer any permanent damage from my lack of morals. They were both better off without me in their lives. I vowed to try to move forward with my man-free life, and to try to forgive myself for screwing things up so royally.

I could be happy without a lover. I had a great life before I met the Davis twins, and I would try to get back to that point. It would take a while to forgive myself for my indiscretions, but I would work on it.

Right now, I needed Court and Annie. I could use some unconditional love, and I knew those two would dish it out, even if I didn't deserve it.

I had sat there with my mind spinning for so long that I was now late for work. I was normally extremely punctual, so I used our home phone to call Annie. "Sorry I'm late," I started in as soon as she picked up. "I'll be there in a few."

"Take your time, Love. I'm just glad to hear you're okay." Annie was already doling out the unconditional acceptance. Most bosses would at least want an excuse about why you were late. Not my sweet Annie, though. All she cared about was that I wasn't sick or injured.

My next call was to Court, asking her to meet me at the shop in half an hour. "I'll be right there," she responded. Again, no questions asked. These two ladies were truly there for me, and I was so grateful to have them in my life.

I raced up the stairs to take a quick shower before heading in to work. When I walked into the boutique, Courtney was already there chatting with Annie. She had obviously already filled Annie in on what she knew of the horny details of the last 24 hours because they both held their arms out to me.

I rushed to them for a soothing group-hug. As we stood there holding each other, I thought about how happy I was that the two most important women in my life had begun to forge a solid, caring relationship with each other. I needed both of these fabulous, nurturing, wild, lovely women, and I wanted them to be able to lean on each other as well.

Courtney was the one who finally broke the silence. “I can’t stand the suspense any longer. Did you tell Seth about Sam?”

We broke the three-way hug, but stayed close to each other. It was my triangle of solace as I nodded in answer to her question, unable to utter the word. Tears began to pool in my eyes as the guilt over what I had done washed over me.

“Oh, Sweetie, it’s okay.” Annie put a hand to my cheek as she said the words. Court grabbed my hand as she nodded in agreement. I didn’t feel judged by either of these wonderful women, even though I knew that what I had done was despicable.

“I know that I have ruined my chance of being with either of them, but I just hope that I didn’t destroy their relationship with each other.” I managed to get the words out despite my sniffling.

Annie reached for the box of tissues as she said, “Honey, why in the cosmos would you think that you’ve lost your relationship with both of them?” She seemed genuinely perplexed.

I knew that Annie was flighty, maybe to the point of being occasionally ditzy, but I couldn’t imagine that she didn’t understand this. Maybe Court hadn’t fully explained the situation to her. “I slept with both of them,” I said simply.

She shook her head as if still not getting it, so I continued. “Seth hates me because I slept with his identical twin, when we hadn’t officially broken off what we had. Sam is furious because I told him that Seth and I were finished, when evidently we weren’t quite done yet.”

Court was the one who answered. “None of that was your fault. You tried to reach Seth, and he ignored you. You had every reason to believe you and Seth were over when you were with Sam.”

Annie nodded her agreement with Courtney’s words. “The way I see it, you have a monumental choice to make.”

I shook my head. They weren’t getting it. “No, you don’t understand. Neither of them wants to be with me after what I did.”

“Are you sure?” Court was the one who posed the question. “Maybe you should consider who you would choose, if they both want you.”

“When they both want her, you mean.” Annie tucked a stray brown curl behind my ear as she amended what Courtney had said. “How could either of them resist her?”

I was still shaking my head. These two ladies loved me too much to see the writing on the wall. I had let my lusty body take over my brain, and I had ruined my chances of having a relationship with either of the near-perfect Davis twins.

My thoughts were interrupted by the tinkling of the bells on the front door of the shop. All three of us turned to look as Mr. Finley, the owner of Treats, walked in. His bakery was where Seth and I had gone with the dogs on our first unofficial date, the day we met in the park. That seemed like an eternity ago now.

Mr. Finley was carrying a pink bakery box, which he handed to Annie when she floated, in her distinctly Annie way, over to greet him. *He’s the king of impeccable timing*, I thought as I eyed the box, wondering what kind of delectable goodness it contained.

Something about Annie’s reaction to him drew my attention away from

the pastry container. *Was she blushing?* Court and I looked at each other in surprise when we heard Annie's girly giggle as he kissed her hand with a flourish.

After he left, Annie swept back over to us with the pink box in tow. Court was the first to get the words out. "So, what's going on with you and the Fin-Man?"

"Harry? Pish posh." She tried to play it off as if there was nothing between them. "I'm sure he makes the rounds delivering baked goods to all the local businesses. It's good TR or PR, whatever it's called."

Court and I raised our eyebrows at each other over her use of Mr. Finley's first name. Neither of us had ever heard it before.

I thought about the idea of Annie being with Mr. Finley. He was on the shorter side, but not too short. He had graying hair and a slight belly pooch, but he was handsome in a sweet, grandfatherly way. Somehow, it all clicked into place in my mind, and I realized what a fantastic couple they would make. I was slightly annoyed with myself for being too consumed by my own love life to notice how perfect they would be for each other.

Court saw it, too. "Well, I think you two want to TR each other's PRs, and I for one, think it's a great idea."

Annie shook her head, but all three of us erupted into giggles at Court's play on Annie's latest word jumble. When the laughter subsided, we all three stood quietly for a moment, consumed by our own thoughts.

Suddenly Court blurted out, "Joe kissed me last night, and it rocked my world!"

Chapter 34

I was so happy for Courtney and Annie. They both deserved a happy, fulfilling love life, and it seemed like they were each on the verge of achieving just that.

Trying to relax in a bubble bath later that evening, my mind kept returning to my disaster of a romantic life. Somehow, I had managed to screw up things with two amazing men.

The rap on my bathroom door startled me out of my thoughts. Court cracked the door open and peeked in. “I’m heading in to work the dinner shift because Grace called-in sick again. There’s someone here to see you.”

She opened the door a little wider to reveal Seth standing in my room behind her. I nodded at Court’s questioning look, to let her know it was fine, so she quietly left.

Seth stayed where he was for a moment, then he walked into the bathroom. I gasped when he stepped into the light, and I saw the cut on his lip. “Are you okay?” I asked him.

“Physically, yes.” His answer made me wince with the knowledge that I had caused his emotional pain. My face must have betrayed my thoughts because he attempted to lighten the mood by saying, “You should see the other guy.”

The thought of Sam being harmed made my stomach roll and the burning watermelon was back in my throat. My face must have crumpled because Seth tried to ease my concern. “He’s okay.”

He was looking down as he said the words, and it made me feel even worse to imagine how it made Seth feel to see my concern over his brother’s wellbeing. I had made such a mess of things. They really were both better off without me.

It was kind of Seth to come back to give me closure, but I decided that he had already done much more than I deserved, so I said, “Thanks for stopping by to let me know you’re okay. It was very thoughtful of you. I’m sorry for any pain I’ve caused you, and I hope that you are able to find happiness with someone who deserves you.”

He responded quietly, “You’ve made your decision, then?” At my perplexed look, he continued with a resigned, “You want to be with Sam.”

“Decision?” I kept the question at one word because I was so taken aback by his words. He seemed to be waiting for me to expand, so I continued. “What I have done is horrible, and you both deserve better.” I looked directly into his eyes as I said sincerely, “I wish you only the best.”

“That sounds like a dismissal.” He moved to kneel beside the bathtub even as he said the words. “Please don’t write me off so quickly, Ab. I don’t like it one bit that you were with Sam, but I accept the responsibility that it was largely my fault. I shouldn’t have left things the way I did. We can work through this. I love you, and I’ll do whatever it takes to make you happy.”

I was surprised by his words. *How could he still want me after I had bedded Sam?* Then realization struck. I had become a pawn in their game of one-upmanship. Neither of them actually wanted me. They just wanted to win, and I had unwittingly become the prize, until they moved on to something else.

I said as much to Seth, who seemed shocked by my accusation. “I can’t speak for my brother,” he responded, “but my feelings for you have nothing to do with him. I want to live my life with you. If you’ll give me the chance, I promise to do my best to make all of your hopes and dreams come true.”

His words were wonderful, perfect. A tear slid down my cheek and he gently brushed it with his lips. “You don’t have to answer me right now. Work through your feelings and let me know what you decide.” He rose to leave, but turned back to say, “I’ll be waiting for you. It seems that you have stolen my heart.” Then he quietly walked out of my bathroom.

Chapter 35

I was still reeling from Seth's visit. Normally, sitting on our front porch swing, looking out over the water, and drinking hot tea relaxed me, but it was doing nothing to calm my frazzled nerves tonight. I wasn't even that surprised when the sleek, black Porsche eased into our driveway.

When Sam reached the porch, I saw his black eye. His brother had given him a serious shiner. It was already turning purple and looked extremely painful. It made me wince just looking at it. Seeing my reaction, he tried to play it down. "It's not as bad as it looks." He paused before adding, "I deserved much worse."

He looked like he felt as guilty as I did, and it made me feel dreadful, knowing that I had caused all of this turmoil. He sat down beside me on the swing, but made no attempt to touch me. Even after all that we had been through, I still felt the electricity sizzle between us. My physical reaction to him was undeniable.

We sat there like that for a long while. When he finally broke the silence, his words surprised me. "You deserve a much better man than me. You should be with someone like Seth. He will never let you down. I, on the other hand, am known for loving 'em and leaving 'em. I just came to tell you that I care about you both, and I sincerely hope that you are able to work this out." He looked at me before continuing. "I'll keep my distance until I'm sure that I'll be able to keep my hands off you."

Anger flared inside me at his words. "So, you feel guilty about fucking me, and you have decided to let Seth win this one. Am I the trophy in this round of the competition?" I spat the words out with venom.

He seemed honestly stunned by my accusation. "Abby, it's nothing like that. How could you think that?"

I ignored his question, so he continued. "I've never wanted any woman the way that I want you, and believe me, when I'm with you, the last thing on my mind is my brother." He flashed his crooked smile as he said the

last part.

I studied him to gauge his sincerity. *Could he be telling the truth? Does he want me like my body craves him?* I wanted to believe that I was in some way special to him, even if it was only physical.

“I haven’t been able to stop thinking about you since that first night we met at the charity auction, and I didn’t even know you were with Seth then,” he pointed out.

He paused for a moment, and I pondered over his last statement. It was true. At the time of our rendezvous in the bathroom, he hadn’t known I was with Seth. He had been attracted to me sexually, just for me, and not as another way to compete with his brother.

As if reading my thoughts, he continued. “I can barely keep from touching you now, just sitting here next to you, but it’s not just your body that I want, Ab. I want to spend time with you, laugh with you, dance with you, dream with you and have a future with you.”

My mouth fell open at his last statement. Seeing the surprise on my face, he continued on, as if trying to convince me. “Why can’t you see how amazing you are? I’ve never desired anyone like this.” He touched me then, for the first time since arriving. He tenderly brushed the back of his fingers down my cheek. Just that slight connection with him felt amazing. I closed my eyes and leaned my head towards him, enjoying the sensation.

He moved his hand down and gently raised my chin, so that I was facing him. My eyelids felt heavy as I gazed at him. I licked my lips, aching with desire. “There’s nothing I want more right now than to kiss those soft, beautiful lips.” My lips parted slightly at his words, ready to be taken. My eyelids drooped as I leaned forward, wanting him, but his lips were not there.

He cursed and stood up. I could see his erection straining for release from his jeans. My eyes were drawn to it, riveted, until I realized what he was saying.

“You’re too good for me, Abby.” I started to shake my head in disagreement, but he continued on, ignoring me. “Seth is a good man, and you deserve to be with someone like him. I’m sorry that I’ve made such a mess of things. I want to say that I will back off and pretend to hope that the two of you are able to work things out, but I don’t think I have the strength to give you up. It’s just too hard, and I’m evidently not that big of a man. I’ll try to give you some space while you work through this, but please don’t take too long.” His next words were so quiet that I wasn’t sure if he actually uttered them or if my imagination conjured them. “Choose me.”

With one last burning gaze, he turned and left.

Chapter 36

I had requested a meeting with my ladies. Annie, Courtney, and I were sitting around the kitchen table, and the two of them were having a rowdy discussion. They were supposed to be helping me sort out my feelings, but it seemed they each had very different opinions about what I should do.

They were on their second bottle of our favorite soft red wine, and they were starting to get more vehement in their arguing. I was drinking water because I wanted to keep a clear head as I worked through the mess I had made of my love life.

“Seth is sweet and kind, and he really cares about her. He’s the better long-term investment.” This came from Court.

“Long-term investment?” Annie nearly screeched. “We aren’t discussing annuities here. We are talking about love. She has passion with Sam.” She reached over to grab my hand. “You have to follow your passion, Sweetie.”

“Passion burns out and then what are you left with?” Courtney countered. “You need to choose the one that you can have a future with.”

“Love isn’t meant to be solid and dependable. It’s meant to be fun and exciting. If we find moments of pure joy, we should cherish and embrace them, even if they are short-lived. You can’t deny your reaction to Sam. It’s your body’s way of telling you that you are meant to be with him.”

“She has passion with Seth. It’s just slower burning than what she has with Sam, which means it will last longer. This hot flash of lust with Sam will fizzle out in no time.” Courtney refilled their wine glasses as she said it.

“So, what if it does?” Annie countered. “It will be amazing while it lasts. There’s no guarantee that things will last with Seth either.”

“It’s a lot more likely than her chances of making it work with Sam,” Courtney countered.

I let them bicker, lost in my own thoughts. They both made valid arguments. I had been struggling with the same points for the last few days. I had hoped that the two of them would be able to help me figure out the right answer, but they were like the two sides of my conscience that had been warring it out.

I wasn’t sure if there was a ‘right’ answer. How could I choose between kind, caring, grow-old-together love and hot, steamy, can’t-get-enough-of-each-other passion for each other? Which was better? Which was right for me? Which did I want?

I returned my attention back to Annie and Court’s conversation just in time to hear them come to an agreement. “One thing’s for sure,” Court held up her glass to toast. “She needs to make a decision soon and stick with it.”

“Here, here.” Annie clinked her glass with Court’s.

I picked up my water glass and chimed in. I fully agreed that I needed to make a choice for all of our sakes. The problem was, I had no idea who to choose.

It was like having two fabulous, but very different showcases on the ‘Price is Right.’ Time was quickly ticking away and I had to make my decision, but how could I pick?

Chapter 37

I woke up the next morning feeling exhausted and still uncertain about what I should do. I had spent the night tossing and turning, and making up my mind and then changing it.

First, I had decided to choose Seth. I had always wanted to have a family, and Seth was the ideal person to have a family with. He would be a wonderful husband and father, and I would be lucky to have him. We would adopt sweet babies, and we would live happily ever after.

Relief had swept over me. I had made a decision, and I was going to stick with it. Then, I began to picture going to Davis family events with Seth, and seeing Sam with a constant parade of leggy 'I' girls. I pictured him ramming his fabulous cock into them while their perfect, fake, plastic tits never moved. The thought made me cringe. I wanted that cock to be ramming me.

I had sat up in my bed, sweating and feeling nauseous. I couldn't handle seeing Sam with those women, even in my imagination. When it really happened, I would be desperate from wanting him. If he showed the slightest bit of weakness in his resolve to avoid me, I would cave into my desires and sleep with him. Seth would inevitably find out about the affair and divorce me.

Okay, so I couldn't have my 'happily ever after' with Seth because I wouldn't be able to resist his brother. Since that was the case, I decided to flip-flop my decision and choose Sam. There, the decision was made, so I turned over and tried to go to sleep.

Sam and I would have a hot, satisfying sex life. We couldn't get enough of each other, and we would probably nearly kill each other in our attempts to bang each other's brains out. It would be fantastic.

Our life together would be mind-blowing, at least for a year or two, but eventually, the passion would subside. *What will we have left then?* I tried to picture us a few years down the road. I couldn't imagine things

working out in the long-term with Sam.

Would he get bored with me and sleep with ‘I’ girls on the side? Would he not bother with sneaking around and just leave me?

I visualized what Seth’s life would be like without me. He would meet someone wonderful, who was deserving of all that he had to offer. They would have a family and grow old together. In this scenario, I wanted what this imaginary lady had, and, irrationally, I wanted to gouge her eyes out.

I was appalled with myself. I had no right to lay claim to two men, but that is exactly what I had done. I couldn’t see a way for this to work out well. I was going to be consumed by jealousy when the twin I didn’t choose moved on, even though I had no right to be. *What the hell was wrong with me?*

I realized then that I needed to do some soul-searching and work on myself before I would be ready to move forward with a romantic relationship with anyone. Something was terribly wrong when I was paralyzed about making a decision between two amazing men because I didn’t want to give up the other one.

It was selfish and embarrassing, and I needed to get over myself. I needed to give myself some space from this love triangle and work through what to do.

I used our home phone to call Annie and ask for a week off, which she gladly agreed to give me. I packed a small bag, said goodbye to Buster (who gave me one tail thump upon hearing his name), picked up a new smartphone at the cellular store, and stopped by Joe’s to give Court a goodbye hug. I texted both of the Davis boys and told them I was leaving town for a week, and that I would be in touch when I got back. Then, I turned the phone to silent mode and lit out of Dodge.

Chapter 38

I didn’t go far. I discovered a small, lakefront motel that was about a half-hour drive up the coast from Harbor Shores. Marta, the friendly, matronly woman behind the front desk, gave me a rate for the week and an actual metal key for my room’s door. It had been a while since I had seen one of those, and I knew instantly that I had found the right place to stay.

My room was small, but clean and functional. I unpacked my travel bag and took a walk along the lakeshore. I found some colorful rocks along the way and placed them in the pocket of my hoodie. The wind off the lake was clean and refreshing. If I couldn’t sort out my feelings in this wonderful spot, then I was a hopeless mess.

I spent the week walking the shoreline, eating in the diner two doors down from my motel, and simply relaxing. It was nice not to have anywhere to be at a certain time. Well, almost no place to be.

I had settled into the habit of having tea with Marta in the lobby of the motel a few times a day. She was a lovely woman who was proud of her numerous grandchildren, and I had seen pictures of all ten of them.

Marta had been extremely tactful so far and only asked polite questions about where I was from and my occupation, but today it seemed that her curiosity was getting the better of her. When I refilled our tea mugs and returned to sit on the lobby sofa with her, I was expecting to hear more about one of her grandchildren’s latest antics, but instead she patted my knee and asked, “What are you running from, Sweet Girl?”

“I’m not running,” I started to fib, but the look she gave me told me that she could see right through me. “Okay, I am running because I’m trying to stall having to make a decision between two men.”

“That’s a good problem to have.” She chuckled as she said it, but then she turned serious. “I had two men who wanted me once, and I’ve wondered every day since then if I ended up with the right one.”

Her words surprised me. I had expected some hogwash about following your heart and knowing the right answer deep down. I didn't want to spend the rest of my life regretting my decision, or even questioning it.

"How did you decide between them?" I asked her. I was truly curious about how she made her decision, and I was hoping for a better solution than the flip a coin or eeny-meeny-miney-mo options that I had been considering.

She answered me sadly, "I waited so long that one of them dropped out of the race. Not making the decision became my decision, because I only had one option left."

She was deep in thought when she said, "I loved my Hal." I already knew that Hal was her late husband. She had tears in her eyes as she continued. "We had a wonderful life and family together. I wish that I had chosen him, though, instead of just taking him because he was the last man standing. He deserved to be my pick."

She gave me some advice then. "Don't wait too long, Honey. Make a decision and stick with it. Let the one you choose know without a doubt that he is the one you want." I nodded at her. Her suggestion made sense, and it was what I wanted to do more than anything. It was just such an enormous, important choice, and I didn't want to screw it up.

I suddenly wondered about the other man. Did he still pine for Marta? Had he moved on and built a life for himself? Was he happy? As if reading my mind, Marta said, "Danny, the other boy, got married shortly after Hal and I did. I think people call him Dan now, but he'll always be my Danny."

I smiled, trying to picture a young Marta with Hal and Danny fighting for her attention. The similarities between our stories were striking, and I had to know if she felt like fate had stepped in or if she could have been happy with either man.

"Do you think you and Danny would have had a good life together, if things had worked out differently?"

She considered for a moment before answering. “Yes,” she finally answered, nodding. “We would have had a happy family life together, but things turned out the way they were meant to be.”

What was left of the tea in our mugs had gone tepid, so I rose to take them to the sink. After I washed them, I turned to ask Marta a question before going back to my room. “Are you sure Danny is still married?” At her perplexed look, I continued. “His wife could have passed away. They could be divorced. It’s probably worth checking into.”

She sat there for a moment, pondering that before responding. “Yes, I think that might be worth looking into.” We grinned at each other, and I walked outside to return to my room. I had a good feeling that Marta might soon be getting her chance with the one that got away.

Chapter 39

My week at Marta's motel had gone by quickly. I had spent the time soul-searching, yet I still wasn't any closer to having a decision about which Davis twin was right for me. Before leaving, I promised to call Marta soon to let her know what I decided. I didn't mention it, but I would also want to know what she found out about Danny. I secretly hoped that this would be the right time for Marta and Danny to be together.

We gave each other a hug, and I headed home to face the music. I wouldn't be able to avoid Seth and Sam forever, or one of them would likely give up on me, like Danny had on Marta. Or worse yet, both of them could give up. This indecisiveness wasn't fair to any of us, so I needed to just make a decision and stick with it.

I fretted all the way home, making up my mind and changing it numerous times. *This is ridiculous.* I finally told myself. *I don't deserve either of them, so I should just let them both go.*

I didn't know if I had the strength to do that, but I knew it would be best for all of us. The idea of facing either of the brothers while I was with his twin was unfathomable. It would be awkward and uncomfortable for all three of us. *They really would be better off without me.*

The fact that I had slept with both of them would just cause bitterness and jealousy between them. They had already had a fight because of me. I didn't want to cause any more turmoil in their lives.

The answer to my dilemma had been staring me in the face the whole time. I just hadn't been willing to admit it because I didn't want to give them up. I needed to let them go, though. It was the healthiest choice for all of us.

They would be able to move on with two different women, and I could move on with my life. I had a perfectly happy, fulfilling existence before I met them, so I could be content without them.

It would take a while to get over the heartache of losing them, but it was something I needed to do for all of our sakes. It would be so difficult to give them up, but I vowed to be strong and stick with my decision.

When I walked into our house, Courtney asked me immediately, “So, who is it going to be?”

“Neither of them.” She looked at me like I was crazy, so I continued. “They are identical twin brothers, and I have slept with both of them. There isn’t a good way to move on with either of them now. I don’t want to mess up their relationship with each other, any more than I already have. Besides, it would be so awkward to be around the brother that I didn’t choose. I can’t have a future with either of them, and they are both better off without me.”

“First of all, either of them would be lucky to have you. There is no one better than you.” Courtney was adamant, so I didn’t bother to argue with her. “Secondly, you’re all adults. People sleep together all the time. Sure, it might be awkward at first, but you’ll all move on and probably even forget about it eventually.”

I couldn’t imagine ever forgetting about sleeping with Seth or Sam. “It’s just not in the cards,” I said to Court. “I think we’ll all be better off if I just let them both go.”

“I thought you really cared about them?”

“I do,” I answered simply. Then I added, “No one said it would be easy.” I gave her a sad smile before carrying my bag up to my room. Once in my room, I shut my door and texted Sam and Seth. I sent them both the same message. *‘I can’t see you anymore.’*

My phone buzzed with responses almost immediately. Seth’s text read, *‘So, you’ve made your decision? Can we talk?’*

Sam’s message said simply, *‘I don’t accept that. I’m on my way over.’*

I sighed and slid down to the floor. I had been a coward to try to end things with them by text message. They deserved better, and it appeared

that they were both going to demand more. I just hoped that I had the willpower to resist them in person. I silently vowed to stick to my guns.

Chapter 40

I was surprised to see Seth's Jeep pull in as I sat on the front porch swing. I had been preparing to see Sam first. Seth carried a large bouquet of happy-looking daisies and colorful wildflowers, which he handed to me when he reached the porch.

"Thank you. I'll go put them in water." I used the excuse to have a minute to go in the kitchen and gather my thoughts. I found a classic Ball jar to put the arrangement in and set them in the center of our table. Then, I took a few deep, calming breaths before walking out to join Seth on the porch swing.

We sat side-by-side quietly for a few moments. Seth broke the silence by saying, "You've chosen Sam." He didn't pose it as a question. It was more of a resigned statement.

"No," I answered him. "I'm not going to be with either of you. It's too awkward. I've messed things up too much."

"I thought we had something special. I thought we were falling in love." His words nearly broke my heart because I thought the same thing.

As I had known would happen, Sam's Porsche pulled into the drive. Seth didn't seem shocked either. When Sam eased his long, lean body out of the low sports car, I saw that he had brought roses, dozens of them. The brothers nodded solemnly at each other in greeting as Sam held the red flowers out to me.

I muttered something about putting them in water and ran for the kitchen. I busied myself finding the good crystal vase and putting the huge bouquet of long-stemmed red roses in it. When I placed the vase on the table next to the jar of wild flowers, tears welled in my eyes.

The flower arrangements were great representations of the brothers. One was wild, fun, and free. The other was elegant, beautiful and dangerous. *How could I choose between the two? I couldn't.* The answer was as

simple as that. I strengthened my resolve to go out and tell them that they both needed to move on. It really was the best thing for all of us.

Sam was the first to speak when I returned to the porch. “So, you want to be with him, then?” He spat out the question. He was standing near the porch stairs, and I had stopped awkwardly between him and the swing where Seth sat.

“No, I’m not going to be with either of you. I’ve made too much of a wreck of things, and you both deserve to be with someone who loves you and only you.” They were both just looking at me, so I continued. “It would just be too uncomfortable if I was with one of you. It doesn’t make sense.”

“This is bullshit.” Sam was angry. “We both care about you, Abby, and we are all adults here. Choose one of us, then the other one will go off and lick his wounds for a while. In time, we will all be fine. No awkwardness needed.”

He was simplifying it too much, and I wasn’t explaining it right. I couldn’t seem to formulate words that would make them understand. I knew what I meant and that was all that mattered. As I looked at these two identical-on-the-outside, near-perfect men, and tried to explain why I couldn’t be with either of them, I was exhausted.

“Just go. Both of you please go.” I could tell that they were each considering putting up a fight, but I shook my head sadly, and they both respected my request and left.

I went in the kitchen, looked at both sets of so gorgeous, but so different flowers, and sat down at the table and sobbed.

Chapter 41

The shadows of dusk were starting to creep across the kitchen, so I went up to shower. Then I flopped on my bed and cried myself to sleep. I tossed and turned all night and awoke certain that I could have been happy with either one of the dark-haired, green-eyed, sexy-as-hell Davis twins, if the other didn't exist.

They both did exist, though, and they were both amazing. I cared about each of them too much to choose the other one. I had royally screwed up any chance with either of them, so I needed to pick up the pieces of my life and move on without them. We would all be better off without the sick love triangle that I had inadvertently created.

I showered again in the morning and walked to work on autopilot. A blaring horn snapped me out of my daze when I started to cross the street in front of a car to get to Eck, Meck & Dreck. Annie was standing just inside the door of the shop and ran out to get me.

"Be careful, Sweetheart!" She waved to the car in apology as she put her arm around me and swooped me into the safety of the shop. "No boy is worth losing your life over."

"I'm sorry." I wasn't sure why I was apologizing. She seemed concerned about me, though, and I didn't want her to worry.

"No need to apologize. I just love you, and I don't like seeing you so upset, especially over a boy." Then she added, "Or two boys. Tish tosh." She waved it off, as if it were an everyday occurrence for a person to fall for two men.

As if reading my mind, she went on, "You know, I was once in love with two boys." Her revelation surprised me. I had thought I had heard all of Annie's stories.

She seemed lost in thought as she continued. "One was my high school sweetheart. Adam was kind, and sweet, and wholesome, and good-

looking. He was a star athlete at our little high school." She smiled as she described him, obviously remembering him fondly. "Everyone thought we would end up together."

I nodded, wondering about the other boy. She sighed deeply before continuing. "The other boy, J.D., was a rebel. He was dark and dangerous, and handsome-as-sin. I couldn't seem to resist the magnetic pull I felt towards him, even though I could sense that he didn't care enough about me. At one of Adam's football games, J.D. lifted my skirt, removed my panties and stuffed them into the pocket of his jeans. Then he took my virginity standing behind the locker room."

She paused before continuing, lost in thought. "It was glorious, and I couldn't get enough of J.D. after that. We spent the next few weeks screwing any place where we could find a modicum of privacy. It broke Adam's heart, but I was so enamored with J.D. that I couldn't help myself. I was desperate for J.D. to love me, and I kept telling myself that he did."

"I let myself believe that he felt about me the way I felt for him, until one day after school, when I ran out to jump in his car for a ride home. I had an hour before my Mom would be home from the salon, and I planned to enjoy every minute of it naked in my bed with J.D."

"To my horror, I found him in the driver's seat of his cherry-red muscle car leaning his head back on the head rest with the blonde, curly ponytail of the head cheerleader bobbing in his lap. He had the audacity to smile at me as she blew him. I slammed the car door shut, and she didn't even stop sucking his cock long enough to turn and see who had seen them. She was under his spell as much as I had been."

I shook my head, uncertain about what to say. I had let lust get in the way of a wonderful relationship as well. Complete sexual attraction to another person was difficult to ignore. *Did we all have to choose between steady, dependable love, and hot, frantic sexual desire?*

Annie's affair with J.D. had ruined her relationship with Adam, and she had ended up losing them both. It made me curious about why she had encouraged me to choose Sam, and I questioned her about it.

“Sweetie, I was never going to be happy with Adam after feeling that intense attraction to J.D. Even if I hadn’t slept with J.D., I would have always wondered about him. You can’t deny that kind of pure, animal lust. If you have the chance to enjoy it, you should grab it, even if it doesn’t last. Let the consequences be damned.”

I contemplated her words. It was true, I would never forget my amazingly hot time with Sam, and I couldn’t bring myself to regret it. I was sorry for the pain it had caused Seth, but if I could take it all back, I didn’t think I would have the strength to do it.

Annie continued, saying, “What I felt with J.D. was a once-in-a-lifetime, sensational experience, and I wouldn’t give up those wonderful memories for anything, even though it didn’t last. It sounds like you feel that sense of complete exhilaration with Sam, and it is a rare and beautiful thing that you should enjoy while it lasts. Besides, just because J.D. was a cheater doesn’t mean that Sam is.”

I understood now why Annie wanted me to choose Sam. I had tasted the forbidden fruit, just like she had. There was no turning back now. The difference was that I was the cheater in our scenario because I hadn’t ensured that things were finalized with Seth. I had ruined my own chance of enjoying that feeling of pure, sexual bliss for a longer duration. At least I would always be able to relive my memories of being with Sam.

Annie had a good, fulfilling life without either of the boys from her story. I could and would do the same.

Annie ended the story with another of her classic, jumbled quotes, “I have found that the sky is sometimes bluer on the other side of the rainbow, but once we experience it, it’s hard to go back.” Then she patted my shoulder and went to the storage room in the back of the store. I was pretty sure I had seen a tear glistening in her eye. I had never before seen Annie cry.

Chapter 42

I went through the next several days in a bit of a haze. I made it to work on time, and I responded appropriately to concerned questions, but I wasn't fully engaged. I just wanted to curl up in bed and sleep for a week.

When I saw Courtney walk into the shop and Annie step forward, I knew they were staging some sort of intervention. I didn't want either of them to worry, and I was touched that they both cared so much, but I wasn't ready to be my usual, perky self. I tried to come up with some words to let them know that I would be okay, but that I needed some time to heal.

"You know we love you." It was Courtney who spoke. "But you have to snap out of this funk." She moved to put her arms around both of us and we stood in a three-way hug. The store was empty of customers, so we were able to speak freely.

"Maybe the three of us should have a fun night together. We could rent a movie, order pizza, and drink martinis at my place." It was Annie's idea. She turned to Court and asked, "Do you think Joe would give you the evening off?"

"I'm sure I can work it out. I'll see if one of the other girls can cover my shift. It sounds fun."

I started to nod in agreement, but all I could think about was that I was suddenly overly warm. Sweat broke out on my lip and my stomach started roiling. I tried to swallow away the nausea, but still knew without a doubt that I was going to vomit. I couldn't make it to the restroom in the back, so I ran to the trash receptacle behind the counter and retched into that.

Once I was finished, I said, "Sorry you had to witness that. I must be coming down with some kind of flu bug."

I saw the concerned look that Courtney and Annie shared. Court said gently, "Ab, there aren't many flu bugs going around right now."

I wondered what she was getting at as I put a hand to my forehead and said, “Maybe it was something I ate.”

Both of them moved to face me on the other side of the counter. Annie looked at Court before asking delicately, “Is there any chance you could be pregnant?”

I shook my head automatically. “I can’t get pregnant.” It hurt my feelings that they would ask me this, when they both knew how much I had longed for a baby during my marriage.

Courtney talked slowly when she responded, as if speaking to a young child. “You think you can’t get pregnant because it didn’t happen during your marriage to that pinkie-dicked, cheating scumbag.”

“Right.” I drew my words out slowly like she had. “His new woman is pregnant, so I was clearly the one with the fertility problem during our marriage.”

“Unless that skanky ho-bag cheated on him.” Court’s words made my mind reel. I hadn’t considered that possibility.

I shook my head, trying to process. *Could I be pregnant?* I had been tired and emotional, but I thought it was just due to my love life being in the toilet and possibly a severe case of PMS. *Was my period late?* I tried to focus on the date and calculate how long it had been since my last menstruation.

“Whoa, whoa, here. Let’s not go jumping to crazy conclusions just because I threw up once.”

They looked at each other, and I could tell they were both thinking the same thing. “Did you use any protection?” It was Annie who voiced the question out loud.

“No, I didn’t think I could get pregnant.” I almost screeched the answer. That was the true answer for why I hadn’t used protection with Seth, but embarrassingly, I had been so hot for Sam that the thought of needing protection hadn’t even crossed my mind before jumping his bones. *How*

could I have been so ridiculously irresponsible?

Suddenly, my stomach sank. *If I am indeed pregnant, how will I know who the father is?* I voiced the fear aloud. “I slept with identical twins within a week of each other.” The idea made me cringe with shame. I winced, but continued. “If I’m pregnant, one of them is the father and one is the uncle, but how will we determine which is which?”

By the looks on Courtney and Annie’s faces, I could see that I was the last one to come to this realization. For once, Annie was the voice of reason. “Okay, let’s not get ahead of ourselves here. You might not even be pregnant, and if you are, they might have some new-fangled paternity testing that will tell you who the father is.”

“They are identical twins. They have identical DNA.” My eyes were open wide as I said the words. I was stunned by my own stupidity. *How could I have let this happen?*

“They can probably pinpoint the exact time of conception,” Courtney reassured me. “Let’s find out for sure if you’re even pregnant before we go worrying about any kind of paternity testing.”

Her words made sense, but I had a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach. I numbly went through the process of buying the test kit at the pharmacy and peeing on the stick, but the little plus sign only verified what I already knew. I was pregnant, and one of the Davis twins was the father, but which one?

Keep reading to take a *Sneak Peek* at the first chapter of the second part of Abby's story, **Making Choices.**
Available NOW.

Making Choices Chapter 1 – Sneak Peek

He tipped his head back to look deeply into my eyes as he entered me. His beautiful green eyes were slightly obscured by his thick, black eyelashes. I watched his pupils dilate, almost hiding the sea foam green rims, as he pressed his impressive length into me. I relished the thought that my body excited him. His body's physical reactions proved that he wanted me, desired me.

We were on my bed, completely naked, our bodies melded together. He was heavy on top of me, and it felt glorious. My body was on fire, my skin burning in each spot where we touched. It wasn't enough. I wanted more. I entwined my body completely around his, wrapping my arms and legs tightly around him, pulling him closer, deeper.

I lifted my head to brush tender kisses along his neck and trailed my tongue along his collarbone. I caught a glimpse of us in the mirror of my rarely used vanity where I kept the stash of makeup that I applied only on special occasions. We looked like one entity. His skin was a few shades darker than mine. The disparity of our skin tone was the only clue as to where he ended and I began.

He caught me looking at us. He stopped moving, and we both looked at our sensual reflection in the large mirror. "We look amazing together, Abby, like we are meant to be connected to each other. Here," he reached a hand down between us to rub over my swollen clitoris. "And here," he moved his hand up to cover my heart.

I watched the reflection of my nipples hardening, reacting to the nearness of his palm. He saw it too, and smoothed his hand down along my bare skin to brush over one of the hard nubs. My mouth fell open with the wonderful sensation of it.

My eyelids were heavy with desire, but I managed to keep them open, looking at our images in the mirror. We both watched, mesmerized as he rolled my nipple between his index finger and thumb. I let out a cry of pleasure as the initial waves of ecstasy began to course through me.

He eased slowly in and out of me as we watched. It was like being voyeurs at our own hot sex show. The intensity of it was almost overwhelming. I couldn't tear my eyes away, and from the looks of it, neither could he.

My hands slid over his damp skin as he slowly circled his hips over me. I reached down to cup his firm butt and yanked it towards me, making us both groan with pleasure. "I love watching us fuck." I whispered the naughty words near his ear, completely turned on.

He stopped his movement and turned from the mirror to look down at me. "Look at me, Abby," he commanded. When I complied, he gazed deeply into my eyes. "This is so much more to me than fucking, Ab. Please tell me you feel it too."

"I feel it," I responded honestly, returning his direct gaze. His eyes softened as he dipped his head down to kiss me on the lips. The kiss started out achingly tender, but quickly grew in intensity. His tongue hungrily ravaged my mouth as his huge dick plunged into me. We became desperate for each other as our bodies frantically ground together. I couldn't get enough of him. No matter how much he gave, I still wanted more.

I needed release, but I didn't want this to end. He moved his lips to my ear, panting as he said the words. "I love you, Abby." That was all it took to send me flying over the edge. My hips were bucking, and my body was milking him as I cried out and pleasure pulsed through me. My contractions squeezed his thick cock as he moved over me, and he exhaled my name as he released his seed deep inside me.

I knew that I was dreaming, caught somewhere between the state of sleeping and being awake. I wanted to stay in this fabulous dreamland where the reality of my confusing situation didn't exist, where I knew exactly whom I wanted and he wanted me back. Where I felt loved.

I fought to stay on the brink of sleep, even as my brain started to become aware. I tried to go back to my perfect dream, but it was already fading. I desperately attempted to return to it. My subconscious had made a choice between the Davis twins. It knew which man I truly wanted to be with in the deepest reaches of my soul, and I needed to find out who it was.

I fought my way back to the dream by picturing us lying together, spent and exhausted from ravaging each other. His penis was still inside me, connecting us. He was dead weight on top of me. I rubbed my fingers gently along his strong back.

Who was I with in my dream? I needed to know. Was it sweet, kind, caring, tender Seth Davis? Or was it his darker, more dangerous, more sensuous identical twin brother, Sam Davis? They were both wonderful men. I would be lucky to have either of them, but which one did I truly want? I had to find out before I became fully awake.

The shoulder scar was the easiest way to tell who the man in my dream was. Sam had a scar on his shoulder from saving his twin during a swimming accident on the lake. Seth didn't have a scar. I eased my hand up to my dream partner's shoulder.

I didn't feel anything. Would I feel it, if it were there, though? I wasn't certain if Sam's scar was raised. I didn't remember feeling it before. I knew that it was visible, though. I had seen it. I turned towards the mirror and strained to see his shoulder. The mirror was on the opposite side of where the scar would be, so it was difficult to see the correct area.

I lifted my head, craning my neck, trying to see the right spot. I peered around trying to get a clear view, but the area I needed to see was just out of sight.

Suddenly, my eyes flew open, and I was fully awake. I hadn't been able to glimpse the area of shoulder that I needed for confirmation, but I knew without a doubt whether I had wanted to see the scar or not.

Don’t miss out on the rest of Abby’s story:
***Making Choices* ~ Book 2 of The Davis Twins Series**

Who is the father of Abby’s baby? Is it sweet, wonderful, kind Seth Davis or dark, dangerous, sexy Sam Davis?

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About the Author – Ann Omasta

These bios are generally rather dry, so I thought I'd shake up the format a little bit. Here are ten not-so-interesting tidbits about me:

1. I despise whipped cream. There, I admitted it in writing. Let the ridiculing begin.

2. Even though I have lived as far south as Key Largo, Florida and as far north as Maine, I landed in the middle.

3. If I don't make a conscious effort not to, I will drink nothing but tea morning, noon and night. Hot tea, sweet tea, green tea - I love it all.

4. There doesn't seem to be much in life that is better than coming home to a big dog who is overjoyed to see me. My other family members usually show significantly less enthusiasm about my return.

5. Singing in my bestest, loudest voice does not make my family put on their happy faces. This includes the big, loving dog referenced above.

6. Yes, I am aware that bestest is not a word.

7. Dorothy was right. There's no place like home.

8. All of the numerous bottles in my shower must be lined up with their labels facing out. It makes me feel a little like Julia Roberts' mean husband from the movie 'Sleeping with the Enemy,' but I can't seem to control this particular quirk.

9. I love, love, love finding a great bargain.

10. Did I mention that I hate whipped cream? It makes my stomach churn to look at it, touch it, smell it, or even think about it. Great - now I'm thinking about it. Ick

On a serious note, I am so excited to have written my first contemporary romance novels, which comprise The Davis Twins Series. I hope that you enjoyed reading about Abby's passionate journey to discovering her sensuality and the complicated love-triangle that ensued, as much as I loved writing about it!

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Taking Chances

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