



Tangled Up

THE PACT BOOK 3

KATE HUNT

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BOOK 3

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CHASE

Forty minutes into working on these stubbornly tangled string lights, I'm tempted to give up. It feels like I'm never going to get them undone.

Then I remember the reason I'm doing it, and I start working on them again.

It's stupid, really. I'm doing this all in hopes of charming Lolly, but there's ultimately no point in it. She's my tenant and I can't pursue her. And even if she wasn't my tenant, she's too young for me.

Sure, at twenty-five, she's a woman through and through. But why would she go for a man twelve years older than her? That's the part I just can't get over.

Last year, on a whim, I put up some string lights on the exterior of the house. A few nights later, I was outside grabbing a package when Lolly came home. Before heading around to the side door—the entrance to her half of the house—she called out hello to me and gushed about how much she loved the lights I had put up.

“They're so pretty, Chase,” she said, pressing a hand to her heart. “I love them.”

And now here I am, a year later, putting them up again. Or attempting to, anyway. How the hell did these get so tangled up?

I tug one of the strings through a loop, and the mess finally starts to come undone. There. Finally. Feeling encouraged, I work on getting the rest of it straightened out. At last, it's all

untangled. I carefully loop the lights over my left arm and carry them over to the ladder that I already set up.

The hooks that I installed last year are still in place, so this time, all I have to do is hang up the lights. I'm hoping I can finish getting these up before Lolly gets home, because I'd like it to be a nice surprise for her. In addition to last year's lights, I bought some new ones, too. The new ones have a setting that makes them twinkle. I've got a feeling she'll like that.

Tucking the string lights into the hooks along my siding, I make my way up the side of the house. When I reach the second story, I install as much as I can, then climb down the ladder so I can shift it over a few feet. After repeating this a few times, I've made my way over to Lolly's bedroom window. Her curtains are open, but the lights are off since she isn't home.

Then, suddenly, the lights turn on. I freeze at the sudden flood of brightness.

The ladder I'm on is just to the side of her window, so she doesn't see me as she walks into her room. While I curse under my breath and try to decide the best thing to do, she continues to not realize that I'm there. I know that if she sees me, I'll be able to explain what I was doing at her window... still, I don't want to scare her or make her uncomfortable. That's the last thing I'd want to do.

Okay. She's gone now. Good. The lights are out again, too. I'm guessing she's going downstairs to fix dinner, which means I have a while longer to finish installing these lights.

I descend the ladder, shift it over a few feet, then climb back up. I'm able to install the lights all the way over her window before I have to go back to the box on the deck to get another string of lights. This new string is less tangled, but still requires some wrangling.

Now back up the ladder again.

I've just reached the top rung when Lolly's bedroom lights flick on again. This time, she walks into her room in nothing but a bath towel. Her hair is wet and falling over her bare

shoulders. At the sight of her, my hands grip the sides of the ladder tightly and my cock instantly goes hard.

Fuck. I need to back down this ladder as quietly and as quickly as I can.

And yet I don't.

Oblivious to my presence, Lolly walks over to her closet and searches through her clothes. I have such a clear view of her that I can see a drip of water run off her hair and down the middle of her back.

Leave, I tell myself. Now.

Lolly decides on what she's going to change into and throws the clothes onto her bed. Then she pulls off her towel, unknowingly exposing her backside to me. In that instant, it's too much, it's too dirty and wrong, and I force my eyes away.

But not before I get a glimpse of her perfect round ass and sumptuous curves.

LOLLY

I know Chase is watching me. I'm sure he thinks I don't realize he's there, but I've known all along. It's a little evil of me to tease him like this, but you know what? I'm tired of him acting like he can't make a move.

So here I am, showing him what he could have.

This sort of naughty behavior isn't the norm for me. I've always been the good girl—straight A's, no speeding tickets, and I always write thank you notes. I've never been one to even consider breaking the rules. But the past three years of living in Chase's house and getting to know him little by little has slowly and surely made me crazy with desire. I shouldn't want him, but he's all I want.

If I was really brave, I would turn around right now. Or I would drop something on the floor so I could bend over and show Chase how wet and ready I am. Or, even better, I would crawl onto the bed and touch myself while he secretly watched through my window.

But as sexually frustrated as I am, I'm too shy to do any of those things.

It's up to him to make the next move.

I can hear him making his way down the ladder now. I can tell he's trying to be quiet about it, but you can only be so quiet doing something like that. Disappointment thrums in my chest, although I don't know what I expected him to do. Smash the window and barge in and fuck me?

The thought is so ridiculous that a laugh bubbles out of me. Chase is undeniably a manly man, but he's not a caveman.

I put on the clean clothes that I just pulled from my closet and towel off my hair. As I'm bringing my towel back into the bathroom to hang it up, I hear Chase's footsteps on the other side of the wall.

It sounds like he's going into his bedroom.

I quickly hang up my towel and return to my bedroom. Climbing onto my bed, I press an ear against the wall. I don't hear anything at first, but then I catch a sound—a low groan.

Heat pulses between my legs as I ache to hear more. I have no doubt that he's over there jacking off. I've heard that low groan countless times before. The first time I heard it, I jealously assumed that he was having sex with someone, but then it became obvious that he was alone. He's *always* alone. Aside from his brothers or his parents stopping by, it's always just him.

If only he knew that it didn't have to be that way.

If only he'd ask, I'd be his.

Hours later, I wake up in the middle of the night to a different kind of sound—one that makes my chest tighten with worry. A cat is meowing outside. The poor thing sounds distressed.

Shaking off sleep, I slide out of bed, grab my phone, and groggily make my way downstairs. Fumbling with my shoes, I walk outside into the freezing cold night. Tiny snowflakes are falling silently through the air. It's a beautiful sight, but I can't admire it right now. Where is that poor cat?

Using the flashlight on my phone for light, I start searching the yard. The sound of the cat's desperate meows guides me closer to it. At last, I see it: it's a tabby cat. Oh, sweet thing. It's tangled up in the string lights.

“Hi, sweetie,” I say softly, crouching down and cautiously making my way closer. “It’s okay. I’m here to help.”

The cat gives me a panicked look and hisses as I extend my hand. But then, seeing that I don’t mean any harm, it calms down. It lets me get closer, and I try to free it from the mess it’s gotten itself into.

I’m still struggling to free it when Chase’s footsteps come around the side of the house. A beam of light falls over me, and I look over my shoulder at him.

“This poor thing somehow got itself wrapped up in the lights,” I say.

“Shit,” Chase says and comes closer. “Here. You hold the light, and I’ll try to free it.”

I do as he says. It takes a minute, but Chase is able to figure out how to get the strings untangled. Amazingly, he also manages to grab the cat before it flees.

“It doesn’t have a collar,” he says. “I wonder if it’s a stray.”

My heart tugs. “We should bring it inside and make sure it’s okay.”

Chase nods and keeps a protective hold on the cat as we bring it into the house. Once we’re inside, Chase transfers the cat into my arms and tells me he’ll be right back. To my surprise but delight, the little creature starts purring in my arms.

I take a better look at the cat. It’s scruffy but cute. It definitely looks like a stray. And...oh, shit. It’s definitely pregnant.

“Uh...Chase?” I call out.

“Coming,” he calls back. He steps into the room a moment later with two small dishes in hand. “Here’s some milk and some canned tuna. I think it’s the only thing I have on hand that a cat could eat.”

“Chase, look.” I nod toward the cat’s belly.

“What?...Oh.” He blows some air out from his lips. “Huh.”

“How far along do you think it is?”

“No idea. But it looks ready to pop.”

Chase sets down the dishes and I gently set the cat down on all fours. She dashes over to the dishes and starts to eat.

“I’ll bring her to the vet when they open,” Chase says.

“I’ll come with you,” I say, already feeling bonded to the cat. “You aren’t going to get rid of her, are you?”

Chase hesitates. “I don’t know anything about taking care of cats. And if she’s having kittens soon…”

“She needs a safe place to have them,” I point out. “Is it okay if *I* keep her? I don’t mean forever—just until the kittens are old enough to be adopted.”

“If that’s really something you want to do.”

“It is.”

“Okay. That’s fine.” He looks at me a second longer, then clears his throat. “After the vet tomorrow, we’ll get whatever kind of supplies you need.”

I break into a smile. “Sounds perfect. Thanks, Chase.”

He nods and looks down at the cat, who’s drinking milk now. “What should we call her?”

“Hmm.” I chew on my lip as I think. “Twinkle?”

When he smiles, my heart patters. If only he wasn’t so handsome.

“All right,” he says. “Twinkle it is.”

CHASE

After the vet gives Twinkle a full health exam and confirms that she doesn't have a microchip, we pick up some things from the pet store and then get Twinkle set up at home. I haven't been inside of Lolly's half of the house since before she moved in, and it's like walking into an entirely different home. She has a bunch of different art prints hanging on the walls, and all of her furniture is charmingly mismatched.

In her living room, Lolly has a small tabletop Christmas tree. It's cute, and she's decorated it with lights and some miniature ornaments, but seeing it makes me wish that I could get her a full-size one. There's not a whole lot of room for one in her living room, but if we shifted her furniture around a little...

...or if we knocked down the wall and joined our living rooms together...

I shake my head, silently chiding myself for such a ridiculous thought.

"What's wrong?" Lolly asks, looking at me with worried eyes.

"Nothing. Everything's good." I look around at everything we've gotten set up for the cat. "What do you think, Twinkle? Do you need anything else?"

Twinkle looks at me from her new cat bed, which she's currently kneading. The happy look on her face tells me all I need to know. I glance over at Lolly, who looks like she's holding back a big smile.

"What?" I ask.

“I just love how you talk to her,” she says. “It’s sweet.”

“She’s growing on me.”

“You can come see her anytime you like.” Lolly’s expression turns a little shy. “Would you like to stay for lunch? I made a pot roast last night.”

Her invitation catches me off guard. While I’m trying to decide if it’s a good idea to accept, my stomach growls in response.

Lolly laughs. “I’ll take that as a yes. Make yourself comfortable, Chase. I’ll heat up the food.”

Fuck, I love it when she says my name. I need to stop loving it so much.

I hang out in the living room with Twinkle while Lolly gets things ready in the kitchen. While I wait, I look at the framed photos on Lolly’s built-in shelves. There are photos of what I’m assuming are her family and friends. Despite myself, I feel a tug of longing to meet all the important people in her life.

“Okay! Lunch is ready!” Lolly calls from the other room.

I turn and start toward the kitchen, glancing at a curled-up Twinkle as I pass her by. In the kitchen, I find that Lolly has set out our steaming bowls of food in her breakfast nook.

“Hot apple cider?” she offers, holding up a glass jug.

“Sure. Thanks.”

I settle into the breakfast nook and Lolly joins me a minute later with two glasses of hot apple cider. The first sip I take warms my chest. And when I try a bite of her pot roast, I have to shake my head in disbelief.

“This reminds me so much of the pot roast my mom makes,” I tell Lolly.

“Oh, really? It’s interesting you say that, because this is *my* mom’s recipe.”

“Do you know where she got it from?”

“Hmm. No, but my mom subscribes to several different magazines, so I wouldn’t be surprised if it came from one of them.”

I smile. “I’m pretty sure my mom gets a lot of her recipes from magazines, too. Maybe it was from the same one.”

“That’s entirely possible.” Lolly smiles, too. “Hey, how’s your mom doing, by the way?”

“She’s done with her treatment and she’s doing a lot better. Thanks for asking.”

“Oh, I’m so glad to hear that, Chase. I don’t know if this is weird to say because I’ve never met her, but I’ve been thinking about her.”

I’m not sure what to do with that information. Does it mean anything? Nah. I think all it means is that Lolly is a good-hearted person who cares about people, even if she’s never met them.

“So does your family have any holiday plans this year?” Lolly asks.

I nod. “We’ll spend Christmas Day together, and then my parents also always throw a big holiday party right after Christmas.”

“Ah, that’s right. I remember you mentioning that before. It sounds really fun.”

The question I wish I could ask her hangs on the tip of my tongue. *Will you come with me, Lolly?* I don’t just want to ask her because my brothers and I made a pact to all find dates to bring this year. I’ve wanted to ask her that question the previous years that I’ve known her, too.

But I can’t ask it. Goddamn it. If only we had a different kind of relationship. And if only we weren’t so far apart in age.

“What are you doing for Christmas?” I ask.

“I’ll be driving to Portland to see my family,” Lolly says. “Oh, shoot. Will you be able to watch Twinkle when I’m gone?”

“Sure. Not a problem.”

“I’ll only be gone for a day or two,” she says. “As for the rest of Christmas break, I’m not sure yet how I’m going to spend it, but I’m looking forward to it. Honestly, just hanging out here and watching Christmas movies sounds pretty great. I’ll also need to do some school prep, though, of course.”

“You’re still teaching first grade, right?” I ask, remembering that she mentioned that in one of our previous brief conversations.

She smiles. “Yep. I have a really fun group of kids this year.”

I can totally imagine her standing at the front of a classroom, commanding the attention of a bunch of six- and seven-year-olds. I’m sure she’s a natural at it. She definitely has maternal vibes.

“Hey, I’ve been wondering, how are your other properties doing?” Lolly asks. “You just fixed one up, right?”

It makes me feel good that she remembered. “That’s right. I’m about to put it up for rent. If you know anyone who’s looking, let me know.”

“Would it be a good rental for a married couple with a newborn?”

For a split second, my mind goes to that ridiculous place again, imagining the two of us as a married couple, our swaddled baby cradled in her arms.

“It’d be perfect for that,” I say.

“Oh! Well, then yes, I know someone who it would be good for. A close friend of mine and her husband are looking for a new place to live. They have a six-week-old baby, and the apartment they’re in isn’t cutting it anymore.”

“I’d be happy to show the property to them.”

“That’d be amazing. Thanks, Chase. I’m excited to let them know.”

When I finish eating, Lolly offers me seconds, but as much as I want to take her up on that offer, I know I need to limit my time here. It’s too much of a tease, spending time with her like this. I’m starting to imagine too many unattainable things.

Lolly stacks our bowls and carries them over to her sink. I pick up our empty glasses and follow in her steps. I'm about to set the glasses on the counter when Lolly says, "You can put those over here in the sink. Thanks."

I move closer to her and lower the glasses into the kitchen sink. Lolly is washing the bowls, a pair of cherry red dishwashing gloves on her hands. When she looks up and smiles at me, I can see the subtle flecks of amber in her brown eyes.

"Do you have time to stay for dessert?" she asks, her voice soft and sweet.

Then I know I'm really out of my mind, because all I can think about is her thick thighs and how badly I want to taste the honey between them.

"I need to get back," I say hoarsely.

"Okay. I understand."

"Maybe another time," I say, baffled at myself even as I'm saying it. What am I doing? I can't tempt myself again like this. It's going to kill me.

"Sure. Sounds good," says Lolly, still smiling at me. "Thanks for all the help today, Chase. It was super cool hanging out with you."

LOLLY

Thanks for all the help today, Chase. It was super cool hanging out with you.

Ugh. I still can't believe I said that to him yesterday. What am I, twelve years old? No wonder he didn't make a move when he was here.

I drum my fingers on my hips as I debate what outfit to wear today. What do you wear when you're spending more time with the man you have a major crush on? I guess it doesn't matter. It's not like a cute outfit is going to undo my awkwardness from yesterday.

I check the weather on my phone, see that there's a good chance of snow, and opt for a plain but thick sweater from my closet. I put on some warm pants, too, and then grab my wool coat. Twinkle is curled up in her cat bed, so I don't disturb her on my way out. As I pop over to Chase's door, a few nervous butterflies flutter in my stomach.

Those butterflies multiply when he answers the door. Everything about the man standing in front of me makes me feel overrun with desire. It's his height, his muscular build, his tousled hair, his magnetically blue eyes. It's the way he's close to his family, and the way he went through all that trouble for Twinkle yesterday. It makes me want to take care of *him*.

"Ready to go?" Chase asks. I nod. As we get into his truck, he asks, "You said your friend's name is Josie, right?"

"Yep. Josie and Mark." I glance over at him as he backs out of the driveway. "You don't mind me tagging along, right?"

“Nope. It’s fine.”

We drive for a few minutes in silence. Then Chase asks, “How’s Twinkle doing?”

“Good. She’s made herself at home.”

“Glad to hear it.”

Is it just me, or is he acting a little weird? Compared to yesterday, he seems reserved. Was he that put off by my lame comment about it being super cool to hang out with him? Or maybe I did something else wrong?

“Oh, look. It’s starting to snow,” I say, pointing out a snowflake on the windshield.

But Chase doesn’t say anything.

With a heavy feeling in my chest, I stay quiet for the rest of the drive.

Josie texts me just as we’re pulling up to the rental house.

“Josie and her husband are running late,” I tell Chase as I read the text. “She says she’s really sorry and that they’ll be here as soon as they can.”

“Okay.” Chase unbuckles his seatbelt. “I’m going to make sure everything’s good inside. Do you want to wait out here or come in?”

“I’ll come in.”

As we walk up to the rental, I admire the front yard. It’s small, but it’s really cute with its stone walkway and little shrubs.

“Did you do all this landscaping yourself?” I ask Chase.

He nods as he unlocks the front door and holds it open for me.

“Oh, wow,” I say, my attention shifting to the inside of the home. For an empty house, it feels surprisingly warm and cozy. Hardwood floors run throughout the rooms, and there’s

crown molding everywhere. Plus natural light floods the space. “Chase, this is beautiful.”

“Thanks.”

“I’m not just saying that to be nice. It’s a really lovely home. Can I see upstairs?”

He hesitates, then nods. “Sure.”

Keen to see more, I lead the way. My hand runs over the smooth banister as I make my way up to the second story.

At the top of the stairs, there’s an adorable reading nook and some built-in bookshelves. Then a hallway leads to more rooms. I step into each of the rooms, admiring the thoughtful layout of each. There are two bedrooms, then a bathroom, and then at the end of the hallway there’s the primary bedroom.

As I step into it, it’s so easy to imagine what it would look like fully furnished. A large bed here, with nightstands on either side of it; a dresser here; an accent chair over here. Oh, gosh, and the closet—it’s simply gorgeous.

“Josie is going to *love* this,” I say, smiling over my shoulder at Chase.

He’s leaning against the doorway, watching me. “I’m glad you think so.”

My eyes trail over to the windows. “Are those casement windows?” I make my way over and turn the crank handle to open one. Fresh, cold winter air hits my face, and I smile and poke my head out to peer into the back yard.

Then, all of a sudden, Chase is grabbing me from behind and yanking me back from the window. I gasp in surprise. “Chase—what are you—”

“Sorry, I—fuck, I was just worried you might fall out, and I—”

I’m facing him now, still in his arms and still confused. “What?”

“I still need to put the screens in.”

I laugh. “You really thought I was about to fall out the window?”

“I—” He looks flustered and embarrassed. He pulls his hands away from me. “Sorry. It was a stupid reaction.”

“No, it’s okay. It’s sweet of you to look out for me.”

“Sorry again.”

“Stop apologizing.” I take a breath and work up the nerve to say the rest of what I’m thinking. “I liked having your arms around me.”

His eyes study mine. He shifts forward again, then stops, and leans back. The movement is so subtle that it would be easy to miss it. But I don’t miss it.

“Oh, fuck it,” he finally says, and steps forward and wraps his arms around me. I’m in shock as his lips capture mine.

Finally. All these years, all this wanting, and he’s finally kissing me. My body pulses with heat as I try to get over the shock of it. But that’s hard to do when a kiss is as good as this. I melt against him as his lips dominate mine, a feeling of explosive desire burning between us. *He really does want me.* It feels so good to finally know that it’s true, that it hasn’t just been in my head.

“Jesus, Lolly,” Chase groans. “You have no idea how badly I—”

But he’s interrupted by the loud chime of the doorbell.

CHASE

I should have waited until we were back at the house to kiss her. But I couldn't. Not after she told me she liked having my arms around her. I almost couldn't believe it when she said that to me, but the look in her eyes was too genuine to ignore.

And so I went against everything I knew I should do and kissed the fuck out of those sweet little lips.

Now that moment feels like a dream, because I'm walking around the rental giving a tour to Josie and Mark. Josie has their newborn wrapped up against her chest and they both seem to really like the rental. I'm glad about that, but I'm not fully present with them.

All I want to do is get Lolly home and into my bed.

"Well, I absolutely love this place," says Josie. "What do you think, Mark?"

"Yeah, it's great," he says. "This is exactly the type of rental we were hoping to find. Can we put a deposit down right now? I don't want to lose it."

I shake my head. "Don't worry about that right now. I'll hold the rental for you for the next twenty-four hours, and I'll get a lease sent over to you this afternoon. Take your time reading it over, and then we'll move forward from there."

"That sounds great," says Josie.

I shake both of their hands, smile at the newborn wrapped up against Josie, and walk them out. As Lolly and Josie hug goodbye, Josie says to her, "Thanks so much for arranging

this, Lolly. I owe you one.” Then Josie leans in and whispers something to her, and Lolly’s face flushes as she laughs.

“Um, let’s talk later,” Lolly says.

Then Josie and Mark get in their car and drive away. Lolly glances over at me, a faint blush still on her cheeks, and asks, “Is there anything else you need to do while we’re out?”

“No,” I say, fighting the urge to pull her into my arms right here and now. “You?”

“No.” She chews on her lip a little. “Let’s go home.”

I try not to speed on the way back, but I still end up pushing it. As soon as we’re parked in front of the house, I get out and rush around the front of my truck so I can open the passenger door for her. I can tell from the way she smiles at me that she likes that. I take her hand as we’re walking up to the house, and squeeze it as I unlock the front door.

I’m still holding Lolly’s hand as we step inside and I shoulder the door closed behind us. Then I take her other hand in mine and pin both of her hands above her head as I cage her in against the wall. She gasps at my forwardness, but then smiles, gazing up at me with fresh desire in her eyes.

“Hi,” she whispers.

I kiss her full lips. “Hi, beautiful.” I kiss her again. “You want this, right?”

“God, yes. I’ve wanted it for so long.”

“How long?”

“Since I first met you.”

I groan. “Fuck, Lolly. If I’d known…”

“I tried to let you know.”

“I’m sorry I was so oblivious.” I kiss her neck, savoring the softness of her skin. Each moment with her is getting me harder and harder. “I know we shouldn’t be doing this, but I can’t fucking take it anymore.”

She aches against me. “I’m all yours, Chase.”

I groan and release her hands so that I can pull her sweater up over her head. Her tits are nearly spilling out of her bra and I bend down to kiss her nipples through the satiny fabric. They grow hard against my kisses, and Lolly moans softly as she drags her hands through my hair.

I drop to my knees, kissing down her soft belly as I get her pants undone and tug them down off her hips. Her big luscious thighs make my cock strain against my fly. I tear down her panties and feel almost dizzy at the sight of her bare pussy.

“Spread your legs,” I demand.

She does as I tell her, her breath sounding a little shaky with nerves. I kiss the inside of her thighs, working my way up higher and higher. When I reach her pussy, I see how soft and pink and perfect she is, and I look up at her and say, “Is this your first time, baby girl?”

“Yes,” she says quietly.

“Good. I’m going to take care of you like you deserve.” I lick her clit, getting my first taste of her. It’s intoxicating. “Fuck, Lolly. You taste incredible.”

“Oh, God. I can’t believe how good that feels.”

I lick her more greedily, flattening my whole tongue against her pussy. She moans and spreads her legs wider. My cock is pushing so painfully against my fly that I have no choice but to reach down and free it. It springs up, hard and angry as I return my hands to grip her thick thighs.

“Come on my tongue,” I grunt between licks. “Let me taste it.”

Lolly’s breath catches. She strains her hips forward, her body tightening as she nears the edge. I suck her clit between my lips and bring her over the point of no return.

“I’m coming,” she gasps. “I’m coming!”

Her body shudders hard as she comes. I keep sucking her clit, pulling my mouth away only after I feel her fully relax. Then, taking her weight against me, I ease her down onto my lap.

The length of my cock presses up against her warm cunt as she sinks against me. As she catches her breath, her eyes meet mine, and she whispers, “Now it’s my turn to make you feel that good.”

My cock throbs between us. But I shake my head and say, “No. Today is about you.”

“But I want to.”

“Lolly, baby...”

“Please. Let me suck your cock. I’ve fantasized about it so many times.”

Fucking hell. I don’t have enough willpower to say no to that. I’m turned on as fuck as she scoots back and kisses her way down my abs. When she reaches my cock, she looks nervous for a second, then she slides her lips over me and takes me into her mouth.

I breathe heavily as she sucks me. At first she only takes a few inches into her mouth, but then she gains more confidence and takes me deeper. I can barely withstand the feeling of her warm, wet mouth tight around me. Too much more of this and I’m going to explode down her throat.

“Lolly, baby,” I rasp. “Come up here and sit on my cock.”

She pops my cock out of her mouth and pouts. “I want to taste your cum.”

“No. I need to come in your pussy first.”

She bites back a smile. “You’re really going to come inside me?”

“Yes.” The answer comes out as a growl. “Now get up here.”

She obeys me, moving up to straddle my lap. I reach around and grab her full ass cheeks, yank her closer, and then fist my cock and push the swollen head into her virgin cunt. We both moan as I penetrate her. I push in deeper, cursing at how tight she is.

“Chase,” she chokes out. “Oh, God. You’re so big.”

“You’re perfect for me, sweetheart,” I grit out, returning my hands to grip her ass. “Your pussy was made for me.”

I push into her deeper, giving her as much as she can handle. A few slow, shallow strokes help her get used to my size.

“More,” she begs.

I give her another inch, then another. She takes me with a moan.

“Good girl. You like being stuffed full of cock, don’t you?”

“Only by you,” she says breathlessly.

My cock pulses at her words. I squeeze her ass tighter, giving her more slow, powerful thrusts. As our mouths meet, the rhythm of my hips picks up. I fuck her faster, driving into her pussy with unapologetic demand.

“I’m going to come again,” she whimpers. “Come inside me, Chase. Make me yours.”

I curse under my breath as I feel myself near the edge of exploding. I dig my fingers into Lolly’s ass and she pants heavily as I pump up into her. A few seconds later, she cries out and her pussy pulses violently around my cock, triggering my own orgasm and milking out my cum.

LOLLY

THREE DAYS LATER

It's been half an hour since I woke up, and I haven't been able to stop smiling. I've barely moved a muscle, either, because right now, life feels perfect exactly as it is. I'm snuggled up against Chase, and he's sleeping soundly beside me, his broad chest slowly rising and falling with every breath.

We've basically been inseparable for the last three days. We've eaten all of our meals together, we've brushed our teeth standing side-by-side in the bathroom, we've taken showers together, we've talked about everything under the sun. In a way, it feels like we're making up for all the time that we spent wanting each other from a distance. It's funny, how much we have in common that we didn't realize. But I also love that we're such different people, too.

I wonder what our kids will be like.

I roll my eyes at myself for already thinking so far ahead into the future. Clearly the last few days have gotten me in a weird state of mind. I bet it's just all the sex that's making me think like that. I'm dick drunk or something. Isn't that what it means? Maybe I'm getting it wrong. I should probably look that up...

I carefully roll onto my other side and reach for my phone. When I tap the screen, I see that I missed a text from Josie.

Josie: Hey. Are you okay? I'm starting to get a little worried.

Guiltily, I realize that I never responded to her previous text from a few days ago. Shit.

Me: I'm so sorry, Josie! Yes, I'm fine. I've just been preoccupied the last few days. I'm really sorry for not texting you back sooner.

Josie: No, it's totally fine! Is everything ok?

Me: Yes. Everything's great. You were right about Chase. Something did happen after we saw you that day.

Josie: Hahaha. NICE. I knew it. So that's what you've been up to...

Me: I'm so embarrassed right now.

Josie: Don't be! You certainly waited long enough for the right guy. How was it?

Me: Intense.

Josie: Good intense, or...?

Me: Yes. Very.

Josie: I'm thrilled for you :)

Me: Haha! Thanks. I have a question for you. Is it normal to feel really attached to the guy afterward?

Josie: I mean, it's a special thing to share with someone.

Me: But what about fantasizing about the future? And thinking about marriage and kids and stuff?

Josie: Um...I mean...I don't want to say it's abnormal, but it's definitely uncommon. Wait, are you saying you're already thinking about those things with him??

Me: ...yeah

Josie: Lolly!

Me: It's not like I just met him!

Josie: I know! But you literally just started sleeping with him! Look, I don't mean to put a damper on things. I think it's sweet that you're so smitten with him. But please, please don't do anything crazy like elope with him. If you two are meant to be, you'll end up together. There's no reason to rush it.

Me: Weren't you the one who told me 'when you know, you know'?

Josie: Yes, but Lolly, I think you might just be infatuated with him?

Me: What if it's not just that? What if it's the real deal?

Josie is in the middle of typing a text when I feel Chase stir beside me. I quickly type out a text to Josie telling her that I have to go and I'll talk to her later.

"Hey, come 'ere," Chase says, his voice gruff with sleep.

I laugh as he pulls me into his strong arms, dropping my phone on my bedside table in the process.

"What're you doing? Texting your other boyfriends?" he teases me, kissing my shoulder.

"Yep, you caught me," I say.

"Such a naughty girl. I'm going to have to punish you for that." He rolls over me and settles between my legs. I moan as his hard-on aches against me, my panties already going damp.

Afterward, I drag him out of bed so we can make breakfast together. While we cook, Twinkle weaves in and out of our legs, purring up a storm.

"I think those kittens are definitely ready to come out soon," Chase says, eyeing Twinkle.

"Aww. I can't wait. I wonder how big her litter is going to be."

"I don't know, but please promise me you won't keep them all, Lolly."

I grin at him. "Does that mean I can keep one or two?"

"Uh..."

"What, you don't think I'd be a good cat mom?" I joke.

"Huh? No. You'd be a great cat mom. Or just a mom, period."

My heart squeezes. "That's really sweet of you to say."

"I mean it."

My toaster oven dings, but we both ignore it.

“And you’re going to be a great dad,” I say to Chase. “To cats *and* kids.”

He smiles, but his eyes go serious. “I’m hoping they’re the same cats and kids as yours, Lolly.”

My heartbeat is going wild now. “Really?”

“Really.” He keeps looking at me with those serious eyes of his. “If it wasn’t an absolutely insane thing to do, I’d marry you today.”

I freeze. This can’t actually be happening, can it? Real life doesn’t work like this.

“You’re right, that would be absolutely insane,” I say.

“So we definitely shouldn’t do it,” he says.

“I mean...” I laugh at the ridiculousness of it all. “Everyone would think we were crazy, right?”

“No question about it.”

“At the very least, we should wait a few months.”

His mouth quirks up in an amused smile. “That would be the sensible thing to do.”

“And if we ran off and got married, we wouldn’t be able to have a big wedding with our family and friends. We wouldn’t get to do all that planning, or have an engagement party, or anything like that.”

“Nope,” he says. “It would just be me and you.”

My heart is beating so fast that it’s almost hard to breathe.

“Just me and you,” I repeat.

CHASE

My brothers are all looking at me like I'm out of my mind.

Not that I'm surprised. If one of them dropped the kind of bomb I just dropped, I'd think he was nuts, too.

"What do you mean, you and Lolly are getting married this weekend?" Sean asks. "Lolly, as in, your *tenant*?"

I nod. "A lot has changed in the last few days."

The four of us are at the Frost & Fire, our go-to restaurant when us Reynolds boys get together. As it has for the last few weeks, Christmas music is jingling overhead. But our usual table was occupied, so we're sitting in a booth this time—which means we're all squished into a smaller space together and there's no escaping my brothers' incredulous eyes.

"I knew it," says Wyatt, shaking his head. "I *knew* you had feelings for her. But this is...wow. I don't know, man. It's pretty nuts."

Meanwhile, Mason's eyebrows are so furrowed that they're nearly touching. "I'm sorry. *What?* A lot has changed in the last few days, and now all of a sudden you're getting married? *This weekend?! What the hell are you talking about, dude?*"

"I know it sounds crazy," I admit. *If only they knew that I wanted to marry Lolly yesterday. It was her idea to wait so we could invite our families to the courthouse.* "I know it seems like it came out of nowhere. But what you guys don't know is that I've been fantasizing about this for years. Lolly's had my heart the whole time."

“But why the hell are you two getting married so fast?” Sean asks, his face still full of disbelief.

I shrug. “We both know what we want, and we don’t see any reason to wait.”

I can tell that my explanation isn’t convincing my brothers. I understand why it’s so shocking to them, but I don’t know how else to explain myself. If they could only witness all the emotions and thoughts I’ve had over the last three years with Lolly living in my house.

Guess it would have been a good idea to tell them about it before today.

“This is insane,” says Sean, reaching for his beer. “All three of you have taken our pact *way* too fucking seriously.”

“I’m not marrying Lolly because of the pact,” I say, my voice taking on an edge. “Don’t even suggest that.”

Sean rolls his eyes. “If you were so in love with her before, why didn’t you do anything about it until now?”

“I didn’t think I could!” I roar.

“Jesus! Calm down, Chase.”

“No. You know what? I’m pissed off,” I say, shoving myself out of the booth. As I rise to my full height, I look each of my brothers in the eye. “I expected you guys to be shocked. But I didn’t expect you to all be so unsupportive.”

Wyatt reaches for my arm. “Chase, we’re just concerned that you’re getting caught up in your feelings for her.”

“Oh, and you didn’t get caught up in your feelings for Macy? You basically got engaged after two seconds together, too, dude! And I was a hundred fucking percent supportive of you!”

“Chase—”

“Nope. I need some space right now.” I throw some money on the table and storm away from them. I know this isn’t going to solve anything, but right now, it’s what I need.

And so I leave the Frost & Fire. I get in my truck. And I start driving just to fucking drive. I don't know where I'm going, I just keep my hands gripping the wheel and my foot on the gas and my jaw held tight.

I'm at a stoplight when my phone buzzes and I get a text from Lolly.

As soon as I see it, I do a U-turn and rush home.

“There's five of them,” Lolly says, clasping her hands over her heart as she greets me. “Oh, Chase. They're the most adorable little things.”

I smile as I pull her into a hug. “How's our mama cat doing?”

“She seems good. Everything seems all right, from what I can tell.”

“I'm glad.”

Lolly's beaming smile fades as she studies my face. “Oh, no. What's wrong? Did your brothers not take the news well?”

“We can talk about it later,” I say, not wanting to ruin the happy moment.

“No, let's talk now. I can tell you're upset.”

“Really, Lolly, it's fine—”

“No, it's not.” She takes me by the hand and pulls me over to her couch so we can sit down. “Now tell me what happened.”

It feels good to talk about it with her, even though it's hard to admit that my brothers weren't supportive. As I tell her about their responses, Lolly nods and listens thoughtfully.

“I'm so sorry, Chase. It must hurt, them reacting like that.”

“I just don't get it,” I say, sighing. “Both Wyatt and Mason have had these crazy whirlwind experiences over the past few weeks. But now that it's happening to me, it's unacceptable for some reason.”

“Maybe they’re jealous that you’re getting married before them.”

“I don’t know. Maybe.”

“Or it might be because they don’t know me,” she says. “It’s probably hard for them to accept you having a serious relationship with someone they’ve never even met.”

“I’ve talked about you, though,” I point out.

She smiles. “You have?”

“Well...okay. Fine. Only in the context of you being my tenant, I guess.”

She laughs. “See? Of course they think it’s crazy that we’re getting married. With Wyatt and Macy, all of you have known her for years because your families are friends. And with Mason and Haley, they’ve been best friends forever so you guys have known her for a super long time, too. You and I might have spent the last three years getting to know each other, but your family really doesn’t have any idea who I am.”

Her argument makes sense. A lot of sense, actually. Now that I think about it more, if I was in my brothers’ shoes, I probably would have reacted exactly how they did.

“Yeah, you’re right,” I say, exhaling a long breath.

“So...what do you think?” says Lolly. “Should we delay the wedding for a little while so I can get to know your family first? Would that help?”

“I’m sure it would help. But...fuck, Lolly. I just want to be married to you already.”

She laughs and crawls onto my lap, straddling me. “I want to be married to you, too. But a little delay won’t kill us. We’ve waited three years to be with each other. We can wait a little longer.”

LOLLY

The next morning, I wake to the sound of faint, persistent tapping. Groggy and confused, I blink awake and look over at the man beside me in bed.

Chase is wide awake and his fingers are flying across the screen of his phone.

“What are you doing?” I ask sleepily, yawning as I snuggle up against him. Outside, a gentle snow is falling again.

“Texting my family. Telling them all about you.”

“What?” I frown at him, confused. “What do you mean?”

“Hold on. I’ll show you in a second.” He finishes tapping on his phone, then hands it over to me. I rub my eyes, then focus on the screen of his phone. What I see amazes me.

He’s practically written a novel about me in a group text to his family.

My heart squeezes as my eyes take in his words. It’s like a love letter, what he’s written.

“I want them to know exactly how I feel about you, and exactly how well I know you,” Chase says. “I still want you to spend time with them and show them how amazing you are, but it’s important to me to express all of this to them, too.”

“Chase, this is so sweet.”

“It’s necessary. They need to know how real this is.” He turns my face toward his and captures my lips in a tender kiss. “I love you, Lolly. And I always will.”

“I love you, too,” I murmur softly, and drop the phone on the bed as I melt into his kiss.

My heart pounds with fierce desire as Chase peels our clothes off and moves over me in the bed. When he presses kisses all over my curves, I feel so desired by him—and completely accepted for the woman I am.

“Tell me this is mine, Lolly,” Chase murmurs, rubbing his fingers over my slit.

“It’s yours,” I breathe, aching for him to fuck me. “My pussy is all yours.”

“Good girl.”

He fists his cock and pushes it into me. I moan and rock my hips against him, desperate for more. He obliges, giving me deep relentless thrusts right from the start. He fucks me like that until I’m close to coming, then flips me over onto my stomach and makes me sob with pleasure as he takes my pussy from behind, making me come so hard that I see stars.

“I love you so fucking much,” he grits out just before he spills his seed into me.

We’re both hot and breathless as we lay in bed recovering. After several minutes, and a few lazy, slow kisses, Chase reaches over to check his phone.

“Oh, man. I have a bunch of missed texts,” he says, pulling them up. He’s silent for a few moments as he reads them, and then he hands his phone over to me with a smile.

Mom: Wow. Chase, honey, I’m tearing up just from reading your text. I’m so happy that you’ve found the love of your life.

Dad: I’m happy for you too, son. We look forward to getting to know Lolly.

Wyatt: Yeah. Agreed. I’m sorry about yesterday, dude.

Mason: Me too. It’s obvious that she means the world to you.

Sean: I still think all three of you are crazy for getting engaged so fast, but you know what? I’m happy for you guys.

Mason: Pressure’s on, Sean.

Sean: Yeah, sorry, man, but I think I'm going to be the odd one out. I've got my big hiking trip, remember? There aren't many eligible women out in the middle of the wilderness.

Wyatt: You never know...

Mom: Chase, do you think Lolly would like to come over for dinner tomorrow night? We'd love to have her over, if she's available.

I smile as I hand the phone back to him. "You don't know how happy this makes me, Chase. Oh, and you can tell your mom I'd love to have dinner with them tomorrow." I pause, then ask, "Hey, any chance your parents or brothers want to adopt a kitten a few months from now, once they're old enough?"

"Hmm. Good question. We can ask all of them when we see them."

"Sounds like a plan."

"Speaking of plans," he says, snuggling me closer into him. "If we're not going to get married this weekend, when *do* you want to get married?"

"Hmm. Maybe the weekend after next?" I say, grinning at him.

"A New Year's Eve wedding? I like it." He leans in to kiss me, his hands digging through my hair.

"Hey, careful," I murmur between kisses. "You're going to get my hair all tangled up."

"Don't worry, beautiful," he says, moving over me again. "I'm a pro at getting things untangled."

Thanks so much for reading *Tangled Up!*

Sean's story is up next!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kate Hunt writes short, sexy, feel-good romances about irresistible men and the curvy heroines they can't live without. Kate is married to her high school sweetheart, unapologetically spoils her pets, and always has a love song stuck in her head.

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