

Rogue London

VERONICA'S

Little

VALENTINE'S DAY



🌀 HOLIDAYS AT RAWHIDE RANCH 🌀

VERONICA'S LITTLE
VALENTINES DAY

*A Holidays at Rawhide
Ranch Story*

ROGUE LONDON



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**VERONICA'S LITTLE VALENTINE'S DAY
A RAWHIDE RANCH HOLIDAY NOVELLA**

**By
Rogue London**

PROLOGUE



Veronica

THE BOTTLE SPUN AROUND AND AROUND. WHEN IT FINALLY came to a standstill, the round opening was pointing at me. The butterflies that had been hammering inside my belly turned into giant birds and I thought I would throw up.

I couldn't help but notice all the others rolling their eyes. Porsha, a perfect blonde who'd lost her V card with the family's gardener's son, cast a judgmental eye at me.

"Well, aren't you going to go into the closet and kiss Jacob?"

Her friends, Bianca and Juniper, laughed.

"Yeah, Veronica, your lover boy is waiting," Bianca added.

Harmony leaned in. She was my best friend, my only real friend in the group. It was no secret I'd been crushing on her older cousin, Jacob, since our families had started forcing us into the same social circles as children.

"Don't listen to them, V, you'll be okay. You know Jacob is Mr. Dependable."

I couldn't help the giggle. She was right. I could always count on Jacob to do the *right thing*.

Harmony glared at the group and told them they could shove their attitudes where the sun doesn't shine—in their freshly bleached butt holes.

A blush stole over my face at what she'd said. Did they really bleach their bottom holes? I flinched, imaging how painful that would be and for what? Why did they need their... Oh dear. A picture of Porsha getting nailed by the gardener's

son in the butt flashed through my mind and I just knew my pink-stained cheeks had turned a few shades darker. Maybe they were on to something. I mean, all three of them had confidence, something I sorely lacked.

“Harmony,” I whispered, “do you bleach your butt hole too?”

She rolled her eyes. “Don’t be ridiculous, V, now get going, Jacob’s waiting.”

I stood up on my wobbly legs and headed over to the closet. We’d been playing spin the bottle, first base version, thank goodness. At fifteen, I looked twelve as my body was slow to develop what the others had in spades—tits and ass. There was no way in hell I wanted to play spin the bottle strip or homerun. Jacob was nineteen and the oldest in our social elite friend group. I was sure he’d seen plenty of naked women, but I certainly didn’t need the comparison to them, especially by my crush, even if the closet was dark.

My hand gripped the doorknob for a moment while I took a deep breath and said a little prayer—*Please don’t let me make a fool of myself*—and opened the door. When I closed the door behind me, the light from the bedroom disappeared and I was momentarily blind. I felt a well of panic burble up inside and knew I’d be hurling the extravagant dinner we’d finished only an hour ago.

I grabbed the handle and wiggled, but it was locked. “Oh god,” I sobbed. “Let me out!” From the other side I heard a peal of giggles and then Harmony’s voice telling them to shut their holes. Warm hands gently gripped my shoulders.

“Shh, you’re okay, Veronica, just breathe.”

Jacob tugged me against him, and his size alone made me feel safe in a way my father never had. My parents weren’t bad people, they just weren’t fans of showing emotions. I blamed their ancestry. Everyone knew the British only showed emotions to dogs and horses. I’d only received hugs on special occasions, which resulted in me being physically awkward. Add to that my undeveloped body and lack of confidence, and you had a recipe for loneliness.

But this, right here with him, differed from any hug I'd ever received before. Jacob rubbed my shoulders and arms, while muttering words like *"you're okay now V. No one will hurt you, little one. You're safe with me,"* and on and on.

When my heartbeat calmed down from a rickety, rickety inside my chest cavity to a rat-a-tat-tat and the fluttering in my stomach reduced once again to only butterflies, I took a deep breath and slowly exhaled.

"Thank you, Jacob. I'm a little afraid of the dark."

A slightly amused chuckle reverberated through my body from his. "If memory serves, the dark is one of many."

He turned me around and even though I couldn't see his face, his minty breath reached me, and I wondered if he'd taken a breath mint before I came in. "Are you ready for your first kiss, Veronica?"

I pulled away from him to gaze into his eyes, which weren't really visible in the dark closet. "How did you know?" If Harmony told him... well, let's just say we'd have words.

Another light chuckle from him. "Just a guess. Well, that and I asked my cousin," he admitted.

"Right," I said with a snark.

"Now, now, don't be a brat."

"Or what?" I crossed my arms. Not that he could see me do it, which took away a little of the defiance I'd been feeling.

"Or this."

Before I could ask what, I felt a harsh sting on my bottom. "Ouch!" I couldn't see his smirk, but I knew him and was positive if the light had been on, I'd see a big ol smirk on his face.

"You spanked me," I accused.

"I did." His voice was huskier than before. "And I'll do it again if you misbehave."

My nipples instantly pebbled at the implied threat. One of his hands slid into my mass of blonde curls and tipped my

head back. “Tell me, Ronnie, are you going to be a good girl?”

His voice was a puff of air close to my ear. Jacob was tall and had about a foot on me. I visualized his lips only inches from mine. Then his minty breath hovered just beyond my lips. I allowed mine to part as I waited for his lips to claim mine.

Suddenly, there was a bang on the door.

“Eek!” I climbed up Jacob’s body like a spider monkey hanging on for dear life.

“Hurry up in there. We still have a second base for those of us past this juvenile stage.”

Jacob stiffened beneath me. “Bang on this door again, Juniper, and I’ll tell your parents you’ve been sneaking out at night to meet the football team.”

There was silence from the other side, but we waited another moment to see if they were going to be jerks again.

“Okay, monkey, you can climb down now.”

“Oh!” In my haste, I’d forgotten I was still clinging to him.

“On second thought, this is nice too.” Jacob wrapped his arms snugly around me, his hands cupping my bottom.

I relaxed into his grip and had angled my head for my first kiss when the door flew open. This time it was Harmony, and she looked panicked in the beam of light that shone into the murky depths of the closet.

“V, your place is on fire. Your parents have rushed back, but I thought you should know. Come on, Jacob can drive us.”

My kiss forgotten, Jacob dropped me to my feet and the three of us rushed from the massive mansion in Tuxedo Park, the home of Porsha and her parents. Usually, Harmony sat in the front when Jacob drove us places, but he’d directed her to the back seat, then proceeded to hold my hand on the forty-minute drive back to the city. His warm strength gave me the courage to face what lay before me. This wasn’t the first time this had happened while my parents and I had dined with their society friends.

Behind me, Harmony tested the constraints of her seat belt, leaning as far forward as she could to wrap her arms around me.

“It will be okay, Veronica. I’m sure the firefighters have put it out already. It won’t be like last time.”

Wouldn’t it? An involuntary shudder wracked my body. The last time we’d lost everything, every memento of my childhood had gone up in flames. It had taken me years to feel comfortable again in a new place, and here it was, happening again.

The previous fire happened when we’d lived down the road from Porsha’s family, but after the fire, my parents thought it wise to move us to a more central hub as they weren’t home much, and the fire had messed with my head. They’d purchased what I called a sky palace and bought me whatever I wanted to make up for what I’d lost. But it wasn’t the things they bought that I missed then, it was the special things like the teddy bear my father had bought me on my fifth birthday. The tickets I had pinned to my bulletin board from the play and ballet performances they’d taken me to. It was my first place ribbons from equestrian events I’d won.

You couldn’t buy those precious items at Macy’s or any other store. Those were tokens of my best memories that had meant the world to me. When we set up in the sky palace, it was supposed to be safe where nothing could go wrong, yet here we were, just a few years later. My gut told me this time would be the same, that all my recent memories would be gone, snuffed out by a fire that seemed to always find me. However, feeling it and seeing the reality of my words were two different things.

While my friends did their best to cheer me up and keep things positive, I sunk inside myself where it was safe. When we arrived, my gut proved right. Everything inside was gone and the burning embers laughed at me for being so naïve. I swore the next time I made a home I’d never leave, because if experience had taught me anything, it was when I was away from my space, things went devastatingly wrong.

CHAPTER I



Veronica

“SERIOUSLY, HARMONY, HOW ARE THINGS GOING AT RAWHIDE? I feel like I haven’t seen you in forever. When are you coming home for a visit?”

I knew I was firing too much at her at once, but that was my modus operandi, and she knew that about me. At least someone knew me. I sighed.

“That’s why I’m calling, V. I have news.”

My hand tightened around my cell phone. I just knew that whatever she was going to say would somehow affect me.

“Oh? That’s nice. So, things are going well then.”

Silence met me for a few uncomfortable seconds before she responded. “What’s wrong, V?”

What wasn’t wrong was more like it. “I’m not really sure, but I feel really empty, and I miss you so much.” It wasn’t the whole truth, but one thing I knew about my bestie is when the attention turned to her, she ran with it. Which was better than me trying to fumble through an explanation of how I was doing.

She knew I suffered from agoraphobia and that I’d been seeking treatment, but she didn’t know there had been no improvement in my condition. When last we spoke, I’d been optimistic about meeting my parents for lunch while they were in town for a rare visit. They could have come to see me, but they wanted to test if the money they’d been outpouring for my online treatments had paid off. Of course it hadn’t, and another shrink bit the proverbial dust.

But it wasn't my fault, they just weren't good at their jobs. I'd tried reasoning with my parents, but I could tell my response disappointed them. I wanted friendships and a boyfriend, but no one wanting a healthy relationship would hang out at my place exclusively, regardless of how nice it was.

"I have great news!" Harmony squealed through the phone.

I instantly pulled it away from my ear so I wouldn't go deaf. Now I understood what she meant when I was always the one squealing in her ear.

"Gray and I are getting married!"

Harmony had run away to Rawhide after a fiasco at a finishing school in New York. The teacher she had an altercation with ended up at Rawhide as her teacher once again and, after he laid down the law, they started dating. She was so lucky. I hadn't met Gray, but she talked about him all the time and I had respect for him in helping Harmony bloom. She was like the best version of herself now and was getting ready to put out her first novel. She'd come a long way since our childhood, and now she was getting married. I couldn't bury the little spark of jealousy. I didn't even have a boyfriend, and she was getting a husband.

I wished I was married and had a husband who would keep my demons at bay and make me a better version of myself. Living in constant fear of leaving home was a problem, one my parents had given up on trying to fix. After the last fire, I'd never gone to another society event again and slowly, over the last several years, I stopped going out altogether.

"That's amazing news. Congratulations!" I did my best to sound ecstatic for her, and I was, but I was also losing my one and only friend and it cut like a knife.

"You're my best friend, V. I need you to be here, to be my maid of honor."

It was my turn to have a few seconds of silence. Was she crazy? There was no way in hell I could go to Montana,

especially with my parents in Europe. There was no one here to guard our home. Not that I'd ever really felt this was my home, but still, this is where I lived and where my things were. Who would take care of them if I was in Montana?

Everything I needed was in this penthouse. *Not everything. There are no people, friends or men. You are all alone, Veronica, so how can you have everything?*

I hated that niggling voice that had invaded my thoughts a lot of late.

“Harmony, you know I love you, and want nothing more than to share in your happy blissful day.” *Yeah right!* “But I have agoraphobia. I couldn't possibly come there. I wouldn't even know the first thing about how to do that.”

The very idea of leaving the safety of my confines set off my anxiety. I hustled to my ensuite and grabbed a bottle of medication. “One sec.” I quickly swallowed the pill and took some deep breaths.

“Okay, I'm back.”

“Were you having a panic attack?”

“Uh. Yes.” A few awkward beats of silence followed.

“I have a solution.”

“Seriously? Hallelujah.” I thought she meant a solution to my condition, but I was way off. “How are you going to fix me?”

A peal of giggles came through the receiver. “It's easy. You just need to meet your Daddy.”

Heat spread up my neck and encompassed my entire face in record time. Thankfully, this was not a video chat, so she couldn't see the effect her words had on me. I tried to speak and had to clear my throat several times.

“What do you mean?” I barely got out before a fit of coughing, a reaction to the meds, overtook me.

“Hang on,” I croaked and ran to the kitchen for a glass of water. When I could speak, I repeated my question.

“Come on, V, it’s obvious you’re a Little and in need of a Daddy. I believe if you came to my wedding, I could help you find the Daddy of your dreams. Wouldn’t it be worth it to come here and be my maid of honor and meet the perfect Daddy for you?”

Well, that would be perfect, but I still didn’t know how I could accomplish it and said so.

“Remember Jacob?”

Of course, I remembered Jacob; he was the star of every fantasy I’d ever had and featured in all my pleasure sessions with B.O.B.—my battery-operated-boyfriend. When Harmony shared her experiences with me, I pictured it being me and Jacob.

He was the closest I’d been to a man who wasn’t my father. And the closest I’d gotten to first base. He was the one who’d driven me back to the city to see the multiple firefighters putting out the flames that had once been home. He’d been the one to hold me in his arms and tell me everything was going to be okay.

“Your cousin?” I played dumb.

“Yes! He has time off for my wedding to help get everything organized. He has already volunteered to come and get you and take care of you until you’re here, safe and sound.”

I hesitated. Jacob... there wasn’t anyone more trustworthy than him, but it still meant leaving my home and there was so much fear of what that meant. Those nasty fire demons would come and burn up everything. Even now I could see the flames laughing at me. My heart rate picked up.

“I’m really happy for you, Harmony, truly, but I’m not sure if I can do this.”

“Please, V. I know it feels like a lot and I understand. I never realized all the things hidden deep inside me until I met Gray. I didn’t know I was okay until I met Gray and made friends here at Rawhide.

“Believe me, there has been enough of a change in me to know that you would thrive here. With all my heart, I know your Daddy is here and waiting to meet you and when you two finally do meet, your life will change for the better, I promise.”

I’d been fingering a pulled thread on the duvet cover on my bed when I looked up and caught myself in the mirror. Studying myself from the outside, you’d never know I had issues. I’d developed but hadn’t grown, so other than being puny, I appeared normal. Maybe, just maybe, Harmony was right. Maybe I could do this and finally turn my life around.

“Okay, I’ll do it. But if I ruin your wedding, don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

Light laughter echoed through the phone. “Okay but be careful. I’d forgive you, but I’m not so sure about my Daddy as he can be less forgiving.”

Why did that both horrify me and excite me all at the same time? “H, what are the Daddies like at Rawhide?”

For the next half an hour, she shared stories with me about people I’d never met but suddenly wanted to. She shared about the antics of the Littles living on the ranch and how their Daddies dealt with unacceptable behavior. By the time we hung up the phone, I was in need of a different type of anti-anxiety therapy and pulled B.O.B. out of the bedside table, flipping on my favorite porn.

It was always spanking porn and always naughty schoolgirls or domestic discipline videos. Watching men chastise errant brats got me so completely riled up. I’d cheer for him when the woman over his lap tried to hide her bottom from his punishing hand or implement, and inevitably failed.

The more the women kicked and protested, the more I cheered for the Dom controlling the spanking. When she finally gave in, I would cheer for her and wished it was me facing a fresh perspective post discipline. I wanted to know what it felt like to not have control and not be able to escape my fate and be happy about it afterwards. Maybe if I acted bratty like some Littles at the Ranch, a Daddy would see how

much I needed him and come and give me my fantasy and, if I was super lucky, keep me for his own.

I watched as the woman squirmed when the man's large hand reddened her bottom. He kept her trapped over his muscular thighs... oh dear, that was so hot to see her jiggling bottom change from a pretty pink shade to red. "*Yasss! Get her,*" I cheered inwardly, as the woman in the video cried and kicked her legs.

The vibrator nestled against my hardened nub sent a tingling sensation through my lower belly and along my spine. A bolt of heat spread like a wildfire out of control and my body arched off the bed, freezing in a kind of pleasurable rigor mortis state.

My lips parted, opening wide, as a silent cry from the intense pleasure rolled through me. I hung in the space between heaven and earth until the orgasm ran its course and I crashed.

I was so relaxed I could have fallen asleep, but the urgent need to pee forced me to my feet. I stumbled to the bathroom on rubbery legs with my toy in hand. After I wiped and flushed. I caught myself in the mirror and liked what I saw—blushing skin like the women in the video with hooded eyes from the pleasure I'd experienced. Looking different after a session with my vibrator was new for me. Just being this much closer to potentially finding my one had pushed my release to a new level. Quickly cleaning the toy, I put it away and headed for the shower.

Once under the steaming water, my eyes again captured my reflection in the mirror opposite me. I ran my gaze slowly over my body with a critical eye. What would a man looking at me naked see? Curves, but not in the same way as Harmony or the other girls who had once comprised our friend group.

My build was more like a pear, with wide hips and a flat stomach. I turned around and looked over my shoulder. I had a nicely rounded ass that jiggled, and two dimples just above the top curve of my bottom.

Turning back to examine my front once more, I studied my breasts which were on the smaller side with peach-colored nipples that were pebbled even under the spray of hot water. They were always like that, as if they were a mere fraction of an inch away from being touched by strong, knowing hands.

I looked young for my age, especially with my large mop of hair. When the agoraphobia had increased and I'd stopped going out, I also stopped having services like mani/pedis and monthly trips to the hairdresser and had let my hair grow out.

With the mass of wild blonde curls, I resembled an 80s woman. All I was missing was the fuchsia-pink body suit and headband. That, or I could have easily doubled as the lead singer from Poison.

Now that my parts resembled a woman's and not a little girl, I was hopeful that men, especially Daddies, would find me attractive. In the videos I watched, they zeroed in on the female's bottom, and I had to admit that my ass was my best feature.

My mind wandered to Jacob. What would he think of the adult me? I had a sudden image of our time in the closet, with him firmly gripping my butt cheeks while I clung to him, afraid of the dark. I pouted my lips in the mirror. He probably wouldn't even notice. I was just V, his little cousin's bestie, and I don't think he ever saw me or would ever see me as anything other than that.

I slipped into a fantasy about my first kiss, imagining a tall blond cowboy with hard abs and powerful hands. He'd tip my chin and claim my lips with his. I realized, of course, that the tall blond Montana man's body resembled Jacob's, while the face remained invisible beneath the hat.

As Jacob starred in my imaginary sex scenes, this was no surprise, and a part of me hoped my first kiss would be with him. Ah hell, I replaced the faceless stranger with Jacob's serious mien and imagined his breath tickling my ear as teeth pulled on my tender earlobe.

He'd kiss it better and then his mouth would seek mine, clamping down, taking, and owning my mouth. The imaginary

bubble popped and instead, I saw Jacob with an amused expression. The one he used whenever I found him watching me. It was what I called the indulgent parent look. Not that I ever had those, but I'd seen normal families, in which parents watched their children play and wore the same expression Jacob usually had, especially when he'd caught me doing childish things at those big society parties. That always stung because I wished him to look at me with heated passion.

It didn't really matter how Jacob looked at me back then, or how he would when he came to fetch me because it was like Harmony had said—there were lots of Daddies at the Ranch. Surely, I was right for one of them? For the first time in forever, I was excited, and it was easy to ignore the frantic voice deep within, trying to get my attention.

CHAPTER 2



Jacob

“THAT’S THE LAST OF THEM, SIR,” I REPORTED TO DEREK AS the last car passed through the gates to the kingdom. I call it the kingdom because once you passed through the gates of Rawhide, you were in a whole other world.

Rawhide is not like anywhere else; it even beats Disneyland. Not only because there is one Rawhide and multiple Disneylands around the world, but also because of the mishmash of interesting people looking for something magical to happen.

The looks of awe and excitement from the new guests reminded me of my first time coming here years ago. I’d thought bringing my play partner at the time to Rawhide Ranch was a great idea, with the hope she’d fall in love with the lifestyle. Even then I knew she wasn’t *the one*, but she came close, and after staying single for a long time, I was ready to take on the challenge of a full-time play partner/girlfriend. Lucky for me, I found out the truth about Bianca before taking the fateful trip to Rawhide Ranch, the place that unexpectedly became my new home.

For years, Veronica De Haviland starred in my fantasies. Our parents ran in the same circles, forcing many social events on their would-be heirs—us. Ronnie was the youngest in the group and had always exhibited anxious behavior. She stuck to the shadows at these events, especially when Porsha thought up one of her games, which inevitably put Veronica in a bad light.

Over the years, I’d taken to keeping my eye on her. As my cousin’s best friend, I felt it was my duty to keep both in line,

especially when things got out of hand, which was often. Rich kids got bored easily and had entitlement issues. Ironically, those same kids lacked almost everything that mattered in life.

I was lucky to have parents who put me before their pedigree. Unfortunately, Harmony's didn't and her "take no prisoners" sassy attitude morphed as she moved into her young adult years, becoming a disaster waiting to happen. She caused many incidents and drew an unhealthy amount of negative attention to herself. After one particularly explicit experience, she came to me to bail her out. It turned out we could blame her belligerent attitude on deeper issues.

Keeping my cousin out of trouble was difficult, whereas her bestie, Veronica, would do what I said, but not without a challenging fire in her eye. That fire sent spikes of desire through me, and my hand had often itched to spank her naughty backside.

Back then, I didn't realize those desires were from a dominant streak in me that stemmed from a kink that was very much a part of who I was. It was in wanting to yank Ronnie over my lap and spank her and then do all kinds of other things to her I learned who I was. That came later. Back then I was just waking up to who I would become.

The night of the fire, I'd held Veronica's trembling body in my arms as tears tracked down her cheeks. It was a dark time for her, and I wanted to be the one who took care of her and dry her tears. Reluctantly, I'd let her go when her parents left their home in the capable hands of the firefighters and checked into suites at The Plaza.

Had I'd known that Ronnie would disassociate from life, and I would never see her again, I would have done things differently. But after that night, she never attended another formal gathering or invited me over, regardless of the texts and emails I sent. It took me a long time to let go of all the visions and ideas I had for me and her, and when I did at last let go, it was to attend a local BDSM club, where I ran into Bianca.

I don't know who was more surprised by our chance meeting, her or me. She recovered quickly and glommed on to

me right away. I booked us into a private room where we talked and caught up. When I felt sure she was a submissive looking to partner up, I asked her for consent to play with her.

She agreed and our first time had been perfect. After that first time, we agreed to a once-a-week time to partner at the club for playtime. Her favorite kink was being degraded pretending to be forced to be my personal slut and reveled in crawling to me. While not exactly my kink, I worked with her desires and fantasies, ensuring she'd left fulfilled after each session. Then we ended up in a social event together and she drew me away to a bathroom on the third floor.

“WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE, BIANCA?”

She shimmied her tight skirt above her hips to show me she had no panties on. And that's not all. She was very excited to see me, the evidence of which was coating the insides of her thighs.

She puckered her shiny red lips in a pretend pout and then got down on her knees, gazing up at me like all she wanted was to suck my dick.

“You don't control the scene, Bianca, I do.”

I turned to leave, but she reached out a hand and tugged on the hem of my dinner jacket.

“If you leave me here wanting and needing you inside of me, then I will fuck someone else.”

I gazed down at her, my eyes hard, my voice cracking like a whip in the silence. “I don't respond to threats.”

Maybe I was being a dick, and maybe I was pushing on purpose to see if she was as obedient outside of the club as she was inside.

Her eyes darkened, and I could see her about to make a snarky reply. I'd seen all I needed to and turned to leave. Then she did what I least expected.

“Wait, Daddy. I'm sorry, please don't leave. I need you.”

We'd never discussed the power dynamic of Dd/lg. I'd placed it on the back burner as what was possible down the road. When I turned back around, she was no longer on her heels, having slid down to the floor, her feet splayed awkwardly at her sides with her hands in a prayer pose and her eyes glossy with unshed tears.

"Will you forgive me, Daddy?" she asked.

How could I not? I summed up this experience to it also being her test to be a more permanent part of me and my lifestyle. Maybe she needed to know that she could count on me to be consistent and lead us as a couple and with our kink life.

Lord knew, most of the parents of the kids in our group were the absolute worst examples of healthy relationships. I was lucky in that my parents fully supported me, but I also hadn't given them a reason not to.

I helped her to get up and lean over the bathroom counter. "I completely forgive you, little one, but I will also punish your behavior. After your spanking, we will go back downstairs and you will be with me, and only me. Is that clear? If you want your Daddy all to yourself, then you must do the same. In private you call me Daddy, instead of Sir. Understood?"

"Yes, Daddy."

Music to my ears.

"Look in the mirror, little one. I want you to see your reaction as I punish your bottom."

My words fueled the fire already burning inside of her. Her breath came in quick pants and her eyelids were heavy, covering enlarged pupils, which told me how turned on she was at the idea of getting a spanking. This was way more intimate than anything we'd done in the club. There, I'd flogged her and used an assortment of items to edge her closer to an orgasm. But I'd not spanked her with my hand yet. I'd avoided skin on skin contact, opting for toys and implements in our sessions.

“Keep your arms on the counter and your feet in place.”

“Yes, Daddy.”

I cracked my hand down on her naked backside and enjoyed the bloom of color. I quickly made work of her entire backside. Her soft mewls and moans said a lot about Bianca. I'd seen first-hand punishments doled out by Daddies to their Littles and seen how they danced on their toes and cried out “Sorry, Daddy” until the tears spilled down their cheeks.

Not Bianca, however. Had she always enjoyed pain and somehow, I'd missed her signals? After tanning her sit spot until it glowed and got not an ounce of remorse from her, I reached into the shower and drew out a bath brush. I cracked the brush across her lower cheeks and finally received a gasp. Okay, now we were in business. Clearly, her threshold was a lot higher than I'd realized.

I brought the brush down on her thighs. She gasped, her eyes going wide.

“This is a punishment, not a funishment. I'm ensuring you feel sorry for your unacceptable behavior every time you sit down for the next week.”

I cracked the brush across her backside until finally actual tears spilled down her cheeks. I put the brush back and tugged her into my arms, rubbing a soothing hand down her back and in circles on her heated bottom.

Her cries quickly turned to moans of need and turning her back around, I made her watch in the mirror while I took her from behind for the first time. When we returned to the party, I kept her at my side, feeding her water instead of alcohol and hors d'oeuvres from the trays that constantly circulated through the vast room.

Bianca was getting her first lesson in being controlled in public, and I could tell she wasn't happy about it, despite allowing me to lead.

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THEN THAT IT WAS ALL AN ACT. I shook my head at the memory. A few weeks later, when I told her I'd booked a trip to Rawhide for us for Daddy and Little training, she lost it, telling our inner circle I was a pedo and the worst lover she'd ever been with. It was inevitable, I guess, looking back, that things would take a turn for the worse. Bianca was no Little, she wasn't even a submissive, just a flawless actress.

I'd heard about her through the grapevine from time to time that she started a Dominatrix side hustle and was doing very well. I was happy for her and hoped she'd finally found her place in the BDSM space. For myself, I'd come to Rawhide and attended the weekend I'd signed up for and ended up staying.

Done with New York and the scandalous rumors that spread like wildfire through certain circles within our community, I packed my truck with most of my personal items. There was no plan in place except my journey would begin with a four-day weekend at Rawhide. When those gates closed behind me that first time and that sense of being home enveloped me, staying seemed like the best plan.

The entire environment at Rawhide comforted my injured heart and soothed my soul. Since that four-day event, I'd attended many more since becoming part of the Rawhide family and learned so much about myself and who I was. Derek and all the men at Rawhide taught me many things and helped me to define my kinks and the best ways for me to express them without judging myself.

I was heading to my house, a recent change from the staff apartment I'd been living in for a few years. I'd kept putting off claiming a more permanent home, but as I didn't have plans to leave anytime soon, decided to take Derek up on his offer to purchase a house he'd built under the condition that if I ever left Rawhide, I would sell it back so another lover of the Ranch could make it their home.

My phone buzzing brought me out of my trip down memory lane. Harmony's name appeared on the screen.

“What’s up, cuz?”

“I have a question to ask. Can you pop by?”

If she wanted me to *pop by* just to ask me a question, then it sure as shit wasn’t just any old question but a huge ass favor!

“Does Gray know you’re about to ask me for a mega favor?” I hadn’t liked Gray when he first arrived at Rawhide. He and Harmony had a shaky beginning, but he’d proven himself as not only a good man but also a wonderful Daddy to my Little cousin. Since the night Harmony went missing and we’d gathered a search party, we’d grown our friendship to the point now that my respect for him outweighed enabling his fiancée to be naughty.

“Uh, of course.”

“Harmony... don’t lie to me.”

“Oh fine. No, he doesn’t, but I don’t think it matters in this case, as I know he’d agree with what I am about to ask you.”

“I’ll be by at 4:00 when your Daddy is home.”

“But, Jackey—”

“Don’t Jackey me, brat!”

“You’re gonna tell on me, aren’t you?” she said in her Little girl voice.

It was hard not to chuckle. As one of our teachers here at Rawhide, Gray had really stepped into his own when it came to Harmony toeing the line. She’d be a sorry Little girl for going behind his back like this, and she knew it.

“No, sweetheart, I won’t.”

“Really?”

“Really. I won’t have to because you’re going to do the honors.”

Silence met me, and it was hard to hold back my chuckle. But as my baby cousin and the only cousin I was in contact

with, she needed to learn that going behind her Daddy's back was a big fat no-no.

“Fine. See you at four pm.” She disconnected before I could say another word.

At 3:45, I met Gray outside Rawhide University.

“Are you on your way to my place?”

“I am. Harmony called to ask for a favor.”

“Oh? And what would that be?”

“I didn't give her a chance to ask me because I knew it would be pretty big as she asked me to come over.”

He stopped walking. “She didn't say anything to me about a favor of that magnitude.”

“I'm aware.” I held his gaze.

“I see.” And he did indeed see. I fell in step with him while he got quiet, no doubt already processing how best to deal with his woman. Despite the chilly February weather, the day was sunny and perfect for a walk to his property. He'd built Harmony a beautiful home here at Rawhide Ridge. Like us, Gray was from old money and was quite wealthy. He'd graduated as a lawyer but had turned away from a career in law to be a professor at Rawhide.

“She's excited,” he commented. “Too excited.”

“You know Derek has given me time off to help with anything you need done.”

Gray smiled. “Yes, and I'm appreciative you are taking the time to help. My parents won't be arriving in time for my mother to assist Harmony with anything, so really, it's up to you and me and anyone else crazy enough to want to help.”

I didn't hold back the bark of laughter. “Why was it so sudden? You don't strike me as the type of man to make sudden or rash decisions.”

“Oh, believe me, I have my moments. And I can be a very indulgent Daddy. This was how your cousin wanted to celebrate our anniversary and, of course, it took her forever to

own up to what she really wanted, but I had fun getting it out of her. When she turned those tearful eyes on me, I knew it had to be done, especially when she's been such a good girl."

She had been good, better in fact than I'd ever seen her, and it was all due to Gray supporting her and helping her grow. She really was turning into the very best version of herself.

Gray opened the front door, and Harmony was waiting for him. And was already blurting out a rush of words when I walked in behind him. She completely deflated and crossed her arms. "Oh, I guess you know then."

"Know what, my Little bride-to-be?"

"That I called Jacob to ask for a favor."

"You did? And what did you need to ask him so badly that required talking to him before me?"

Harmony chewed her bottom lip, at a loss for what to say.

"For someone so desperate, you seem quiet now. I want you to go to the bedroom and stand in the corner with your nose touching the wall, your skirt up and your bottom out. Maybe you'll find your tongue after Daddy warms your bottom."

"Yes, Daddy." She scurried off down the hall.

"Let's have a drink."

I followed Gray down the hall and out to the best entertainment deck I'd ever seen, complete with an entire outdoor kitchen. Grabbing two beers from his booze fridge, he popped the caps and handed me one. He palmed a small remote and pressed some buttons, the outdoor heater lamps came to life. Perfectly warming the area in which we sat.

"I'm just giving her time to think. Then we'll find out what she needs that apparently, only you can provide."

I may have heard a sliver of jealousy in his tone, but the twinkle in his eyes told a different story.

“Did you see all the new arrivals?” Gray asked, relaxing back in his chair.

He never truly relaxed but gave off the energy of a king purveying his people. I got it, as he was from the same old money wealth as myself, although our circles never touched. That was the thing about old money. Those who had it were a tight, often snobby clique. If the families hadn't been allies for a few generations, there would be no penetrating into one now except through marriage.

I'd never really thought about it, but by getting hitched, two very powerful families were merging through marriage. If this were New York, I knew their union would make the headlines. They could create a power vacuum and stir up the ire of other families. Although on the outside they would cheer the happy couple on, behind their backs, there would be a lot of speculation about what it meant for them. Almost as if reading my mind, Gray brought up his parents and the family lineage.

“With Harmony and I coming together and her now in charge of her family's fortune, I expect some fireworks when my parents arrive.”

“Well, at least they won't ask you to get a prenup.” I chuckled. “It's not like we come from ordinary stock after all.”

Gray smirked, but his eyes darkened. “Actually, I was thinking more about where we live and our association versus money. If they have one negative thing to say about my bride, they will be out the door so fast they won't know what hit them.”

I clicked his beer bottle with mine. “Cheers to that.”

“Speaking of my bride, I think she's had enough time to think.” Gray left to retrieve Harmony and returned a few minutes later with her bearing flushed cheeks. She allowed Gray to draw her onto his lap once he sat down.

“Okay, princess, you have our attention.”

Harmony quickly gave us the rundown on her conversation with Veronica. Most of it was surprising to me, as we'd never

discussed her much. A picture of a tiny, scared little blonde by herself in a gigantic penthouse presented itself, and I felt my unoccupied fist curl.

“So, would you help me, cousin? I think you are the only one who could make my wedding wish come true.”

I’d been so deep in thoughts and images of a woman I hadn’t thought about in years that I’d missed the question entirely.

“Sorry. What is it you need me to do again?”

Harmony rolled her eyes and let out a little huff of annoyance. “Jacob. I need you to go to New York and retrieve my maid of honor for me. Please.”

What do I say? That my own issues had me not wanting to go to New York. Harmony knew I hadn’t gone home since I’d arrived at Rawhide, but she didn’t know why. I’d never told Harmony what happened with Bianca, although I expected she’d heard the rumors, but she’d never mentioned them to me.

Whether it was avoiding the inevitable or desiring to not leave the comforts of my home, I couldn’t leave my cousin hanging, not after I promised her whatever help she needed with the wedding. That and the idea of Veronica home alone in her palace tower didn’t sit right with me. She had to be the kindest little brat I’d ever met, a little anxious, sure. A little too innocent... maybe. She had been back then, but she was all grown up now, a woman and I had to admit, my curiosity to see how she turned out nagged at me, like a hangnail, no matter how many times you try to chew it off, it persisted.

“Agoraphobia? Is that a real thing?” I asked to buy myself some time.

“Unfortunately, it is. But like Harmony’s ODD, it is a learned response from her environment,” Gray stepped in to offer.

“When I told her, you would come for her, she finally relented and agreed. There really is no one else, Jacob. Pleaseee!”

I couldn't help grinning at her antics. That girl had been begging me for things since she was old enough to formulate words, and as my cute little cousin, I'd always relented and given in.

"Is that even a question? You know I'll do it."

Harmony jumped off Gray's lap and did the happy dance. "Thank you!" She threw her arms around me. "Did I ever tell you that you're the best cousin ever?"

"Only when I'm doing you a favor." I chuckled.

I placed my empty beer bottle on the table. "I should get going. I need to take care of a few things and talk to Lawson to ensure security is running smoothly before I head out. Text me her number so I can let her know when I arrive."

Gray stood up and shook my hand. "Thank you, Jacob, for doing this for Harmony."

"No problem, but you"—I narrowed my eyes at Harmony—"owe me one."

She gave me a big smile. "Don't worry, cousin. I plan on repaying you ten times over."

That was not the response I had been expecting, and it haunted me a bit on my walk back to my place. What was that bratty cousin of mine up to now?

CHAPTER 3



Veronica

HARMONY HAD CALLED ME AN HOUR AGO TO SAY WHEN TO expect Jacob. Talk about no notice! She waited until he'd left the great state of Montana, and I know she did it on purpose, so I couldn't cancel.

But that hadn't stopped me from closing all the blinds in the place and ensuring all the lights were off. I didn't have to worry about my door because it was a code entry that no one knew.

I felt like an idiot for making the apartment dark. It was stupid, and I knew it, but I couldn't help it, thinking that if he thought I wasn't here, he'd go away and leave me to the safety of my home, right? At least that was my thinking.

In the darkened bathroom, my screen lit up with an incoming message. My heart pounded in my chest and panic welled within me. *Don't look at the screen, V, if you don't look, it's not real.* But I'd been one of those kids whose face glued to the window when passing a car accident and this felt like that. Horrid fascination had me glancing at the screen and seeing an unknown number, but I knew who it was from.

"Your escort has arrived. Buzz me in."

Oh god! The panic doubled. I really wanted to see him, but then he'd coerce me into going. Images of us back when he was twelve, and I was eight, commanding me to not climb the tree because he wouldn't rescue me. But he did, with a stern warning that had made my heart melt. What would I do if he commanded me to attend the wedding in Montana? Saying no to Jacob was never something I'd learned to do, and it was safer to deny him entrance and avoid the issue.

“No,” I answered.

The screen lit with flashing as he typed, then disappeared. This happened several times. I guess he was stunned by my reply and was looking for the right words to say.

“If you don’t let me in, you won’t receive a good girl present.”

“You brought me a present?” Stupid redundancy but I never got presents except for Christmas and my birthday from my parents. A present from a man, not ever, and I couldn’t hold back the feeling of curiosity.

“Yes. A present. Let me in and I’ll give it to you.”

I needed to know he wouldn’t make me leave. I wanted his word that he would leave me alone as soon as he gave me the gift.

“Do you promise to not force me to leave if I let you in?”

“I will not force you. I promise. But I’ve come a long way to see you, and at least we could talk before I go back to Montana.”

I wanted that too. Truth be told, I really wanted to see Jacob. Thoughts of him had been percolating since Harmony had called to ask me to come to Rawhide.

“The elevator code is 12081998.”

No response from him and I ran to the door and unlocked it, staring through the peephole like a creep so I could see him exit the elevator before he saw me.

I wasn’t disappointed when a minute later, he stepped off the elevator. Big, muscular, dangerous. His large masculine frame emanated a quiet power that pulled at me. I wished I could dive inside that confident man and wear him like a safety suit. He was a 2.0 version of the young man he’d been at nineteen, the last time I saw him, and felt his protective embrace around me as my home burned. I could still hear the fire laughing at me, like a background noise that wouldn’t quit, but had suddenly quieted when Jacob stepped off the elevator.

“I’m here, let me in,” he said through the door.

He held something behind his back. That must be my present. Excitement filled me. I was going to open that door and let in my childhood crush. But as my hand reached for the keypad, I couldn’t do it and my hand dropped to my side as a sense of despair moved through me.

“You can’t do it, can you?”

My internal dialogue mocked me. The fire laughed too at my inability to function in the face of what I wanted. Maybe I couldn’t, but he could.

“The entrance code is 02122002.”

I watched the panel light up as he tapped in the code. Holy crap! I glanced around for a place to hide, but the door opened, and my eyes rounded when he stepped through the doorway. He was larger than life, even the entryway seemed dwarfed by his presence, but the big welcoming smile he wore turned into a frown when he saw me backing away.

He held up one hand and talked in a low, calm voice like one would with a feral dog. “You’re okay, Veronica. You don’t have to be afraid. Look at what I brought you. He’s been bugging me to meet you for hours.”

Jacob pulled out a giant monkey from behind his back. How had I not seen that when he stepped off the elevator? It must have been almost three feet in length and a good foot and a half wide.

“Bananas has been dying to meet you. Can he give you a hug?”

I gulped and nodded. Without coming any closer, Jacob held out Bananas to me. I took hold of the monkey and couldn’t believe how heavy he was.

“I think Bananas wants to sit down.” I moved to the living room and dropped onto the sofa, placing my new friend against my chest, with his long arms around my neck. Jacob followed us but sat on the other side of the room, keeping a safe distance.

“Thank you, Jacob. I really like Bananas and I think he likes me too.” I sighed contentedly and allowed the weighted stuffy to comfort me.

“I have to agree. I told him all about you on the trip over and I could tell you two would get along.”

I peeked at Jacob over the top of Bananas’ head. He was so gorgeous. Why would he want to come and fetch his little cousin’s friend for a wedding?

“I’m sorry you had to come all this way for nothing.”

Jacob gave me a brilliant smile, the kind that lit up the room. “I’m not,” he said. “In fact, I’m so happy to be here with you after so long. You have blossomed into a beautiful woman, Ronnie.”

I felt the heat on my face at his compliment. “You look really good too, Jacob.” Saying his name out loud felt foreign on my tongue and maybe it was my imagination, but it seemed to hang between us like ripe fruit waiting to be plucked. He shifted on the chair, searing me with a look of hunger that took my breath away.

“Thank you, darlin. Tell me about yourself. What have you been doing since I saw you last?”

Doing? Was he crazy? Didn’t Harmony tell him about my agoraphobia?

“Nothing much,” I replied, dropping my gaze, and hugging Bananas even tighter than before.

Jacob shifted forward in his seat and leaned his elbows on his knees. He gazed at me over his steepled fingers. “We’re friends. It’s okay to let it out, little girl. I’m a safe zone, remember?”

Unbidden, tears tracked down my face. Jacob patted his lap. “Come,” he called me over and for the first time in forever, I didn’t second guess myself. Holding Bananas to my chest with my face mostly buried in his soft fur, I closed the distance between us.

Taking my hand in his, he guided me onto his lap, wrapping his muscular arms around me and Bananas. Oh, he felt so good, and I couldn't help snuggling into his chest, with my nose pressed into the softness of his neck.

"Mmm," a soft, involuntary moan escaped from between my lips. Oops! I froze like a deer in a headlight. But if he'd heard, he gave no indication as nothing changed in his demeanor.

"Can you tell me now, little one, what happened to have you holed up in your tower like a princess in need of rescuing?"

I giggled at the image my mind created of me in a princess dress with one of those cone hats with flowing silk. Life had locked me in a tower, but there was no dragon flying around to scare off a brave knight. This tower I was locked in was one of my own making and had nothing to do at all with the building itself.

"Remember the night you held me in your arms while we watched my world go up in flames?"

I felt him nod to continue.

"I decided right then and there that only bad things happened when I was away from home. And if I never left again, my world would remain intact. You know, like no fires, and other things."

Jacob was silent for a moment, as if digesting my words. I knew it sounded crazy, but it made sense to me. And I'd been defending my position until the shrinks and my parents had finally given up and labeled me an agoraphobe.

"The penthouse burned because of an electrical fire from faulty wiring. If you had been inside when it occurred, there is a pretty good chance you would be dead right now and we wouldn't be having this conversation. I understand your feelings, I really do, but the reality is there is nothing you could have done to prevent what happened."

Well, that was something, at least. I was used to people rolling their eyes and telling me I was stupid for thinking the

way I did.

“You were young when the first fire happened, and the second one silenced you. However, you may not be agoraphobic, sweetheart. You may be suffering from PTSD and working with someone who can offer a kind ear and coping strategies in dealing with the long term may help. I know an amazing therapist who I’m sure could help you.”

I was flabbergasted. How come Jacob, of all people, could see me so clearly while I’d been an enigma to everyone else and by that, I meant all the so-called professionals?

“My parents hired many shrinks those first few years. No one helped me.”

Jacob pressed me back until our faces were only inches apart. His eyes held that stern Daddy look that said, *now listen to me, little girl*, that made my insides melt like butter.

“I’m not anyone, little girl, and neither is the help I know you could get at Rawhide.”

“Rawhide? What do you mean?”

A smile tugged the left side of his lips into what I referred to as the Jakey smile. It was indulgent and threw me off every time I was the recipient because it was sexy as hell... Sooo sexy!

“What I mean is, if you agree to go to Rawhide with me, there are people there who can help you identify and deal with whatever is going on inside that pretty head of yours.”

All the nice warm gooey feelings went up in smoke, just like my home had years ago. I pulled away from Jacob, dropping Bananas on his lap. I missed the sudden warmth, but from which one of them I couldn’t exactly say.

“So that was your plan all along. Get inside my home and then manipulate me into getting what you want from me. You people are all the same. I hate you, Jacob!” I ran for my room but wasn’t fast enough to escape his iron band of an arm he suddenly wrapped around my middle, before swinging me into the air where I landed with a thud over his shoulder. A whoomph of air rushed out of me with the impact momentarily

stunning me. A quick recovery and I was beating my fists against his hard back, doing more damage to my hands than his body.

“Put me down this instance. Put me down!” I screamed so loud that if the apartment hadn’t been soundproofed, I was sure the entire building would have heard me.

Jacob lifted me off his shoulder and across his lap as he sat down on the stately wing-backed chair he’d just vacated. I found myself facing the ornate area rug and tried to get up, but he quickly trapped both my legs with one of his. Squirming against a body that felt was made of iron proved futile and being as out of shape as I was, I gave up the fight pretty quick and lay panting.

I was two parts excited, and one part embarrassed for what I knew was about to happen. I soaked the gusset of my white cotton panties, evidence of those two parts I mentioned. And the one-part embarrassment. Why would I have worn a plaid miniskirt that did absolutely nothing to hide my arousal? My skirt had already slid up and half my panty-clad ass was now exposed to him.

“Here’s what I think, little girl.”

Oh-oh, here it came. I just knew he would call me out on how much I actually wanted this.

“I think you need a spanking to change that bad mood of yours. In fact, I can see that the idea of being over my lap excites you.”

And there it was. Heat flared up my neck and spread across my cheeks that, thankfully, faced the floor. But calling me out like that had aroused me and heat traveled to my core, drenching my panties even more.

If I could smell my excitement, I’m sure he could too.

“Mmm, apple blossoms. Who knew you smelled so sweet?”

Oh—my—goodness! My cheeks were flaming hot!

“Tell me I’m wrong. Tell me that you don’t want a spanking from me, Ronnie.”

I wanted to lie, I really did, but the words wouldn’t come out of my mouth. And the way he said my nickname, his voice thick with passion and promise.

His hand came down on my backside so quickly I didn’t have time to prepare, and then this unimaginable stinging heat erupted on my backside, and I yelped, sweeping both hands back to cover my bottom.

Jacob held my hands down with his. His other hand came down on my upturned bottom and a pulsing heat shot to my core once again.

All those videos where I’d cheered on the Dom for giving the brat her just desserts, flooded my vision. I was experiencing what I’d always wanted and the painful pleasure of it was setting off fireworks. I swear, every nerve in my body was tingling, and I’d never felt so alive.

Jacob continued to deliver a blistering spanking to my scorched little bottom and set more than my jiggly cheeks on fire. My clit was pulsing with need but I fought against the sensations. More to prove that I wasn’t starving for exactly what he was giving me. But the truth was heard in my needy moans and evidenced by my soaking panties, which he had tugged into my crack at some point. The skin of his palm was almost as hot as my ass cheeks, and I wondered if that old saying was true. *“This will hurt me more than it will hurt you.”*

His strokes landed with perfect precision and had me crying out after every smack of his paddle-sized hand.

“It hurts,” I cried, after a particularly hard whack to my sit spot.

“It’s supposed to, naughty girl. You need to learn the error of your ways.”

His words, while straightforward, affected my libido, like fingers stroking that needy bunch of nerves at the junction

between my thighs. I couldn't hold back my response to his words. A needy mewl added into the crying and moaning.

Jacob yanked my panties down and cool air moved across my burning cheeks. He repositioned me so I was now straddling his thigh, my panties acting like ankle cuffs, cutting off my ability to kick my legs.

I wanted to grind down on his knee, but the spanking picked up and who knew that panties offered a barrier, cause without that scrap of material, I felt the intensity so much more. Or maybe because he could see my swollen, slick lips.

“Enjoying your spanking, little one?”

“No,” I cried. “I hate you!” All lies, but no way would I betray myself more than my body already had.

“Wrong answer.”

Jacob stood up, swinging me back over his shoulder. As he stomped away out of the living room. I watched my underwear flutter to the ground, like a white flag of truce trampled on the battlefield. I knew this was one battle I wouldn't win, but I had no intention of making it easy, either.

Between the embarrassment of being exposed and him knowing the truth about how much I was enjoying my first spanking, there was also a slew of other emotions and sensations I was dealing with.

I wanted to submit and, like my panties floating to the floor, wave the flag of defeat and accept my punishment with the hopes it wouldn't end there, while an entirely different part of me wanted to be the snarky sub that kicked and screamed her way to ecstasy.

Finding my bedroom, he walked right in and straight for my ensuite. I looked in the mirror as he searched my drawers. His eyes sparked with malevolent joy when his digging produced my wooden hairbrush. He held it aloft, so it was plain for me to see. “Let's see if this has you admitting to the truth.”

Then he stomped into my bedroom and sat on my bed. He was a big, muscular man and despite the size of my room

being huge, his presence and frame seemed to fill the space. Jacob placed me over his lap, my feet way off the ground as he tipped me until my nose was a breath away from my carpeted floor.

I became hyper focused on the individual strands of the carpet. I never really looked at the carpet and certainly not this close up. It was thick and luxurious to walk on but deep between the twisted threads was dirt. From this angle, the need for a deep clean was obvious. Hmm, maybe that was me, too. Maybe I needed not so much a deep cleansing but a full purge. Harmony used to say to me all the time that I just needed that one moment to see myself clearly, and then the road to healing would start. She should know as Gray had done that for her, bringing all of her stuff out of the dark and into the light.

I wasn't feeling confident that seeing me in the light was a good thing. There was so much I didn't like and invested a great deal of time hiding from it. The anti-anxiety meds helped me in that department but maybe it was all just one giant Band-Aid.

The hairbrush came down on my backside, startling me out of my thoughts.

“Owie!”

“This can end anytime, Veronica.”

How pathetic of me to give in after only one stroke.

“No!”

“Suit yourself, but don't say I didn't give you the chance to end your punishment.”

The brush landed with unrelenting precision, the sting quickly built to an inferno as I tried to squirm and buck the heat away.

“I can do this all day, little one, but I don't think your bottom can. I guess I better move on to your thighs.”

Two strokes in, I broke down, howling and crying, but Jacob still didn't stop, not until I hung limply with all the fight out of me. Tears rolled and dripped onto the carpet and maybe

it was my imagination, but I swear where my tears landed, the rug strands appeared a little brighter, cleaner. If my tears cleansed the strands, was I also clean of my transgression? Could it be that simple?

Jacob ran one of his hands over my bottom, massaging away the sting. My legs parted, an involuntary act, but my body was in the driver's seat now, not my mind. His hand slid between my thighs, slowly moving toward the apex. My inner self was screaming for him to hurry. If I didn't come, I would lose my mind.

Gently, he stroked my slick folds. I arched my bottom upwards, letting him know with my body what I wanted. He spanked my slick petals with just enough sting to break the pink brain fog in my head.

Then he closed my legs and sat me on his lap. Cupping my chin, he tilted my face until our gazes locked.

"I believe you have something to say to me, young lady?"

My face felt as hot as my bottom. I wanted to wiggle away from the burn and hide my face in the warmth of his chest, but he held my body in place and my eyes captive.

"Come on, be a good girl, and say what you need to say."

His gaze morphed from stern to warm in a nanosecond. I gulped, steeling myself to admit I'd been out of line.

"Uh, I'm sorry I yelled at you and said I hated you. It isn't true, not even a little, not at all." I licked my lips. "And I"—come on, say it—"want you." I finished lamely, "I wanted you to touch me and make me have an orgasm. Is that bad?"

His smile was magnetic, and I found myself thinking back to the closet that night so many years ago. When I was in his arms but couldn't see his face. Did it look like it did now? Full of warmth and dark desire? What would have happened if we'd kissed back then? Would we have dated, and if so, would I have escaped the agoraphobia that had been holding me captive in the apartment for so long?

"No, it isn't wrong. What would be wrong is for me to reward you for your naughty behavior. You received your

punishment and are forgiven.”

His hand slid from my chin to the nape of my neck. My breath caught. This was it, my first kiss and by the man who should have been my first back when we were teens. He was so close that if I tilted a little more, our lips would brush.

But his gentle hold on me kept me in place. I understood this was him, taking control and kissing me in his time, not mine, but still. *Hurry up!* I wanted to yell.

The wail of a cop alarm shattered the silence.

“Shit!” Jacob released my chin to dig around in his pocket. “Harmony, impeccable timing, as usual,” he answered, rolling his eyes.

I plastered my hand over my mouth to stifle my giggle.

“Yes, I’m here. How is she? Like a new woman.”

I felt the bloom of heat spread across my cheeks. *Don’t tell her*, I silently begged with my eyes.

“You can see for yourself when we get back.”

My heart fluttered with the look he was giving me and not just my heart. My belly was flip flopping and moisture seeped, making my needy nether lips slicker than ever. Crap! I totally forgot I was naked. I grabbed one end of the comforter and pulled it over my lap. Jacob’s eyes narrowed but returned to normal as he listened.

“Roger that. See you soon.” He ended the call, his gaze traveling from the blanket to my face. “Now where were we?”

His hand reclaimed the nape of my neck, and this time, his lips descended on mine. They were soft, yet strong, and it didn’t take long for my insides to liquify and my body to become putty in his hands. His tongue parted my lips and danced with mine. When his lips clamped down, I lost all sense, and became hyper focused on the panty-melting kiss as his mouth claimed mine. Gripping his forearm was all that kept me grounded.

It felt like hours had passed when he pulled back, releasing my thoroughly ravaged lips.

“That was the kiss you should have gotten all those years ago.”

I felt dizzy and continued to cling to his arm.

“What about now, Jacob? Could you show me the kiss you would give me now?” The left corner of his lips hitched into a familiar half smirk.

“Are you sure you want me to?”

“I’ve never been surer of anything.”

He appeared to be waging an inner battle before he lifted me off his lap and placed me on the bed beside him. “I will give you what you want, but not until we are at Rawhide.”

“What makes you think I’m going?” I couldn’t keep the pout out of my voice.

“Oh, you’ll go, because we are taking everything that belongs to you with us.”

I crossed my arms. “What do you mean by everything?”

“I mean, this entire room. I have a packing company on their way to pack up your things and deliver them to Rawhide. Now”—he reached out and cupped my chin—“you have no excuse not to come with me. I know it isn’t this apartment you’re attached to, but your personal items. Do you wish to take your bedroom furniture?”

I was in shock. I had to be because no words came out.

“Darlin, you better hustle and pack your suitcase, or that spanking you just had will seem like a love pat compared with what I’ll deliver to your impertinent backside next.”

My cheeks flared with color, but I stood and went to the bathroom to shower and get ready. Two hours later, I stood in the shell of what had once been my bedroom. The movers had even packed all the pictures, framed and even the pinned ones on my wall. It literally was just four walls with an empty closet, dresser, and bed frame.

To anyone else, it probably seemed like overkill to pack up all my belongings to be gone for a week, but to Jacob it was a

just matter of fact which was perfect. As I stared at the skeleton of what had been my room, it reminded me of my grandfather's favorite saying. "*Home is where you hang your hat.*" I never really knew what that meant until now. Jacob took my bags from me and handed me Bananas.

"See, little girl, nothing to fear."

And he was right. Yes, I was nervous, but the normal angst I felt at the idea of leaving my home was gone. Jacob shouldered my duffle bag and took a firm grip of my cool hand in his large, warm one, wrapping both around the handle of one of my rolling suitcases. His free hand guided the last suitcase out the door. Maybe it was because he was here with me that the laughing fire wasn't bothering me, hadn't in fact since he'd walked through my front door.

"Let's go. It's time for you to have some fun."

I grinned up at him, loving that he'd made this happen for me. When the door closed behind me, instead of in front of me for a change, I felt elated and prayed everything would be all right.

CHAPTER 4



Jacob

ALTHOUGH MY FOCUS WAS ON GETTING US OUT OF THE AIRPORT and on the road home, I couldn't help sneaking looks out of the corner of my eye at Ronnie, while her focus was elsewhere. Her eyes had been wide from the moment we'd stepped out of her apartment. She'd balked at learning we'd be flying, but seemed to understand when I explained it was over 2,200 miles from New York to Montana and driving would have eaten up almost a full week. She'd also been hesitant in taking Bananas on the plane, but when I assured her he'd probably prefer to ride inside on her lap than to be shut up in the cargo hold of the plane, she'd seemed horrified. It had been sweet to see her pointing out things she saw through the plane's window as she and Bananas took in the outside world, one she hadn't been part of for the last few years.

Back when we were teens, I'd always felt that Veronica was a bit of a lost soul and assumed that was why she'd clung so hard to Harmony. Who no doubt in Ronnie's eyes had seemed to have it all together.

My cousin was great at presenting an image to the outside world, but it was all a lie, or mostly. She'd learned to harness bold extroverted characteristics as protection against an often-cruel world, whereas Ronnie hadn't learned to hide anything. She was as open as the massive grasslands we passed on our way to Rawhide after landing in Butte.

Seeing her now, with her monkey on her lap, its long arms hanging over her shoulders and pressed between her back and the backrest of her seat, she was the same girl I'd known. It warmed me to note with her wide gaze and pursed apricot lips,

she looked the same. I frowned. Except the shifting back and forth in her seat. I didn't recall her ever doing that before.

“Are you squirming because your backside is sore from the well-deserved spanking you received or because you need to pee?”

Immediately she stopped, turning her wide gaze my way.

“Both. I really need to pee.”

“Why didn't you say so earlier? You could have gone in the airport. If you don't start communicating with me, we'll have to pull over and buy diapers, so you don't wet the seat.”

I'd meant it as a joke, but the sudden image following my words of Ronnie lying with her legs spread while I diapered her pretty backside caused a visceral reaction. I'd never thought ABDL was my thing, but something about seeing Ronnie in that position... I shook my head and adjusted the sudden hard on which was pressing painfully against the zipper of my jeans.

I didn't miss the blush that spread up her cheeks. “Maybe one day,” she said absently.

I spotted a gas station conveniently located only a couple of blocks from the airport, I took the exit.

“What do you mean, exactly? Are you saying you're into ABDL or wish to experiment with adult diaper play?”

I'd pulled into the station lot and stopped in front of the door labeled “Her,” and turned off the car, turning in my seat to face her.

“No, I don't think I am into it on that level. I just want to add it to my tried list. And if I like it, maybe do it again, down the road in the right situation. And uh, with the right partner.” She turned to face out the window, no doubt to hide her cheeks, which had just gone bright red.

The idea of her doing anything with a partner that wasn't me made my hands curl into fists. *Cool it, cowboy, she isn't even yours yet.*

My conscience was correct. She wasn't mine, yet. I wasn't even sure that she was the one I'd wanted all along, but I had to admit, the more time I spent with her, the more boxes she checked off on my want/need list in a partner.

"What else do you want from a partner, other than role play?" I was genuinely curious to see if we shared similar boxes we wanted checked off.

Her cheeks were flaming hot pink. "I have to pee so bad; can we discuss this after?"

"Yes, now off you go."

"Uh, could you come with me? Please, Jacob, I don't want to go in there alone."

Daddy J to the rescue, I thought, and I liked it. Being Daddy J and rescuing my Little from the big bad roadside toilet.

"Of course I can." I lifted her out of the cab and held her in my arms. I could have let her jump down on her own, but with her urgent need to pee, she might have had an accident in her panties. I had the evil thought of letting her wet herself just so I could buy the diapers I'd been joking about earlier and make her wear one under her miniskirt, but chivalry won out.

Though she'd left her monkey in the truck, I carried her like she carried Bananas, leaving one hand free to open the door and flip on the light.

"Don't you dare sit on that toilet seat," I warned. Grabbing long strips of butt wipe, I lined the seat so her skin wouldn't touch the porcelain ring when she sat down. I gave my head a shake at the condition of the bathroom, having half a mind to chew out the attendant I'd seen through the window, sitting on his ass and most likely playing on his phone.

"You can sit now."

Ronnie peered at the seat and then at me. "Are you sure?"

I turned and checked the soap dispenser. Empty. "On second thought, let me hold you over that toilet bowl. This place is worse than a garbage dump." I straddled the toilet and

had her turn facing away from me. “Pull down your panties and hike up your skirt.”

She did as she was told, and I lifted her by her thighs and lowered her until she hovered just above the toilet. “Okay, it’s safe to pee now.” What was happening right now could have been embarrassing if this been any other woman, but not with Veronica. With her, it felt natural.

We’d already breached so many potentially uncomfortable situations together and we hadn’t reached the Ranch yet. Admittedly, it was the *uncomfortable situations* that spoke to me the most.

When she was done, I had her reach for the paper and wipe, then I set her down so she could adjust her clothing.

“Thank you,” she murmured, her face having lost none of the vivid dark pink.

Poor Ronnie was continually getting her buttons pushed on our trip, and I was enjoying every second of it.

“Come on, let’s go find some hand sanitizer and get you some snacks.”

“Yay!” she clapped her hands in excitement.

We entered the store, and I quickly pumped some sanitizer into her hands and then mine. “Go find some snacks, babygirl.” She scuttled off to the chocolate aisle while I stared down at the pimple-faced kid behind the counter.

Long seconds passed before he gazed up from his screen. “Can I help you?”

“Yeah, you can help. I’d like to see your cleaning schedule for the restrooms.”

“Huh?” He looked confused by my request.

“You see that clipboard on the wall behind your head? Grab that and bring it here.”

The kid grabbed the clipboard, the schedule confirming what I’d already known that it hadn’t been checked off in

days. I wanted to grab him by the scruff of the neck and shove his face into the grease-smearred paper.

Instead, I took a few breaths. “Listen here. Do you see that pretty little blonde over there?”

His gaze traveled to Veronica, and then the little pervert licked his lips.

“Yeah.”

“She just used your disgusting facilities. You will apologize to her for making her endure such appalling conditions. Then you will go outside and clean that thing until you can eat off the floor.”

“But—”

I cut him off, “That or I phone the owner and get you fired. It’s up to you.”

He hustled out from behind the counter and walked to where Ronnie was selecting a few chocolate bars. I really needed to discuss diet with her, but not in front of him.

He stuttered out his apology and then headed into the back, coming back out a few moments later armed with a soapy bucket and a mop.

“Don’t forget the disinfectant and the toilet brush.” I glared meaningfully at him.

Grabbing those extra items, he made it out of the store and disappeared around the corner of the building.

Veronica sidled up to me, her laden filled arms full of sugary treats. I walked over to a cooler that surprisingly contained some decent-looking fruit cups and grabbed two. Another held fresh vegetable shots filled with turmeric, ginger, and lemon. We’d both need to boost our immune systems after being in that bathroom.

I placed the items on the counter. “You don’t need that much candy. Choose two and put the rest back.”

Her eyes narrowed, but she didn’t give me any back talk. Handing me two chocolate bars, she returned the rest to the

shelf.

“Would you like a drink with those?”

“Yes. May I have a Coke?”

“I’ll make you a deal. You go over there and grab two bottles of water and a Coke. After you drink one bottle of water. You may have the Coke.”

Now she looked angry. “I don’t have to do what you say, you know. I’m a grown woman, and you’re not my Daddy!”

“And a beautiful one at that.” I didn’t miss a beat. “You’re correct, I am not your Daddy—*not yet*—but, while you’re in my care, I will ensure that we make healthy choices.”

“Ooh, fine!” She stomped over to the cooler, selecting two bottles of water and a Coke and added them to the pile on the counter.

I punched in a code into the coffee machine and waited for my mocha. That was my dirty little habit and the only time I had sugar. Growing up wealthy and in the city, special coffees had been a love of mine since being a young teen. It was weird for men I know, as that was usually a habit that women had, but I liked my bean and would travel across the city for my favorite blend.

This was barely passable, but it would do until we reached Rawhide. The Italian restaurant on site had coffee that rivaled anything I’d found in the café back home. Lucky for me, my boss also liked a good cup of coffee and Derek had it flown in from Italy on a fairly regular basis. I wouldn’t be the least bit surprised if that restaurant made all its profit from the coffee alone.

I placed my paper cup on the counter just as the clerk opened the door. “Perfect timing.” I plastered on a smile I didn’t feel. He dropped his supplies in the back room and came back and tallied our order. His face was flushed, probably due to not being used to exerting himself.

He handed me the bag and receipt. Taking Ronnie by the elbow, I led her from the store and helped her up into the cab of the truck, strapping her in. While she again pulled Bananas

to her chest, I pulled out a bottle of water, unscrewing the cap and handing it over. “Half now, and half after you tell me all about what you’re looking for in a perfect partner.”

A fresh flush of pink stained her pale skin. I turned toward her and braved a sip of the coffee. Yep, as bad as I thought it would be.

“Uhm, well, uh, I want a play partner who likes to dominate, one who would control the, uh... scene.”

“Let me interrupt you for one moment. Have you ever had playtime with a Dominant partner?”

Her face turned scarlet. “No.” She dropped her eyes when she answered.

I let out the breath I’d been holding. As suspected, she was new to the lifestyle, but clearly had plenty of time to imagine what she wanted.

“Then how do you know you want a play partner, Veronica, and not something more serious like a partner in life who is also dominant?”

Her eyes instantly filled with tears. “I don’t know!” she wailed.

I grabbed a tissue and wiped her eyes. “I’m sorry. I’ll keep my mouth shut.” I pretended to lock my lips and throw away the key.

She looked amused, and the waterworks slowed to a trickle. She took a deep breath and tried again. “All I really know for sure is that I’m submissive or I wish to be someone’s submissive and, well, I need to be accepted. I think the biggest thing is I, um, really like spankings. I wasn’t sure until you, uh, gave me that one and as much as it hurt, I liked what it did to my insides.”

My cock sprung to attention with her confession. It liked her squirming on top of it, a lot.

Her passionate gaze dropped to my lap, and she licked her lips while gazing at the bulge in my pants. “I think you liked it

as much as I did.” She clapped her hand over her mouth, stifling a giggle.

I had the sudden urge to put something else against those moist, full lips. “Careful,” I growled. “That will get you back over my lap and end with my erection down your throat.”

Her eyes widened, pupils dilating in response to my threat. It was an actual possibility, as it was becoming increasingly harder to keep my word and not give her what I promised back at her apartment. I wanted to reach out and tug her hand away from her mouth, slide it onto my erection and show her exactly the type of kiss I would give her now. Instead, I stuffed down those desires and started the engine.

“We better get a move on.” I pulled out onto the highway, keeping my eyes on the road and telling the monster in my pants to calm the hell down. It took a while, but eventually he realized he wasn’t getting any.

Our conversation moved to safer topics and a calm peace developed between us, like in our youth. Victoria was the same girl I remembered from my youth, just behind those layers she built over the years of solitude.

I wanted her then and still wanted her now... on her knees, over my lap... in my life. That thought of being in that number one position again had me grip the steering wheel. I questioned my sanity in wanting a project as my life partner. Was she submissive, absolutely, but so far everything about her needs and wants was a theory, untried fantasies. We had an hour or so alone together in my truck, and plenty of time to talk before we got to Rawhide, where I would hand her off to Harmony. Back in my comfort zone, I would have plenty of time to think things through and make choices, sans my dick.

“Ronnie, when you visualize your fantasies, do they always happen in your bedroom, or do you see yourself elsewhere?” I don’t know why I asked that question except to wonder if agoraphobia was just a wall or truly an innate condition. She almost looked identical to how she had at fifteen, the only difference being that her butt had filled out and she had grown breasts, small, but beautifully shaped. She

was like a house plant left in the dark for too long and starved of necessary nutrients.

One week at Rawhide would put a healthy glow back in her pale cheeks. It may be cold but there was a lot of sunshine, good food and plenty of attention. And an overbearing Daddy just itching to keep her in line.

Glancing at her from my peripheral, I caught her chewing her bottom lip. When she released it from between her teeth, it shone cherry red in the afternoon light. I loved how plump her bottom lip was and hoped she would chew the top one to match.

“No. None of my fantasies happen in my apartment, despite believing I’d never leave my home. It sounds weird, I know, and it’s hard to explain. But I think a part of me always hoped I’d get out.” She waved her arm around at the truck and the environment beyond. “Honestly, this feels so surreal. Like I’m watching a movie of me doing something unusual and with you. This feels more like a fantasy than anything real.”

Interesting answer. I vowed by the time the wedding was over, it would feel plenty real.

“Was there ever a certain person featured in any of these fantasies of yours?” Admittedly, I was a bit curious to see how I rated in her fantasy department... a little, a lot, or not at all. She certainly featured in many of mine, riding my cock after receiving a blistering spanking and half a dozen orgasms first.

Her face turned a deep puce. “Do I have to answer that?”

“Yes, unless you want me to pull over and spank the answer out of you.”

“What if I want that?” she whispered. “Then what?”

I was in danger of allowing her to top from the bottom because I wanted the same thing she did. So much so that my John Thomas was standing at attention, begging me to carry out my threat.

“Veronica, if you have something you want from me, then you ask me for it. But if you plan on withholding information because you want to force my hand, pun intended, then your

fantasy spanking will turn into a punishment real fast. Let me educate you on the realities of your situation. Right now, you are in my care. I decide what you need and what you don't need. If you have a request, you make it. If I ask you a question, you answer or pay the price. How do you feel about me pulling over and giving you a spanking on the side of the highway where everyone can see your naughty bottom? I'll lift your skirt and bare your naked backside to passersby. Then I'll make you sit on your naked, scorched backside all the way to Rawhide. When we pull up, I'll repeat the process and everyone, and I mean everyone, will know you've been a bad Little girl and are receiving your just desserts. How does that sound?"

Her mouth had dropped open and formed a perfect O.

"You may want to close that before I put something in there that has been wanting to feel those soft, kissable lips of yours since you sat on my lap."

Her mouth slammed shut. I couldn't help the small smirk lifting the corner of my mouth. I wasn't worried about her seeing it either, as she returned her gaze directly out the front window. I was pretty sure she was too busy processing the threat to think of ways of trying to get me to do what she wanted. With any luck, those thoughts would keep her busy all the way to Rawhide Ranch.

CHAPTER 5



Veronica

JACOB'S THREAT WAS DOING ALL KINDS OF CRAZY TO MY BODY. I wasn't sure if he would really go through with a public chastisement, but the threat of something so uncomfortable, so forbidden, was also incredibly exciting.

I'd been gazing at him frequently ever since he'd appeared on my doorstep. Observing him through my peripheral had become far more interesting than the view from the plane or outside his front windshield once I'd climbed into his truck at the airport's parking garage in Butte. He was the same as I remembered, yet more. A beefier, muscled 2.0 version of the boy I grew up with. Adult Jacob had a perfect tan covering his solid frame. The corners of his eyes had tiny crow's feet, I presumed came from squinting up at a sun-laden sky a little too often.

With nothing to do but observe him and stare out the window, my imagination ran amuck with the memory of Jacob and I in the closet in Porsha's bedroom. It always started with that fateful night, the one in which the fire robbed me of my first kiss and all my worldly possessions.

A tremor moved through me at the visceral memory of his kiss from earlier today. With the effects of these new experiences so fresh, I wanted to extend them from beyond the closet. Just because I missed out back when we were teens, and my new experiences included a kiss that melted my panties and a cathartic spanking, one in which I wished ended with several orgasms, didn't mean I couldn't imagine that ending now. I mean, why limit myself?

JACOB TUGGED ME TO HIM, RUNNING HIS HANDS DOWN MY ARMS and back. "You're okay, V, you're safe with me."

He was so close his breath tickled my ear.

"Are you ready for your first kiss?"

Was I? Oh yeah, more than ready.

"How did you know?"

He chuckled. "Only those who haven't gotten to first base were in the game, remember?"

"Oh. Right. I forgot. Um, so what do I do?"

One of his hands slid into my mass of blonde curls, his gentle but firm grip keeping me still. "Absolutely nothing."

His lips descended, capturing mine. They were soft and firm and I couldn't hold back a groan. His tongue licked the seam of my closed lips until they parted, then his tongue was in my mouth.

The jolt of pleasure startled me out of inertia, and my tongue tentatively reached for his. He sucked it into his mouth and my eyes flew wide open to find him watching me. His gaze held amusement and something almost predatory. Heat flared through my core.

His free hand slid to my ass, and he gripped it hard, tugging me tight against him, so tight I could feel his hard on. He swallowed the gasp I released and then relinquished his hold on my hair. I'd been so captivated by the kiss; I'd forgotten all about him fisting my hair.

My scalp tingled when he released his grip, but I didn't have much time to process that. His hand slid down my chest, capturing my breast through my t-shirt and thumbed my hardened nipple.

"Oh my god, don't stop."

"WHAT ARE YOU DOING, RONNIE?"

“I said don’t stop!” Imaginary Jacob had pulled away and flesh and blood Jacob snapped his fingers and my eyes instantly fluttered open.

I was so confused, then remembered I was in a vehicle with the object of my fantasy sitting less than a foot away. I glanced at him, my face burning with embarrassment at the knowing smirk he speared me with.

“Sleeping, or I was until you startled me awake.”

He nodded sagely, focusing on the road once again. “Was it now? And in your dream, was I making you come?”

Oh my god, seriously! “Please don’t make me answer that,” I groaned.

Jacob chuckled and then put on his serious look. “Don’t think you can get out of this without telling me all about it.”

His dominant tone sent tingles down my spine. The junction between my thighs was throbbing almost painfully now with desire. Was this his evil plan? To leave me wanting until I begged.

“Yes, okay, yes, I imagined us together. Happy now?” I slapped my hands over my face and when he didn’t answer right away, peeked between my fingers to see his focus was on the road, but he had a faraway look, like his mind was elsewhere.

“Where were we?” His tone had changed, no longer amused or dominant, but husky with a needy undertone.

“The night in the closet. In my imagination, no one banged on the door, and my life didn’t go up in smoke. Instead, we did it, and went all the way. In my fantasy, you took my virginity.”

Holy hell, that was a lot to admit to out loud and to a man, no less! I was sure, had I been standing at an intersection, I’d been mistaken for a stop sign because my cheeks were so hot.

“I imagine that too,” was all he said.

Wow, admitting he thought about me, no, fantasizing about us in the closet at Porsha’s place, was huge in my books. Happiness replaced the anxiety and the pressure I’d been

feeling since the gas station. He wanted me, and that was enough for now.

Not much later, we pulled into a motel parking lot. “What are we doing here?” I gazed nervously around, not seeing anywhere we might get food. “You don’t mean for us to stay here, do you?” Panic welled up inside of me at the thought of staying out in the middle of nowhere with no conveniences of any kind. Oh no! Is this what the Ranch would be like? This couldn’t be it, could it? If so, where were all the extra buildings?

“I want to go home!” I cried. “I can’t stay here!”

Jacob, who was half out of the truck, climbed back inside, closing his door. “Veronica, calm down, we aren’t staying here. I’m just grabbing some more water bottles from the vending machine. Do you want to come with me?”

Relief hit me so fast I felt woozy and toppled sideways, landing against Jacob.

His brow furrowed, and his eyes filled with concern. “I should have told you instead of just pulling over, that was my mistake. Do you forgive me?”

He reached across the space between us and cupped my face in his hand. I wanted to say no and pout, but the gentle stroking of his finger along my cheek was so comforting.

“Of course, I forgive you. I’m sorry about my reaction.”

He tipped my chin until he held my gaze. “Never apologize for being you, Veronica. I should have known better.”

He was so earnest and clearly meant every word. Unlike others, like my psychiatrists, who tried to make me see everything as my fault. But not Jacob. He took ownership of his actions and words, which allowed me to see and feel things differently than before. I never really thought about my feelings regarding the blame and guilt until now, until him.

“Thank you. No one has ever said that to me before and it’s nice to not be shamed for a change.”

His eye color changed, becoming darker. And for the first time, I realized that his color shifted with his moods. That took away the feeling of being imbalanced with him. A newfound confidence rose with the new tool of reading his moods and emotions. My human interactions had been so limited these past few years that I'd lost my ability to discern many things, but now it seemed we could discover each other on equal footing. That may be total crap, but in this moment, that was how I felt and what I believed.

“Is that what those specialists did? Tell you everything was your fault?”

I nodded, and all those feelings I had processed welled up within me, causing a few tears to escape and trickle down my cheeks. “It didn't seem fair, but how could I argue with them when they get paid a lot of money to tell me what's wrong?”

Jacob wiped a tear from my chin. “Don't you worry, babygirl. At Rawhide, there are many residents with triggers, but we respect them and their journey. Just wait until you meet Harmony's friends. They will love you regardless of your issues, or more so because of them.”

“Really?”

Jacob smiled and nodded, “Scout's honor. They are going to love you.”

Before I could process how that could be possible, he'd unfastened my seat belt and pulled me across the bench seat.

“Let's get that water and I'll answer any questions you have, okay?”

I really had no reason not to agree but held tight to his hand as we walked the short distance to the vending machine. After getting a few bottles, we returned to the truck. Jacob helped me back inside and belted me in again.

“Good to go?” he asked.

“Yes, thank you.”

Jacob dropped a kiss on top of my head before closing my door and walking around the truck to climb inside.

As he started the truck and pulled out from the motel's lot, I thought about what he'd said about people at the Ranch. He really seemed to believe there was hope for me yet. But the thought of being around a bunch of people who projected the same issues as me was not appealing. I wanted to meet Daddies and Littles and hope they rubbed off on me. At least enough that I may find a Daddy for myself. Hopefully, someone as perfect as Jacob. His distance, despite his words saying otherwise, concerned me. Maybe for all his talk, he wasn't interested in having a Little of his own. He hadn't said so and only expressed that he'd imagined us together, but that was before he became what he was now. I wasn't brave enough to ask outright what he saw for us in the future in case he said "nothing". That would just hurt too much.

"Is that what happened with Harmony? She met people like her and got better?" I asked to deflect from the mixed feelings roiling through me about Daddies in general, but especially me and Jacob.

"Mm, not exactly. Harmony has ODD, oppositional defiance disorder. You could say you and her were complete opposites in that regard. While you accepted what you were told without negating, your bestie was always fighting, always pushing back and never listening to rules. But that was her coping mechanism, and when she met Gray at Rawhide, after their episode back in New York, her journey to learning herself and learning to manage began."

"Oh. I guess that makes sense. So, he helped her cope with her defiance. That's nice. I have to admit, I'm kinda nervous about seeing her after her changes. Maybe she won't like me as much now that she has new friends."

Speaking aloud, a fear I'd been harboring regarding my reunion with Harmony sounded silly, and I instantly regretted saying it.

"I can understand that. She is different, but also the same. I think you'll enjoy her company even more than before."

Well, that was nice of him to say, but it wouldn't be like it was before she met her fiancée. "She used to share all her

sexual adventures with me, and I would imagine the same things happening to me. You could say I lived vicariously through her.”

A frown creased Jacob’s brow. Had I overshared?

“What do you mean by sexual adventures, exactly?”

Oh-oh, had I opened Pandora’s box? Here I was Pandora and my big mouth was the box. To clarify, I added, “Uh, well, you know about how she and Gray met. How he’d been having sex with her when they got caught after confessing how much he liked her and wanted her.”

An amused smile from Jacob quickly morphed into loud laughter. “Is that what she said?” he asked when he finally calmed down.

I narrowed my eyes. I was not at all fond of being laughed at.

“Harmony was filling your head with tall tales. She and Gray never had sex in his office at that school. As far as I know, she’d only had sex toys prior to Gray.”

“But she told me he made her spread her legs and ran a hand down... uh, never mind, you get the picture.” My already pink cheeks were on fire, and I could only imagine what I must have looked like to him. “Anyway, she said they both got caught with their pants down and he incited the entire thing.” I sat back in my seat with a pout, crossing my arms. “I can’t believe she lied to me all those times.”

“If it makes you feel better, Harmony confessed her lies and paid for them. Maybe don’t let that ruin your time together. She is getting married, and you are her maid of honor.”

He was right, of course, but I wasn’t ready to let go of my anger about her lying to me all those years. Now I had to question what was real and what wasn’t, and that made me feel like our friendship was fake.

“Fine. I’ll work on forgiving her, but I don’t like it.” I suddenly wished I was going anywhere but Rawhide. Did they

know she was a liar? The more I thought about it, the more steamed I became.

After a few minutes of silence and the anger growing and taking over common sense, I decided I'd had enough. "Stop the truck! I want to get out."

Jacob signaled and pulled over to the shoulder of the highway. He jumped out of the cabin and ran to my side, yanking open the door.

"What's wrong? Are you okay?"

I undid my seat belt and jumped out, joining him on the pavement.

"I want to go home." I stomped my foot for emphasis.

Jacob seemed relieved. "I see you are still angry."

"You're no better than she is. Why did you pick me up, anyway? Isn't there a gaggle of submissives for you to choose from at that place?" I had worked myself up into a real tizzy. Irrationally mad at the world, but mostly at myself for being so ignorant, but I wasn't ready to face that yet.

"You know what, just forget it. I don't need you or anyone else." I turned and started stomping my way through the adjacent woods.

"Veronica. If I have to come and fetch you back here, you won't like it."

I ignored him and walked faster, hanging on tight to Bananas.

"Ronnie, my patience is running thin. This is your final warning. You have to the count of three to get your naughty bottom back here or I'm going to bend you over the nearest rock and spank you until you scream. Do you hear me?"

I started running. Behind me, I heard Jacob in pursuit. I raced for the trees, not knowing where I was going, just blindly running when his hand suddenly wrapped around my bicep.

I yelped and tried to tug free, but he picked me up and tossed me over his shoulder like he had back at the apartment.

“Stop it, Jacob!” My attempt to pound him on his back with my fists was pretty pathetic despite Bananas’ help as he was heavy and still in my arms. “Put me down this instant.” I shrieked. Even to my own ears I sounded like a spoiled brat, but I couldn’t help it. This was just too much and now to find out my best friend was a liar all this time. No, no, no, that was just too much to comprehend.

“Oh, I’ll put you down, sweet cheeks, right over my lap!” His hand landed a stinging swat on my ass.

“Oh, no you don’t! Don’t you dare spank me, you, you ape!” Feeling soft fur in my hands, I whispered, “Sorry, Bananas, I’m not calling *you* an ape.” Though I swore I heard a chuckle, Jacob sure didn’t appear amused when he stopped walking and lowered me from his shoulder and sat down on a fallen tree. After relieving me of Bananas, sitting the monkey down beside him, he placed me firmly over his thighs.

Oh-oh, now I’d gone and done it.

“Little V, I thought I made it clear who was in charge here, but I guess you need a reminder.” With one hand he gripped the waistband of my panties and skirt and tugged them down, exposing my bottom.

Mortification gripped me and I reached back to hide my bottom.

He gripped both wrists in one of his. “You’ll stay still and take your punishment if you know what’s good for you.”

A line of fire lit up my ass like an inferno. Where had he gotten a switch? I screamed and tried kicking my legs, but I was no match for Jacob’s superior size and strength.

He tilted me toward the forest floor where I saw interesting fungi adhering to the limb, he sat on but had no time to ponder nature. With his thigh wrapped over mine and both my wrists captured in his hand, I had no squirming room and no way to hide my bottom from the relentless strokes of the branch.

A dozen strokes in, I was crying and begging for him to stop. Promising anything to make the stripes of fire stop. But he didn't relent, and I quickly realized that he was right, the spanking at the apartment had seemed like a funishment compared with what he gave me now. Each whir sound I heard ended with the switch cracking on my bottom.

It didn't take long for me to give up and hang limply over his lap, completely spent. I was gasping for air between wails of misery and hiccupping, uttering nonsensical words.

He stopped spanking me and rubbed my scorching backside until I calmed down and then sat me up so fast the woods spun in a circle. I would have fallen had he not tucked me firmly on his lap. Snot and tears covered my face. He took a hankie from his pocket and cleaned me up.

“Shh, there now, all better.”

My bottom ached. The roughness of his jeans felt like sandpaper on my sensitive skin. He handed me Bananas, placing the monkey's arms over my shoulders and the weight instantly calmed me.

“Tell me why you were so angry.”

I told him about all the times Harmony had told me about her escapades and how I had lived vicariously through her experiences. “If they are all lies, so are mine.” The truth hit me like a thunderbolt. Nothing in my life was real. Silent tears spilled, disappearing into Banana's soft fur as he clung to me as if to offer comfort.

“Veronica, let me assure you that your experiences are not a lie. You were unaware Harmony was relaying scenes from books she read or real-life embellishments. Your experiences came from a place of innocence. That is not a lie, darlin, it was real to you.”

I snuggled into his chest, allowing his warmth to be my comfort. It wasn't long before the weight from Bananas and the security Jacob provided lulled me to sleep.

CHAPTER 6



Jacob

AFTER PLACING VERONICA BACK IN THE TRUCK, I RECLINED her seat until she was almost horizontal and covered her with a blanket, tucking in the sides to help keep her stable while I drove. I added Bananas and placed his long arms around her in a hug. She looked so young and innocent, especially with the stuffy and the pink fluffy blanket she insisted we have at the ready in case she got sleepy.

She only had time for a short cat nap before I woke her as we pulled up to the gate. “Ronnie, wake up, we’ve arrived.”

She made cute kitten sounds as she stretched and opened her eyes. She put her seat up and blinked several times at her surroundings.

“This is it? I don’t see anything.” Her wide, rounded eyes reminded me of an owl as they blinked my way.

“We’re at the gates. I thought you would want to see everything on our way in.”

“Mmm, then can we have breakfast and hot chocolate? I’m really hungry.”

I shook my head in amusement. “The hot chocolate is not going to be a problem, but it’s actually closer to dinner time so I’m not going to promise you breakfast. But, I’ll see what I can do, kitten.”

“Kitten?”

“You remind me of one. Also, an owl but calling you owl makes me think of the one in *Winnie the Pooh* and as you are neither old nor male, I think kitten serves much better.”

I opened the gate and rolled the truck through. Crossing the threshold, I felt a weight lift from my shoulders. The one-day trip had been challenging. I'd left the Ranch well before dawn in order to take a red-eye flight to New York. Being back in the Big Apple and seeing Ronnie after all these years provoked many emotions, ones I'd not yet had time to examine. There were questions as well that needed answering, and now that I was back home, because home is what Rawhide had become, I felt the welcoming embrace of the land.

As we took the long drive, I pointed out what the buildings were and, for those hidden by more forested areas, explained what was there.

“Where does Harmony live?”

“On the adjacent property called Rawhide Ridge. I'll take you there next, but if you want to eat, we had best go to the cafeteria, as they are the only ones who might still be able to fulfill your desire for breakfast.”

Chef Connor didn't disappoint. After I introduced Veronica to him, he asked her what she'd like to eat. He didn't seem at all surprised when she requested waffles. Her smile was wide when he set down a plate of golden-brown waffles piled high with strawberries and whip cream topped with chocolate sprinkles for her, and bacon and eggs and hash browns for me. After we finished the last bites, we took our leave and headed over to the Remington household.

I thought of texting to announce our arrival as it was getting a bit late, but I knew it wasn't too late as Gray had his last day of classes to teach tomorrow before taking time off for the wedding. Besides the wedding, Valentine's Day would be here the day of the wedding, and while not a holiday, we highly celebrated it at Rawhide.

We'd just passed through the entrance of the gated housing community when Veronica scared me with a loud squeal of delight.

“That's it,” she squealed again. I swore my ear drums were bleeding. Ronnie bounced in her seat as we neared the Remington house, which was definitely excitement worthy.

Gray had built an exterior similar to Derek's, which he'd fallen in love with the first time visiting him and Sadie for dinner.

"How did you know which one was theirs?"

"Oh, I've seen pictures, of course. Harmony sent me tons while they were building and then a ton more when they decorated. But that's new." She was gazing at the massive tent off to the side.

"That's for the wedding."

"Oh, it's big."

"Meh, not that big. Once the tables and chairs are added, as well as the platform for the head table and additional tables for the food, it will seem cozy. We were going to use the Ranch, but it made more sense with Valentines coming up for us to move it to a more private setting."

"Valentine's day," she said with surprise lacing her voice. "You guys do that here?"

"Absolutely, it is a favorite Littles' celebration."

She nodded her head, but I could tell that this scene was intimidating for her.

"Do you know what I am supposed to do? You know, as the maid of honor?"

I wanted to strangle my cousin. Had she not told Ronnie anything about her responsibilities? Knowing Harmony as I did, I knew she would have said anything she felt Veronica needed to hear to be on board with the situation, and definitely not shared what she would see as a deterrent.

"That little brat," I uttered under my breath.

"Huh? Who? Not me, I hope?" Ronnie said, with pink already staining her pale cheeks.

"Not you, at least not this time." I gave her a meaningful look.

She gulped and averted her eyes.

That's right, hide from the big bad Daddy wolf, little girl. Her responses triggered my lust. I'd had an almost constant boner since picking her up earlier this morning.

We pulled up out front just as Harmony flew out the door with a smile so big it almost reached her ears. My heart softened seeing her so happy, and in that moment, I forgave her questionable motives in getting Veronica, her one and only genuine friend, here for the big day.

Happy tears glistened and threatened to fall, for both girls. I got out of the truck and helped Veronica down. She really was tiny, and I didn't want her falling and hurting herself. Well, that's what I told myself when really, feeling her in my arms was becoming my new drug of choice that I couldn't get enough of. Setting her down, she and Harmony flew into each other's arms, almost falling to the packed earth on impact.

"Calm down, ladies, we can't have the bride and her maid of honor broken for the ceremony."

"I second that." Gray appeared with a knowing smile on his face. "Thank you for making this happen. Harmony has been off the wall excited and driving this Daddy to new depths of patience since you left."

"I bet. Where do you want her bag?"

"Bag? It looks more like bags."

There were only the three containing her clothing and those items she wouldn't trust to anyone other than herself. "Yeah, well, as you said, I made this happen. The Little lady wasn't leaving without everything, so I had movers pack up her room and expect them to arrive in a few days' time."

Gray's brow furrowed, and I just knew he was about to deliver news I didn't want to hear.

"We've had a booking issue at Chez Remington." He smiled at the nickname, but it didn't reach his eyes.

"Oh?"

"My parents didn't show up alone. They brought my grandparents with them. Originally, they weren't supposed to

be attending, but they changed their minds at the last minute. I would have put them in the lodge, but they are old and need assistance.”

Oh boy, I knew what was coming next, and I had mixed feelings over the words he was about to say.

“Is it possible for Veronica to stay with you? I know I’m asking a lot, and I have a back-up plan with her taking a room at the lodge, but she will be alone, and I think she would do better with someone she trusts.”

When I didn’t respond right away, Gray added, “I guess I could always have one of the staff keep an eye on her; hell, she may even enjoy being around all the extra Daddies coming in from town for the Valentine’s social.”

He sure knew how to press my buttons. The idea of Ronnie being scooped up and entertained by any Daddy other than myself was a big fat no! I narrowed my eyes at Gray. “I know what you’re doing. That dour demeanor isn’t hiding your motives, cousin-in-law. If there aren’t grandparents at your wedding, we’ll be having words!”

Gray lips twitched as he tried to keep from smiling.

“I would never lie to you. Come on in and see if you don’t believe me.”

“Fine. But you owe me one.”

“Of course, whatever you want, but I have to add in a stipulation to wait until the honeymoon is over. My hands are full.”

“I just bet they are. I know how over the top my cousin can be.” Gray was a man who thrived on challenge. With the mind of a lawyer, his reasoning skills, especially with Harmony, were commendable. But even I could see the man was at the end of his rope.

“Where’s the honeymoon?”

“In a remote cabin in Twin Peaks, Colorado.”

I couldn’t hold back the laughter. “I take it she doesn’t know?”

“Nope, it will be a surprise that I chose that over Bora Bora, but if she’d behaved herself, then she would have gotten that. Instead, I plan on us making a lot of noise. And when I bring my wife home, she will be a happy and contented woman.”

The two of us laughed until the girls interrupted us. “And what are you two finding so funny?” Harmony asked Gray.

“Nothing you need to worry about.”

She pouted but didn’t question him again.

“Daddy, can I take V to meet my new friends? Pleassse!” she begged.

Ronnie looked unsure and turned begging eyes on me.

Gray must have noticed, too. “I believe tomorrow morning will be a much better time for you to introduce her to your friends. Veronica needs to familiarize herself with her surroundings first and get comfortable, and Jacob’s been traveling all day and needs to get some well-deserved sleep. Don’t you have something to say to your cousin?” Gray asked meaningfully.

She turned her attention to me. “Right! Thanks for the reminder, Daddy. Thank you, Jacob, so much for doing this for me. I owe you one.”

“You owe me too much to pay me back. But you’re welcome. You know I’m here for you, Harmony.”

Her face glowed. “I know. I’m really lucky to have you,” she said earnestly.

“We’re lucky to have each other. Now Ronnie and I should get going.”

Veronica’s eyes rounded in surprise. “Go? Where?”

“Well, this inn is pretty full, and I don’t think you’d like being sandwiched in with a bunch of people, so why don’t you come and stay with me. I’ll keep my eye on you and make sure you get what you need.”

She picked up on the double meaning behind my words. Her pupils dilated, but with her gaze on me, the others didn't notice.

“Okay, Jacob,” she finally answered. “That makes sense to me, and I... uh, not to be rude, Harmony, but it's going to take me a bit of adjusting. Do you mind if I go with Jacob?”

Playing her part perfectly, Harmony nodded her head sagely, a funny expression coming from her. “Not at all, V, you and Jacob have been together all day and have reestablished your bond. He'll take good care of you. And he can print off the agenda that I texted him and we can discuss it tomorrow.”

My eyes narrowed at my cousin. If I didn't believe Gray about his grandparents, I'd be convinced she'd been planning this all along. Truth be told, I wasn't completely sure she wasn't.

The two girls embraced, and then Ronnie and I got in the truck and headed to my place on another section of the Ridge. I loved the fact that Derek had bought the adjoining ranch, offering lots of various sizes for residents of Rawhide and staff to buy and build houses of different sizes based on their needs. It made it a lot easier than driving in to work from Porter's Corner, the nearest town. I could have stayed in the employee apartments on the Ranch proper but remembering Derek's offer to purchase a home on the Ridge, I'd not hesitated to buy this place when Gray offered his and Harmony's house when their new one was ready. My home was meant to be a cozy house for two and boasted an enormous bedroom/bathroom combo with a tub for two that I hadn't used yet, but now, with Ronnie staying with me, the tub was definitely a possibility. The hallways were wider than your average home, and the high ceilings throughout made the place seem bigger than it was.

I parked the truck in the garage and took Ronnie inside to familiarize herself with my place while I got busy unloading the truck. For now, I put all of her suitcases in the guest bedroom near the closet. We'd have to figure out where to put the remainder of her things once the moving truck arrived. The rest of the place was an open floor plan with a small living

room with a comfy couch, the kitchen and dining nook, and the larger family room with a stone fireplace.

I caught glimpses of her roaming and touching various things.

“What do you think of the place?” I asked after I’d finished unpacking.

“It doesn’t feel like you,” she responded.

Her response was intriguing, but before I could ask her to elaborate, she yawned and announced she was tired.

“Me too, Ronnie. I’m going to take a shower and hit the hay. Do you need anything before I do?”

“No, I don’t think so.”

“Okay, I’ll be in my room if you need anything.” I was really at odds with myself over her. She wasn’t what I’d thought I wanted but protecting and caring for her had ignited a fierce Daddy side that negated those opinions.

In the shower, I took my time lathering up, using my left hand to stroke myself.

Little did she know that the iron will I’d presented in not taking her had been one of the hardest things to do. But in the privacy of my shower, I could finally relieve the ache being with her had created.

My cock head was swollen and hot to the touch. Spanking her virgin bottom had been awesome, and giving her a first kiss, even better, but I was at that point where I couldn’t take another minute with her without getting some relief. Images of Veronica’s bouncy backside as I spanked it filled my vision. I could easily remember the sight of her puffy, slick lips inviting me to touch and sink inside her tight entrance while she made those cute mewling sounds.

Her eyes rounded with shock, then became hooded as desire pooled and soaked my shaft. My dick grew in my palm as my body strained, chasing my release. I pumped my load under the running water and slammed my other palm against the shower wall for support. Long, ropey streams of cum shot

against the ceramic tiles. I bit my lip to keep the growl contained and spilled the last drops. My body shuddered several times before I succumbed to exhaustion and sagged against the wet tiles.

The need to come must have been the only thing keeping me going, because exiting the bathroom and drying off was a monumental effort. Staying upright and staggering out of the heat and into the dimness of my room, I stood stalk still when I saw Ronnie in my bed, sound asleep, with Bananas tucked against her chest. I hesitated, and then my body decided my next move, as staying on my feet was becoming increasingly harder with each passing second.

I slid under the sheets and pulled her warm body against me and draped one arm over her tiny waist.

“Mmm,” she muttered, but didn’t wake or utter a complaint. Within seconds, I was out cold.

CHAPTER 7



Veronica

I'D BEEN TIRED AND OUT OF SORTS WHEN JACOB LEFT TO HAVE a shower. I'd stared at the empty bed for several minutes before deciding I couldn't sleep there. None of my things surrounded me to offer comfort. I had Bananas, but he was new. I'd needed more than him if I was going to relax and digging through my suitcases had been too much for me in my present state.

Instead, I'd walked out of my room and went into Jacob's. It smelled like him in here. Leather, mint, vanilla, and something more fragrant... maybe cinnamon. It was the epitome of him, and I found the masculine scent comforting. Taking a fortifying breath and praying he wouldn't kick me out when he found me in his bed, I'd climbed under the heavy blanket.

Just smelling his scent and feeling the weight of the blankets on top of me with Bananas tucked safely against my middle had me dozing off fast. My last coherent thought had been hoping I was on the correct side of his bed.

Now, hours later, I opened my eyes and didn't know where I was. My hand shot out to the sheets beside me, and they were warm but empty. Jacob's place, that's where I was. But it was dark and the dark reminded me of things I'd rather not remember. I hugged Bananas tight to my chest, tears leaking from my eyes as waves of fear rolled through me.

I tried crying out, but there was no sound. Then the door opened, and the room flooded with light. Someone stood in the doorway, but the light from the hallway made them a

silhouette, like a shadow monster. I backed up into the headboard and hid my face in Bananas' soft furry belly.

“Veronica. Hey, you're okay, it's me, Jacob.”

I lifted my head to see he was him and not the shadow monster, after all. But the fear still coursed through me and sweat trickled down my back. He balanced a tray he was carrying which had looked like a giant mouth with teeth in the shadows and turned on a lamp on the nightstand.

“See, it's just me. I'm sorry I left you in the dark, sweet girl. I'll make sure I turn on the lamp from now on.”

Jacob put the tray down on the bed and sat himself on the other side. “I brought water and attempted a mocha for you. I hope I did okay.”

I reached out my shaky hand and took the cup from him. The scent wafting from the cup helped to put me at ease, and my racing heart began to calm down as the fear receded. My shoulders released, dropping away from my ears. Lifting the cup to my lips, I took a tentative sip of the chocolaty goodness and whipped cream.

“Mmm, yummy.” I took another sip and leaned back against the headboard. “Thank you. I'm sorry I freaked out, but I'm afraid of the dark and I kinda forgot where I was.”

“Never apologize for being scared, Ronnie. Just tell me what you need, and I'll make sure you have it.”

For the rest of my life.

Those were the words I wished to hear from him. I knew he could, if he wanted to take care of me for the rest of my life, that is, but was I what he was looking for?

I didn't see how. I was needy and had enough phobias to drive a person mental. But Harmony had them too, and didn't Gray fix all that? She looked amazing and so happy when we pulled up, it was a bittersweet moment seeing the proof of all she had done since leaving NYC. Her Daddy was so present and imposing, yet had a gentle, caring energy. If she could have such a wonderful forever Daddy, then why couldn't I?

“Ronnie, are you listening?”

“Huh? Sorry, I was zoning out. What did you say?”

“We have about an hour until we need to leave for the Big House. How about you shower, and I’ll start unpacking your suitcases so you can find an outfit.”

Right, the Big House had been one of the places Jacob had pointed out during our quick tour of the Ranch before we’d gone to the main lodge to eat. This morning I’d be meeting Derek Hawkins, the owner of Rawhide, and his wife Sadie, and god only knew who else as I remembered Harmony mentioning introducing me to her friends. “Jacob. I haven’t been around people in years. I don’t know what to wear. Could you maybe pick something out for me?”

He leaned back on his palms and studied me. I was about to say if it was too hard to forget about it, but his lips tugged into a mischievous smile.

“Here’s the deal, kitten. I’ll choose what you wear, but there better not be any complaints from you. If I hear even one, I’ll punish you for breaking your word.”

I felt the temperature in my body spike and knew my cheeks had turned pink with embarrassment. Hearing him say things that I’d only ever read about in books, or heard from Harmony, was doing a real number on me. I couldn’t control the pooling in my panties or my dilating pupils even if I wanted to.

“Okay.”

“Okay? I think I deserve a ‘yes, sir’!”

Oh, dear heaven, I was in way over my head. How I longed to let go and have someone else to control my decisions. But I also wanted to ask him questions about how this dynamic worked, but instead of conversing or asking questions, “*Yes, Sir,*” popped out of my mouth.

That sexy side smirk stayed the same, but his eyes darkened with my response. Holy Hannah! I was going to need to employ some serious strategies if I wanted to get through the day without falling to my knees and begging to be taken.

“Can I have my purse? It has my, uh, make up and stuff in it.”

“That giant pink thing you’ve been carrying is a purse? I thought it was an overnight bag.”

My blush deepened. “Well, yes, I guess you could say that. I haven’t needed a purse for years, so I grabbed that one and it does have overnight stuff in it.”

Jacob sobered immediately. “I’ll grab it for you.”

As soon as he left, I jumped out of bed and ran into the bathroom, closing the door. A moment later he knocked, and I opened the door far enough for him to pass me the bag, then quickly closed the door behind me.

Digging through the pockets, I finally found what I was looking for: my waterproof vibrator. Hallelujah! Stepping under the multiple jets, I leaned against the wall, positioning myself so the water hit all the right places. Turing on my vibrator, I stimulated my swollen clit.

My libido had been in overdrive since Jacob arrived at my home. Never had I felt so much sexual tension, and my body was begging for release. “Oh, sweet heaven,” I murmured. Gripping one nipple with my free hand, I tugged viciously on the sensitive nub, causing wetness to seep from between my swollen entrance, secreting down my hand... heat was swirling through my body. I was so close to having a mega orgasm.

I wasn’t used to having a real person excite me. The great thing about reading books is you can put them down at the exciting bits or reread them a thousand times. I’d build my excitement and then visualize the scenes I’d read while I got myself off. But with Jacob, I had no control. There was no book to close or remote control to press. He was at a playing level I’d never been, and I felt woefully out of my depth.

He’d been at Rawhide for years, with hundreds of subs parading around all day long. Did the man live with a perpetual hard on or did one grow used to being around what sexually aroused them? It occurred to me this thing between us

may be a game for Jacob and one he'd probably played a million times before.

That thought dulled the excitement, but I was way past the point of return, and within seconds, felt the orgasm that had been building since yesterday roll through me like a thundercloud. I let out a low keening sound that I couldn't keep under wraps and slumped down to the tiled floor.

The door to the bathroom flew open and a worried Jacob came barreling in. "What's wrong? Are you okay? Did you slip?"

Laughter bubbled up. Soon I was laughing so hard I couldn't answer him had I wanted to.

He crossed his arms and pinned me with a glare. "I don't see what's so funny."

I was now lying at the bottom of the shower, holding my belly as the waves of laughter erupted from me. Finally, I held up my little vibrator. "I'm perfectly fine." I managed to say. "Great, actually."

Jacob grinned and was soon chuckling along with me. "As I'm not your Daddy, I'll let that go, but if I was, there's no way you'd steal orgasms from me without earning a punishment."

His words, spoken lightly, hit me hard. Climbing to my feet, I held his gaze and from some place I'd never accessed before, I bravely asked. "If you were my Daddy, what would my punishment be?"

I was very aware, in fact hyper aware, that I was still very turned on and my nipples were hard and on full display for him to see. He seemed to notice that fact as well and pursued me from head to toe and back up.

"The punishment would fit the crime," he finally answered. "You would give Daddy a blow job and he'd come down your throat. But you, little one, would be denied a release." He stalked a little closer to the shower and surprised me by stepping inside, fully clothed.

"You wouldn't get touched like this."

He bent over and reached between my thighs, stroking my swollen lips. “And you wouldn’t feel this.” He slid one of his fingers inside and curled it.

I clung to his shoulders for support.

“And you wouldn’t get this.” He kneeled down and lifted my leg, placing my knee on his shoulder. He dipped his head and his tongue flicked out, penetrating me like his finger just had.

“Oh!” was all I got out before he buried his tongue deep inside me, darting and stroking.

“Ooh, don’t stop!”

He shifted, teasing my nub with his tongue, and slid a finger inside again. Sweet heaven, but it felt so good. His mouth clamped down on my hardened pearl and I screamed, gushing in his mouth as a powerful orgasm rolled through me. My hoisted leg trembled, my arms flew out to the sides, pressing against the shower walls. His finger never stopped, and I came again, hovering between the realms until landing back in the watery element that was the shower floor. Before I could process the rapid rate of my release, another orgasm spiked. My clit was like a button stuck in the on position.

Jacob’s finger and tongue powered the orgasms that kept coming. I lost count of how many when he withdrew from my body, and I slumped, overcome with coital bliss.

Jacob held on to me with one hand as he lifted my leg off his shoulder with the other. Standing up, he leaned me back against him for support and went to work, washing my body and hair, then rinsing me thoroughly. After adding conditioner to my long locks, he rinsed my tresses and was done. Stripping out of his wet clothing, all I got to see was the briefest glance of his bare butt as he expertly wrapped a towel around his hips before turning to face me. Twisting off the taps, he helped me out of the shower and then patted me down with an additional towel.

I stood like a child turning this way and that until he was done. “Can you dry your hair, or do you need help?”

“Mm, I can do it. Thank you for that. It was amazing.”

He scooped up the wet clothing and what I'd been wearing and left the bathroom. While drying my hair, I pondered Jacob's message... he told me what he would do as my Daddy, but not being my Daddy, he did something else that not only had I wanted but also needed. It would be a lie if I said I wasn't a little confused. Now I was questioning everything I thought I'd wanted.

Fifteen minutes later, I exited the bathroom and found what he'd chosen for me, lying on his freshly made bed, a midnight-blue dress with a full skirt that hit mid-thigh with matching ballerina flats. I breathed a sigh of relief that he hadn't chosen heels as I hadn't worn them in years and was out of practice and no doubt would have made a fool of myself.

“Uh, Jacob, where are my panties and bra?”

“No panties, but I'm open to negotiating the bra.”

His head poked around the corner, the sexy smirk back on his face. My heart fluttered and so did something else. How could I go without panties when he kept turning me on? My thighs would be slippery with the constant gushing of fluid that came with his dirty words and constant innuendos.

Think, Ronnie, think, what would he trade a bra for? I didn't know much about Doms except they were controlling over what they considered theirs.

“If I don't wear a bra, all the men will see my nipples.” I delivered that statement accompanied by wide, innocent eyes.

His countenance shifted immediately to a dark, brooding visage.

Ha, I had him now!

“Wear the bra,” he stated flatly before disappearing from the open doorway.

Oh my! Maybe all that stuff about submissives having all the control was right. I just needed to stop reacting to everything and start using my brain. But only when I wanted

to. A sense of power that I'd never experienced before surged through me, equipping me with a rare confidence.

"I've got the power." The lyrics from the early 90s rap band Snap came to mind. I couldn't hold back the giggle at the idea of little ole me having any control, but then I thought about Harmony. She'd looked different... her clothing choices had sure changed too. She'd met me wearing jeans that hugged her curves and a plaid shirt. Her hair was long and loose and... here was the biggest change, no makeup except a little gloss on her lips. Yet she'd looked better than I'd ever seen her before.

As I dressed, I went through a catalogue of reasons for her transformation and then I landed on it. Happiness. I mean, she was really happy and practically glowing in fact. With Gray in her life, everything for her had shifted. Not long before she'd called about the wedding, she had told me she'd gotten a publishing deal for her first book, which was due out next year. Something neither of us imagined could ever happen to her. And not because she wasn't smart, she was, but focusing on anything for longer than a hot minute was not her modus operandi. It seemed that Rawhide had not only broken bad habits but had created the best version of her to date.

I wanted that. To have all the best parts of me encouraged and all my bad parts stripped away. When I'd said that to my shrinks, they usually ended our session with "sorry I can't help you but here is a referral".

I gazed at myself in the full-length mirror. You could still see my nipples through the thin lace of my bra, but barely. The dress didn't hide the fact that I appeared childlike and the only part that seemed to say "woman" was the flare of my hips and wiggly ass. The rest of me almost appeared underdeveloped, and it had bothered me for a very long time. My bestie had curves for days and had put me to shame everywhere we went as teenagers. To make matters worse, she'd developed early and mine had taken until after being diagnosed with agoraphobia, so no one saw me and, therefore, I reasoned must remember me as that skinny kid with no boobs which hadn't changed a whole lot.

I continued to examine myself in the mirror. My breasts were still small, but at least I had them and despite their size, they were nicely shaped. My legs were slim and shapely, especially for someone who never worked out. The flair of the skirt which sat at my hips accentuated them nicely and the roundness of my ass. Being an ass man, I was sure Jacob had chosen the dress for that very reason.

I wasn't so bad I decided. My hair was by far my best feature and fell in big waves down my back and surrounded my too pale face. Jacob was right, I did resemble a cat, with my hair acting like big tufts of fur around a small, angular face that held eyes that always hinted at surprise. Not now, though. They were partially lidded and added a sexy *the cat just licked the cream* expression.

I went back into the bathroom and put on foundation and a bit of blush, then added mascara and a dark gloss to my lips.

I exited the bathroom and slipped on my ballet flats and did another cursory examination in the mirror. Better! Now let's see if Jacob liked the final product. He was in the living room sipping a beer when I entered. Seeing me reflected in the window, he turned and whistled in appreciation.

"I knew that would look amazing on you, Ronnie. Now turn around and lift your skirt. I need to make sure you listened and aren't wearing panties."

I spun around to hide the deep blush spreading rapidly up my neck and across my cheeks. I heard him step up behind me and I held my breath. Here goes nothing! Cool air whooshed against my skin as he lifted the hem of my dress past my hips. If my body could blush like my cheeks, I had no doubt they'd be as red as their facial counterparts.

"Spread your legs."

Oh-my-goodness! I did what I was told and knew he was seeing moisture coating my inner thighs and my slick, swollen lips. I'd had so many orgasms; how could I possibly feel the need for more? But that was exactly what was happening. I groaned out loud when he ran a finger through my arousal.

“So slick for me, kitten,” he purred. Then pulled his finger away and smacked my tender bottom. “Time to go, sweet cheeks.”

I turned and stomped my foot. How dare he do this to me? It had taken me a while, but now I knew this was a game, a game I didn't want to play.

“No!”

His gaze darkened. “Outright defiance will land you over the edge of the couch with your pretty bottom in the air. Is that what you want?”

“No!” I screamed this time. All reason had fled, and all I saw was red. How dare he play with me the way he had all those other submissives. I wasn't some nameless, faceless sub in a dungeon who'd agree to play. No, I was me and I wouldn't stand for this. I wanted a Daddy. I was here to find one and no more games from Jacob.

“Don't touch me ever again!” I screamed. “I don't like your games and I won't be a victim of them anymore. If you want to do that, then go and find a willing partner. I'm here for a Daddy and I won't accept anything less!”

As soon as the words came out of my mouth, I realized two things... one, I was acting horribly, and two, I'd shared what I wanted aloud for the very first time. Sure, Harmony and I had discussed it, but I'd never said what I wanted. She just knew me well enough to know what I wanted.

Jacob looked horrified by my words. “Is that what you think, Ronnie? That I'm just playing a game with you? I can assure you that isn't true, and I apologize for my actions.”

His demeanor did a complete one-eighty. He took my hands and held them gently in his. “I'm very attracted to you, and I want to have you all to myself. When I think of you looking for a Daddy who isn't me, I see black and want to strangle every potential male threat. My body hasn't received the memo to calm the hell down. My dick is aching to be inside of you, and I swear is controlling the commands coming out of my mouth.”

Despite the blaze of anger, whose effects were still swirling inside creating a pit in my tummy, I couldn't hide the smile at his admittance.

“I want to claim you. Spank that pretty bottom and then kiss it better. This is all new to me, Ronnie. I've known what I wanted since I was seventeen years old, but I had an unpleasant experience and it's been difficult for me to let that go of the memories from that time and trust the process ever since. I want to be a Daddy to you, and that's a first for me and admittedly a little scary. What I've been doing, you could call a test to see if your submissiveness would fit with my particular dominance and that was unfair of me, especially as I never communicated this to you. So, I am sorry for any confusion. But you're right, you should have a Daddy and believe me, you will before you leave this place because you are so beautiful, inside and out.”

I was in shock, stunned into stillness at his confession.

So many thoughts were flying around in my head, but I only found the words to voice one of those aloud. “Would you tell me about your terrible experience?” I wanted to kick myself with the crestfallen expression on his face. He'd wanted me to reciprocate, or maybe ask him to be my Daddy. But something deep inside told me not to, that his confession was just the beginning of a longer process that might eventually bring us together, or not. We still had a long way to go to see if we were compatible. I couldn't shake that earlier feeling. I've got the power still played in a loop, only this time it didn't come with that sense of empowerment. This time, it came with a sense of dread.

CHAPTER 8



Jacob

NOTHING HAD BEEN THE SAME SINCE MY CONFESSION. I honestly believed she would reciprocate, but she asked me about my past, which I shared with her on the ride over to the Ranch.

I'd mentally kicked myself so many times at what I'd shared in the face of her hurt and indignation. At the time, it had felt like the right thing to say. I'd received a phone call right before we left from Derek. He informed me that since Gray had mentioned Harmony introducing her maid of honor to her Ranch friends, the cafeteria would be a better place to meet.

"Meeting new people might be a bit easier if your girl has a mug of hot chocolate in her hands," Derek said.

Since I knew of a Little who loved hot cocoa and waffles, I had no problem agreeing to the new location. I hadn't stopped to consider that there would be a lot of people enjoying breakfast as well. Once in the cafeteria, I had to endure a host of men and women approach and engage Ronnie in conversation. If her goal had been to make me jealous, it sure worked. When Harmony informed me it was time to let her show Ronnie around, I really couldn't argue. It would also keep Ronnie away from any of those men she'd mentioned. I left the reception as angry as a bee in a hornets' nest. She either didn't care or didn't seem to notice.

We were in the arts and crafts room, and I pretended to be busy, but was watching Veronica and the rest of the bridal party making Valentine's Day cards for the big party coming up. I'd taken over most of her duties for the wedding and,

other than ensuring she had everything she needed, was at a loss as to how to interact with her or what to do to fix the situation I'd put us in.

Gray had asked me more than once what was going on, but I'd blown him off. I didn't share by nature, and my awkwardly timed confession to Ronnie was exactly why I bottled everything up.

The ball was completely in her court now and not only had I not touched her, but the ache also to have her had morphed into something out of my control, which just added to my frustration.

A peal of giggles from across the room grabbed my attention. Sadie, Harmony, and Jillian were looking at what Ronnie was doing, and whatever they saw sent them into another peal of giggles. Then, all four sets of eyes turned my way.

I couldn't have been more uncomfortable if I'd tried.

“Ahem.”

Startled, I turned to see Derek, who materialized out of thin air, standing directly beside me. For a large man, he was as silent as a cat. Being of equal height made it hard to hide behind my cool veneer. He had a penetrating gaze that many other residents had commented on—the ability to look right through to the crux of an issue—and was the one he was giving me right now.

“The girls are having fun, it seems.”

I nodded, averting my gaze from his. “That's what it's all about, right? Making sure they're happy?”

Derek nodded sagely for a moment. “No, Jacob, that's not what it's all about.”

His words took me by surprise.

“Your job is to see to her needs and provide the right environment for her to grow into herself and be the man who keeps her on course.”

“I think you’ve mistaken me for her Daddy,” I said lightly to hide my reaction to his words that cut deep.

“Have I? Maybe you have mistaken who you are, but I certainly haven’t. I know you’re a bit gun shy, Jacob, but it doesn’t change the fact that Little Veronica is completely in love with you and probably waiting for you to ask her to be yours. Have you asked her, I mean?”

It was on the tip of my tongue to say *of course I did*, but when I thought over our last interaction and our time together leading up to that moment, I realized I had never asked her to be mine. In fact, her freak out had been because I was treating her like she was mine, when in fact, I’d never claimed her.

“I thought I’d made it clear, but, honestly, no, I haven’t.”

Derek chuckled. “Then I think you have some work to do instead of hovering around here.”

He was right, I was being ridiculous. Little Veronica had thrown down the gauntlet and my hurt ego had gotten in the way of seeing things for what they were. But I planned on changing that right now.

Not waiting a moment longer, I stalked to the table where the girls were sitting. Sadie noticed me first, and I heard her say, “Oh-oh someone’s in trouble,” before Ronnie slammed something over what she’d been making and turned her head to see me coming toward her.

She gulped, and her pupils dilated. The little brat! Playing with me was her way of topping from the bottom, again. Not that she’d been wrong to do it, but that she had gone after my weakness and used it against me was an issue. I’d congratulate her performance, then show her the error of her ways. She wanted me to take her in hand, and I would do just that, and make both my actions and my words loud and clear this time.

“Time to go, darlin, we have an appointment.”

As I took her by the hand and led her to the exit, the peals of *oh-ohs* from the girls followed us until the door closed behind us.

“Uh. Where are we going?” Ronnie was practically sprinting to keep up with my long strides. I felt like John Wayne in *McClintock*. Only Maureen O’Hara got her spanking over her skirt, but that wouldn’t be the case for Veronica De Haviland.

“You issued me a challenge, darlin, and this is me accepting.” Her large eyes widened, but she didn’t say another word. Back at my place, I escorted her to the bedroom. “I’m going to give you exactly what you’ve been begging me for since I spanked you in your apartment.”

“Oh? And what is that?” She knew what it was, but she needed me to tell her. She wanted to hear me say she was mine.

“Me taking your virginity. I’ll paddle your bottom and take every hole in your body. I’m the Daddy you want and need, Ronnie, and we both know it.”

Her nipples were hard beneath the flimsy material of her dress. I reached out and pinched one.

“Oh!” Her surprise quickly morphed into a groan of pleasure. I tweaked the other one, rolling it between my thumb and index finger until she squirmed. She was panting when I released it, and speared me with hooded, come-get-me-eyes. But why we were here still hadn’t been addressed. I needed to use the words and ask her.

“Veronica De Haviland, would you do me the honor of being my Little for now and always until death us do part?”

“Yes, Jacob Andrews, I will be your Little for now and until death us do part.”

That was all the invitation I needed. Sitting on the corner of the bed, I pulled her across my lap, tugging her dress over her hips. Without the barrier of panties to soak up her essence, my Little girl’s arousal was quite apparent, the telling evidence slick against my fingertip as I ran it up her inner thigh. My naughty girl startled, then spread her legs. But I didn’t touch her where she wanted yet. Instead I moved her over one thigh

with her head and arms on the bed and her sexy legs parted and draped on either side of my thigh.

Now I could see her delectable, full globes, and puffy slick lips in the floor-length mirror hanging opposite the bed. I parted her fleshy cheeks, loving how she was on full display for my eyes only. Then squeezed them together and shook them. Prying open one cheek, I spanked her naughty back hole and pouty nether lips.

“Oh!” she cried, then moaned with pleasure as the sting dissipated and the pleasant warmth kicked in.

Switching cheeks, I spanked her again. This time she let out a sound reminiscent of a purr and ground against my knee. Keeping her snug, I retrieved her hairbrush from the floor, happy for once that she was messy, and left things lying around that I could conveniently use.

I brought the hairbrush down on her bouncy backside.

“Ouch!”

I admired my handiwork in the mirror’s reflection and felt satisfaction that all was right in our dynamic when a pretty pink circle appeared on her right cheek. Watching from this angle had me so hard I was afraid I’d cum in my pants. I’d never figured myself to be an observer but watching us was a hot new experience.

I set a steady pace with the hairbrush, not too hard as I wanted her to enjoy it, but hard enough to keep her attention.

After several strokes, a rhythm set in. I’d spank her, and she’d arch her back after each stroke, begging for more. My god, this woman liked how I gave it, and all my suspicions about Ronnie collided in that moment. She was perfect for me.

She told me all I needed to know through her actions. Trying to tuck her bottom when a stroke was too hard, then lifting her bottom for more when it felt right. And on we went until her backside was as shiny and red as a ripe apple.

I dropped the brush and ran my fingers through her arousal and up to her back entrance. She mewled like a kitten.

“Oh, yes, Daddy, please, more.”

“Do you want to come for Daddy, kitten?” The new nickname suited her as she was rubbing herself against me like her namesake.

“Yes. I want to come.”

I penetrated her lubricated bottom with one finger and thrust another between her slick lips. She froze but only for a moment and then relaxed her head on the bed, her arms, outstretched, clenching and unclenching her fists in the blanket, much like a cat does with their paws when they are happy.

“Ohh, Jacob, that feels incredible.”

I smacked her ass with my free hand. “It’s Daddy, kitten.”

“Umm, Daddy,” she corrected.

I pumped my fingers slowly in and out of her. Her adorable little mewls came in a steady stream. Her velvety soft walls quivered with my touch. Her moans grew from mewls to insistent moans and I knew it was time. Pulling my fingers away, I lifted her off my lap and laid her on the bed.

“Are you ready for me, kitten?”

Her half-closed glassy eyes regarded me with pure lust. “More than ready, Daddy.”

She watched me kick off my boots and remove my pants, shirt and finally, boxers. Not counting that brief glance in our shared shower, this was her first time getting a full view of what I’d kept in my pants since our reunion. I watched her lust amp up a notch when she licked her lips at what she saw. She wanted me to take her as badly as I wanted to be inside her. Instead of climbing between her legs, I wrapped my arms around her legs and tugged her toward me.

I flicked her entrance with my tongue, then darted as deep inside her as I could reach. Ronnie’s eyes rolled back. She dropped back on the mattress, her fingers digging into the blanket beneath her. Shifting my hands, I gripped her heated

bottom and parted her roasted cheeks. The tip of my tongue speared her naughty hole.

Ronnie gasped, her back arching off the bed.

I sunk a finger inside her, past the tight ring of muscle.

Her feet drummed the bed, and her arms flung wide. Slowly I finger fucked her ass and slid my thumb inside her weeping pussy. Her tight inner walls quivered and squeezed my thumb; her body tensed.

She was so close, just a slight adjustment, to tap her swollen nub. Veronica froze for a beat before shudders wracked her body. Her luscious bottom attempted to lift off the bed but my finger in her ass kept her anchored to the bed. Her mouth opened in a silent scream, her body trembling with the orgasm ripping through her.

The scent of her heavenly nectar filled my senses. I needed to be inside of her. Now!

Pulling my fingers away, I pressed my cock head at her entrance. “You can still say no, Ronnie. But if we do this, if you allow me to be the first man inside of you then there’s no going back. I won’t do this just to have you walk away and choose another.”

“You are the only one I’ve ever wanted. I choose you, Daddy.”

Her quiet confidence had an air of *I do* about it. She accepted being my Little and now, her words sank the message home. I’m the one she wanted, and it was time for me to prove she’d chosen wisely.

I held myself on my forearms so as not to crush her and slowly sunk inside her silky folds. It was hard to hold back and not thrust into her like a wild beast. But that wasn’t the message here. Ronnie had never had anyone to really lean on, someone willing to go toe to toe with her and accept her just as she was. Banging her like a sex-starved maniac was not the way to teach her that person was me.

Her tiny body quivered beneath mine. And the brief thought of whether she could handle my size was on the tip of

my tongue to say just that, when she wrapped her legs around my hips, locking her ankles.

“I need this. Take me the way you imagined you would. I want to feel all those wonderful things I’ve only read about in books.”

That was the green light I hadn’t realized until that moment I needed. Letting go of doubts from my past and worries from my present, my hips pulled back until only the tip remained inside of her and then I thrust deeply. I held still for a moment to give her body time to catch up with the invasion. She was no stranger to penetration. I know because I saw her extensive collection of toys when we were packing up her belongings, but none of them were my size and they hadn’t had a mind of their own, only responding to how she moved them inside of her.

Veronica’s beautiful face contorted with a look of pure ecstasy.

“You’re so big,” she purred, “and I’m so full, but I want more please, Daddy.”

Magic words. Sitting back on my shins, I moved her so her neck and head were all that were left on the bed, and placed her knees on my shoulders, leaving my hands free to roam her body.

Her nipples were hard, pebbled points that begged for attention. I gripped them between my thumbs and index fingers, lightly twisting and pinching as I pummeled her insides.

Ronnie’s mewls hiked up a few octaves. Her fists pounded the bed at her sides. Her body trembled, and a light sheen of perspiration covered her body. She was ready to fall off the edge and into passionate bliss.

I released one nipple, moving my hand to her opening and circled her clit. When she was about to tip into oblivion, I pinched her nub.

“Ahhh!” she shouted. Her tight walls spasmed, milking me with her strong internal muscles. I gritted my teeth in an

attempt to maintain control of my release, but the effort was monumental. She felt better than anything I'd conjured from my imagination.

I managed a few more thrusts before shouting her name, pumping my seed deep in her womb.

Her limp legs slid down my shoulders, dropping to the bed on either side of me. "Is it always like that?" she mumbled.

I pulled out and lay down beside her, tucking her against my body. "Like what?"

"Earth shattering," she replied.

"I'm glad you approve. In answer to your question. Yes, with the right person."

She remained silent in my arms. The only sound in the room was our breathing until her endorphin-soaked brain seemed to catch up to what I'd said. "Are you saying I'm the right person?"

I slid my hands down her back, squeezing her warm bottom. She purred and let loose a peal of giggles.

"When can we do it again?"

"When I'm ready."

She squirmed in my arms until she faced me. "How will I know when that is?" she asked with genuine concern.

"Don't worry about anything, kitten. It's my job to know what you need and when you need it."

"Okay."

"That's it?" I asked, amused. "Okay? I was waiting for a dozen more questions."

Ronnie was glowing in the aftermath of sex and looked like a pale goddess against the black sheets.

"I would have if this was before, but I trust you know what you're talking about."

Her eyes closed and within moments, soft snores emanated from between her full lips. Exhausted, it didn't take long for

me to sink into a dreamless slumber.

CHAPTER 9



Veronica

“COME ON, GIRLS, TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK, LIKE honestly.”

The group of us girls were sitting in Harmony’s little theater and digging through her dress-up wardrobe for an outfit to wear to the rehearsal dinner the next evening. Sadie and Jillian exchanged glances, then turned to me, like they were waiting for my input first.

This was exactly what I feared would happen when Harmony asked me to come over, while Jacob and her fiancée Gray, Derek and a few others had gone out for a bachelor campout. I thought they were crazy; it was February after all, and this was Montana. But when I ask why they’d choose to go camping outside in winter, they all puffed up their chests and said they were tough and the cold didn’t dampen their enthusiasm in the least. I still thought they were nuts as there was still snow on the ground from a snowfall a few days earlier but figured it best not to question their intelligence.

Gray’s parents had taken the grandparents on an overnight shopping trip in Butte to give Harmony some quality time with her friends. With no one home, we decided on a slumber party.

The men had left an hour ago and already I was on edge. I don’t know why as being with Harmony without a man around had been my reality for years, so why was it so hard now? The more I tried to understand all the emotions and thoughts inside, the more confused I became.

“I think we should have some wine.” Was that me making that suggestion? I only drank on special occasions. Technically, this entire week was a special occasion.

Sadie and Jill squealed and clapped their hands.

“Yes! Let’s do that and we’ll blast music and try on everything!”

Sadie’s enthusiasm affected all of us and we dashed to the kitchen, all of us shoving and giggling to be the first to the pick the wine off the rack.

“Ha! I win.” Sadie held the bottle aloft for us all to see.

“Eww, that’s white, Sadie. I never drink white.” Jillian screwed up her face like she’d just sucked a lemon.

Sadie rolled her eyes. Then covered them with her hands and peeked through her fingers. “Oh, it’s just you guys. I can’t roll my eyes when Daddy is around, or I’ll get in trouble.”

“Really? How come?”

All three sets of eyes turned to me. “Seriously, V, hasn’t my cousin gone over the rules with you yet?”

I didn’t like the accusation in her tone, and I really didn’t like that they knew stuff I didn’t.

“Well, yeah, but the rolling of the eyes never came up.”

“Oh, that’s probably because it’s not a bad habit. I did it all the time,” Sadie offered.

“Me too,” Harmony lifted her hand.

“Oh look. An organic red, let’s have that,” I said in hopes of distracting them from the topic. They were right, I didn’t roll my eyes, I had other issues, like always trying to top from the bottom, or at least that was what Jacob called it. In my mind, I was just being ambitious.

“Oh look, I win,” Harmony added haughtily.

“Well, not technically, but it is your party.” Sadie gave her an exaggerated eye roll.

Oh-oh, this wasn’t going well at all. “Here, let me open that for you, H.”

I grabbed the bottle and went digging for an opener.

“I want white. Can I Open this one?” Sadie asked Harmony.

“Hell, ya, it’s my bachelorette party. We can have whatever we want.”

Whew! That comment went far in returning the laughter to the party. The doorbell rang and in walked Catherine Denton. We’d only met at the reception breakfast, but I knew Harmony had worked closely with her and her husband Sam, who’d gone on the campout. Harmony and Jillian scurried out of the kitchen to greet Catherine while Sadie and I wrestled with the wine bottles.

A moment later, the doorbell rang again. Sadie popped her cork and went looking for glasses. I was about to ask her for help with my cork, as I’d never removed one before, when we heard more voices down the hall.

“Do you know them?” I whispered and handed my bottle over.

She extracted the cork and listened. “Yep.” Her lips quirked up into a smile similar to Jacob’s. Did everyone have a side smirk but me?

“I believe that’s the twins, Sam and Savannah. Catherine for sure. That dominant musical tone belongs to her and... oh, that’s Emily. Her man, Professor Dalton, tagged along on the campout.”

“Is he the one who helped Harmony become a writer?”

“The very same. And that last voice sounds like Moira. Have you met her yet?”

“Mmm is she a short, perky redhead with glittering green eyes?”

Sadie laughed. “The very one.”

I had seen all these people and probably met them during breakfast at the reception, but I’d been so wrapped up in the sexual tension between me and Jacob, my memories were vague at best.

A moment later, the noisy group of clucking hens entered the kitchen. So much big energy amongst them, including Harmony's. I quickly poured some wine and beelined it out of there and straight to Harmony's office, quietly closing the door.

I plopped down on the antique chaise lounge I recognized as being from her father's study in her parents' apartment. I thought she'd gotten rid of everything when she took over the family fortune but was happy to see something familiar at last.

I sipped my wine and gazed around the space. The room represented a version of Harmony I didn't know. Except for the chaise I reclined on, there was nothing else in the room that was from her past, at least none that I could see.

I thought about my entire life being packed up in boxes that now took up most of the free space along the hallways of Jacob's home. Nothing I had was older than seven years, yet I held on to it all like it was a lifeline. It was a mystery to me now that I had a different perspective to look at, that what I was doing wasn't mainstream.

When Harmony came to Rawhide, she'd brought her wardrobe, which is what mattered most to her. When Jacob came to Rawhide, he'd done the same. Perusing his home that first time, I'd noted then that nothing reflected his past, just a few photos he had lying around.

Yet here I was with my life packed in boxes, right down to the newer copy of the graphic novel I'd chased down on Amazon that had been on the bed the night of the fire.

I took a gulp of wine, enjoying the slightly numbing effects that allowed me to see perspective. Something Harmony had told me on one of our many conference calls was she drank a glass of red wine in the evening when she wrote. The next day, she would drink coffee and edit what she'd written the night before. When I questioned why, she quoted a famous saying, "*write drunk and edit sober*". We'd giggled about it at the time, but in retrospect, I wonder if she really did that. Probably not. I couldn't visualize Gray allowing her to get drunk every night.

I stood up, a little unstable on my feet, and gripped the back of the chaise until the dizziness passed. Jacob had said that most of what Harmony had told me was inspired from various books she'd read.

Only one way to find out. On the wall opposite the lounge was a bookshelf. Many of the books it held had various colored sticky notes poking out of them. I grabbed one and flipped open the page containing the first yellow sticky labeled *M.POV Thoughts*.

Jaxon wanted nothing more than to rip her panties in two and watch them flutter to the ground. It would be worth the look of surprise on her face he had no doubt she'd be wearing before he had Isabelle get to her knees in front of him.

Oh. That was hot. I found myself wanting to know all about what happened between Jaxon and Isabelle and took the book back to the lounge. A few pages in, the story started sounding familiar.

I returned to the shelf and grabbed a different book, this one had only pink sticky notes protruding from its pages with the first one labeled *F.POV Thoughts*.

Sara was blown away by the chemistry they shared. Every expression and word called to her inner slut. She wanted him to degrade her in front of the entire class, lift her skirt to find her bare. Sara imagined Mr. Rogers having a hard on just seeing her naked ass and glistening sex.

I read the book for a bit and then replaced it. My nipples were hard and poking through my pajama shirt. I really needed to find somewhere to get myself off. Her stories were doing a real number on my libido.

From where I stood, I could hear the party was in full swing, screeches of happiness and surprise rang down the hallway. I wanted to sneak out and return without anyone noticing. I wrote a note to Harmony.

Had an errand.

BYB, V, xo

I left the note in plain sight on the desk and snuck out of the office and down to the back of the house. Outside was a host of golf carts and, of course, their keys were in the ignition. The best place for them, as the area was well protected, and no undesirables were getting past security to steal them.

We'd only come here twice with Jacob driving both ways, but I knew it was only a few minutes in the cart to get there.

I started the cart and traveled around the east side of the house, avoiding the west side which the kitchen was. God, forbid I get caught going home to rub one out. I couldn't hold back the giggle at the crassness of my thoughts. Harmony was right, the red wine really did loosen up the thought process.

I kept the lights off with the intention of turning them on when I was further down the path. The pathway to the home was still fairly new and not paved so although it was fairly smooth, the trip was bumpy in places. I widened my thighs and ground down in the seat. The next bump felt amazing. Oh hell, there would be a lot more off the path, so maybe I could get relief without going home and get back to the party that much faster.

That it was dark, and I couldn't see much, and that I was in my pajamas without a coat, and it was freezing out didn't dawn on me. All I could think about was chasing an orgasm until I felt sweet relief.

I caught air with the next bump, and unfortunately for me, lost control of the cart when it came down on a patch of ice. It crashed on its side, and I was flung over the front, landing on my side. I laughed hysterically when I realized both the cart and I were fine. The laughing changed to grunts of protest when I tried to stand the cart right side up.

It had tipped on an angle, and I wasn't strong enough to push it back on its wheels on my own. What would Daddy say when he returned in the morning and found out I'd taken the cart for a joyride in the dark? I gulped at what my punishment could be, my imagination running wild with all the possibilities.

That's if I made it to tomorrow. When I realized I'd been tossed into a snow drift, I became very aware of how cold it was. What would Jacob do? Well, first he wouldn't be doing what I just did. I found it in me to giggle despite my dire situation. "You should be proud of me, Jakey. I'm thinking instead of freaking." Another loud giggle. "WWJD!" (*What would Jakey do*) I hollered into the night. I may get my ass handed to me when Daddy got back, but despite that, I was proud of the acronym I'd tweaked to fit my situation and the heightened thoughts one glass of wine had inspired along with the bravery to do something outside of my comfort zone, even if it was stupid!

Leaving the cart where it was, I climbed the little hill I'd lost control on, trying to move around any slick spots. In the distance were the lights of the Remington house. Inside were my friends, new and old, and having fun without me. The lights of the house shimmered and altered, dividing into multiple lights.

What the?

The lights grew brighter and seemed to be moving closer toward me. Then I knew what it was.

"It's an alien spaceship!" Realizing I'd sort of said that a bit too loud, I slid back down to the cart and hid behind it.

I'd read about crop circles and alien abductions happening out in the middle of nowhere and this place qualified. There were miles of dense woods surrounding the Ranch. Plenty of space for an aircraft to hide.

The sounds of engines grew closer. I closed my eyes and prayed to whoever was listening to spare me from being taken into space and experimented on.

The engines turned off, and a light shone down on me. Oh no! The beam to the mother ship! I had to try and get away. Jumping to my feet, I raced for the tree line up ahead.

"Veronica?"

I stopped and turned around. "Harmony? Is that you?"

Peals of giggles. “Yeah, it’s all of us. What are you doing out here?”

“I uh, thought, um... that you guys were... well, you know, crazy moving lights out in the dark. I was sure aliens had come to abduct and probe me.”

The giggles erupted into laughter.

“I thought you were afraid of the dark,” she said, sliding down the hill.

I ran the few feet back to the overturned car and peered up to see all the ladies at the top, except H who stood directly before me.

“I am. Or I was.” It was only now that I realized she was right. I’d always been a fraidy cat of the dark, yet here I was out tromping through the dark in my pajamas without using the light from the cart or my phone.

“I guess it’s gone. I don’t know what to say except can you help me push the cart onto its wheels?”

“Come on, girls, we have work to do.”

They slid down the small embankment and helped me right the cart. Luck was on my side as it was still working. Though it was covered in slushy ice and dirt on one side, I figured that could be explained by a myriad of things.

We headed back to the house in silence, and I wondered if they would chew me out once the party resumed, or would they let it go?

Trepidation turned my blood cold. I pulled Harmony into the bathroom when we returned. “Am I in trouble? Will the ladies fink on me to Jacob?”

“I honestly don’t know, V, they aren’t all just a gaggle of Littles. Had they been, we could have chalked this up to a prank. But doing what you did was dangerous, why did you do it?”

I told her about the books in the office and what Jacob had told me about her embellishing scenes she’d told me about

instead of the reality. “I was angry at first, but you know what?”

“What?” she asked.

“Tonight, I realized you’ve always been a writer, you just didn’t know it yet. You were telling me the reality you wished for and used your imagination to turn those dreams into words on pages. I’m really proud of you, Harmony, you made it happen, writing your dreams into reality.”

She took my hands in hers, tears trickling down her cheeks. “What you just said, V, is the most profound observation I’ve ever heard. Not once did I make the connection, yet you come here and see it right away.”

She pulled me in for a hug. “You are the bestest friend anyone could have, and I’m so happy you happen to be mine.” She held me a moment longer, before releasing me and taking my hands once again.

“I have to ask you a question, H.”

“Of course, anything.”

“When I was in your office, I realized something and, well, I’m not sure what to do with it.”

“What is it? Should I be worried?”

“No, at least not you. Okay, when you left home you took what mattered to you most, your wardrobe.”

Harmony laughed. “Oh, yeah, I did. I am the cosplay queen, after all.”

“Right, and Jacob didn’t bring much, and I only saw a few photos lying about, so what was most important to him that he brought here?”

She nodded her head. “I see. Well, you’d have to ask him, but I would say his self-respect. And he didn’t need items for that, V, just himself, and he continues to work on that all the time.”

That made a lot of sense, but it didn’t help me with why my motivation. “Everything I own except my bed frame and

dresser are at Jacob's house. But I don't know why I need those things to feel safe. Do you?"

There was a bang on the door. "Hurry up, you two, it's time to try on dresses."

"We'll be right there, Sadie," Harmony answered through the door. "Look, V, I don't know why, but I promise you will know before the week is through."

"You think?" I asked nervously.

"I know." She tapped me on the nose. "Now come on, let's go have some fun."

CHAPTER 10



Jacob

“WHAT DO YOU THINK THE CHANCES ARE WE GET A CALL AND have to end our trip early?”

Sam chuckled and asked, “Too cold for you?”

Gray huffed and shot him a look. “Says the one sitting closest to the fire.”

The others laughed but Gray had asked exactly what I’d been thinking. I was worried about Ronnie being in a new place without me there to protect her. She spent a lot of time with Harmony in the past, but that was back in the city.

Five minutes out, I’d sent her a message, and every hour since. “I almost wish someone does call. I’ve been worried about Ronnie all evening.”

“You don’t say?”

I narrowed my eyes. “Yes, I say. Stop mocking me!”

Gray laughed. “I’m sorry, my man, couldn’t help it. Believe me, we are all very aware of your angst.”

“Don’t worry so much, Jacob, I can already tell your little Ronnie isn’t nearly as out of control as what your cousin was when she arrived.” Derek smirked and tipped his bottle of beer, taking a long swig.

It was my turn to laugh as Gray nearly choked on his beer.

“I can second that,” Sam offered, “but I think we all know that no one was as difficult as Sadie.” He ducked behind Jagger when Derek came after him.

I marveled at how different the guys were when away from their better halves. I was happy to have joined their ranks, but unhappy with being away from my other half when our relationship was so new.

“Cheer up, brother,” Grant said, “Catherine is the most responsible person in the group, isn’t she, Sam?”

We watched from across the fire as Sam escaped out of Derek’s grasp, his hair in disarray from the noogie Derek had been giving him.

“She can be”—he patted down his hair—“it just depends on the other personalities she’s with. I think it’s a good sign that we haven’t heard from the women, it just shows the other, more mature side of their personalities.”

Grant broke the silence with a barely concealed laugh. It was enough to set off the rest of the group. Just when things were calming down, my phone buzzed with an incoming message, and the hysterics began anew.

“Ha!” I held up my phone triumphantly. “A message from Ronnie saying she misses me and is having the time of her life.”

I realized I was the new guy in the group, but I wasn’t stupid. Still, for the life of me, I couldn’t figure out why the laughter had stopped.

“Wait, wait, wait just a second. You said she hadn’t texted you at all since we left and now suddenly out of the blue at”—he paused to look at the time on his phone—“almost midnight she texted you first?”

He was right, something was wrong. The guys gathered around me, all laughter gone and throwing curious, bordering on disturbed, glances my way.

They all pulled out their phones, and almost in unison, swiped their screens on.

“Nothing from Catherine,” Sam reported first.

“Moiria either,” Jagger added.

“I’ve got nothing,” added Grant.

“Harmony has texted to say that they are having the best time ever and not to worry about a thing.”

All but me groaned and started packing up. “Wait! What the hell is going on?”

Derek patted me on the shoulder. “You may as well learn now; this is one way a Little expresses their guilt.”

“Get out, seriously?”

“Yep,” Derek nodded. “Something happened, and that is their way of telling us. I’ve recently read some studies that show this is also their way of trying to control the outcome. Our strong submissives have Top or Domme qualities, in that they like control, but they like the act of relinquishing even more. It’s imperative that we, as their partners, ensure we stay consistent by closely listening, and never say you’re going to do something and not do it. That is the absolute worst thing for a Little.”

“Well said, Derek,” Sam praised.

Wow, you learn something new every day. Of course, it had to be my Little, it must be as she was the first to reach out. Fifteen minutes later, we were packed and ready to go. Jagger put out the fire after we loaded up.

The drive back was quiet. All the men, me included, distracted and checking their phones. I assumed, like me, they were wondering what we’d face when we returned to Gray’s.

An hour later, we pulled up behind the house and found the golf carts lined up all in a row, which was not how we’d left them. The ground around the carts was wet and under the back light, all the carts appeared sparkling clean. We entered through the back to find the ladies sitting before the fireplace in the great room in their pajamas drinking hot cocoa with whip cream and sprinkles, chatting amiably.

Maybe Derek and the rest were wrong about the ladies getting into trouble in our absence. They certainly looked innocent enough. Stop thinking like a man, Jacob, and think like a Daddy. It was too picturesque, like the lined-up golf carts. They had gone for a ride, probably after consuming

quantities of alcohol. Derek was right, they'd texted to assuage their guilt and were now doing their best to hide the evidence.

Sadie noticed us first. "Daddy, you're back early!" She leaped to her feet and ran into Derek's waiting arms. My eyes caught and held Ronnie's. Something had shifted for her. Seeming more at peace than I expected, and the usual startled look was absent.

"Why are you back so soon?" Sadie directed the question to Derek.

"Temperature dropping and we didn't want to get stranded up on the mountain and miss the wedding. Hope we didn't interrupt your plans."

And there it was, hanging like ripened fruit from the vine. Who would take the bait first?

"I, for one, am exhausted. Sleeping in my bed sounds good to me," Catherine spoke, and the rest moved into action. Derek smirked at me over Sadie's head and gave me the *told you so look*.

Ronnie wrapped her arms around my neck. Her little body shook in my hold. Whatever happened tonight, she'd been impacted by it. I scooped her up, and she snuggled into my chest.

"I'm so glad you came back," she whispered. "I don't think I would have slept at all."

"It's okay, kitten, I've got you."

"Mmm. Wrapped in your powerful arms is exactly where I wish to be."

At the back door, I tucked her into her winter coat and boots and surrounded her with the blanket that she'd taken with her for the sleepover. She rested her head on my shoulder and fell asleep, giving me time to think about what the men shared with me.

By the time we pulled up, my phone had dinged with a message from Gray.

“Harmony has told me what happened. It seems your Little has been busy, but that is her story to tell.”

“Thanks,” I replied and turned off my phone.

In the shower, after I’d tucked Veronica into bed, my thoughts strayed to all that had happened in the past five days. It had been a whirlwind and with the wedding and Valentines and new friends and the pressure she must be experiencing, I realized that she was doing remarkably well. But due to her actually changing or just being too busy to process all those big feelings she had, I couldn’t say.

Tomorrow night was the rehearsal dinner and the big event was the next day... more business. I accepted that what Derek said was true about our role in the dynamic. Veronica was having so much thrown at her at once, I decided that we would sleep in, and I would make her breakfast in bed. We’d talk and she’d explain and whatever her punishment was could wait forty-eight hours. Now was the time to nourish her and ensure she was at her best.

My decision restored the unbalanced feeling since Ronnie’s text message and the subsequent discussion that followed. I crawled into bed and said, “Sleep well, baby.” I kissed her forehead and tucked her back against my front, immediately passing out.

CHAPTER II



Veronica

MMM, THE SMELL OF FRESHLY ROASTED COFFEE ASSAULTED MY senses. I cracked open one eye to see sunlight streaming through the partially open blinds.

“You’re awake.”

Jacob held a tray with two steaming mugs perched in the center.

“That smells really good.”

He set a mug on the nightstand beside me.

“Ooo, whip cream too, yummy! Thank you, Daddy.” I scooped up and fluffed the pillows behind my back.

“You’re welcome, kitten.”

He swept a few of my stray items aside to rest the tray on the nightstand. I’d been meaning to tidy up, but things had been so hectic, and I wasn’t sure where to put anything. I should ask but I kept forgetting to do that.

“Uh, sorry about that stuff, I keep meaning to move it, but...”

“But what?”

“I’m not sure where to put it, and uh, I keep forgetting to ask you,” I added lamely.

Jacob sat on the edge of the bed, sipping his homemade mocha, seemingly unconcerned. “We’ll figure all that out after the wedding. Until then, your things can stay where they are.”

Not what I was expecting, but that was okay.

“I didn’t get to ask you last night. How was your time at Harmony’s?”

I could feel the blush stealing up my neck and across my cheeks. What could I say to not disappoint him?

“I had a glass of wine,” I confessed. I don’t know why I was so nervous except we hadn’t discussed limitations or ground rules as yet and what was and wasn’t acceptable was a mystery.

“Was it good?”

Whew. “I really enjoyed it. You should have seen me trying to open the bottle, though. I didn’t know how, so Sadie helped me.”

That didn’t seem to surprise him. In fact, his overall calmness was a little unnerving.

“That’s not all,” I said boldly.

“Oh?”

“Yeah, when the other ladies got there, I took my glass and snuck off to Harmony’s office for some quiet.”

He nodded his head sagely. “Understandable.”

It was? “Did you know that she has her father’s old chaise lounge in her office?”

That got a reaction. “That’s why I recognized it. Thanks for clearing that up for me, kitten, I couldn’t remember for the life of me why it looked so familiar.”

I felt proud and smiled at the praise. “Guess what?”

“What?”

“Your cousin has a huge collection of naughty books on her shelf and many of them had sticky notes tagged inside. You were right, Daddy; she does use the books she’s read but not to embellish her own. No, she uses them as inspiration to write her own story.”

“Really?” His interest seemed genuinely piqued. “Do you mean the book she’s just written?”

“No! I mean her story. She wrote her reality.”

Jacob appeared puzzled. “You mean to say that all those times she shared experiences with you, she was creating what she wanted to have happened?”

I clapped my hands excitedly. “Yes!”

“Interesting.”

“It really was and then I thought of something else. When Harmony left New York, even though she had no idea if or when she’d ever go back, she only packed her wardrobe and a couple of items. Seeing the chaise in the office made me see that and she told me when I asked her that it was because she is the cosplay queen, her clothing mattered to her most. Isn’t that interesting, Daddy?”

“Absolutely.”

I remembered our talk about Jacob and how he only had a few pictures lying about. His clothing style had completely changed from what he used to wear so I could only assume he probably outgrew everything based on the rippling muscles his sexy physique now showcased. He’d been fit before, but not like now.

“Can I ask you something important?”

Jacob put his mug down and turned to me. “You can ask me anything. Remember, I’m the safe zone.”

And he was, he really was.

“What did you pack when you left home? I don’t see much of the you I knew, except a few photos.”

He pursed his lips. I remembered this as his thinking face and it took me back to when we were kids at one of the parties, this one hosted by his parents and I’d asked him why his bedroom was separate from the house.

“I’m not attached to things, Ronnie. What I brought here to Rawhide was injured pride and a deep-seated need to be around like-minded people. I guess you could say I believed I needed to know if just being myself was okay. Was my integrity in the choices I’d made correct. I suppose I really

needed nurturing, and once I pulled through the gates for my weekend seminar, I knew that this Ranch was the place for me.”

It was my turn to nod in agreement with all he’d said. “Harmony said that too, about you, though not in so many words. She also said that when it’s time for me to leave, I would know why packing up all my belongings and bringing them here was important. Because I don’t know why I need them, Daddy, do you?”

His arms wrapped around me. “No, kitten, I don’t, but I believe Harmony is right, you will soon enough, of that I’m certain.”

I snuggled into his warmth and strength and knew one thing for sure, that Jacob was my *one*.

“I have a confession,” I whispered against his naked chest. When he didn’t say anything, I continued, “I read a few chapters out of those books and grew really horny. I needed to come but I’ve never been able to without help, and my toys were here. I snuck out of the house and took the cart, Daddy, I’m really sorry.” And I was, tears trickled and mingled with his skin.

“I know you’re sorry, baby, and when we are done with the wedding and have time to ourselves, we’ll address all your transgressions and lay down the rules going forward.”

I thought about what he was saying and how it made sense. I hadn’t felt guilty last night at all, but now, sober and in the light of his wonderful calmness, I sure did. It ate at my tummy like tiny monsters of regret.

“Daddy?”

“Yes, kitten?”

“I feel guilty. Please, make it go away.”

He pulled back and held me at arm’s length. “Do you know what you’re asking for?”

“Yes, Sir, I do.”

“Good girl. I’m very proud of you, Ronnie.”

Heat speared me but not down in the lower regions of my body this time, but in my heart. “I love you, Daddy.”

“I love you too, Ronnie.”

CHAPTER 12



Jacob

I TOOK ALL THE SUGGESTIONS FROM THE CAMPOUT AND applied them to coffee in bed, but in the end, she chose differently which, I'd been told she would most likely do. I'd heard Derek say, "let the punishment fit the crime" so many times but acknowledged I hadn't truly understood his meaning until now.

I'd checked the golf cart before making coffee, it was totally fine, not a scratch on it. Holding her accountable for cleaning and paying repairs for any damage she'd caused was what I'd planned. That was no longer a viable solution.

"Veronica, I want you naked and standing in that corner. Ensure your hands are behind your back and your nose is touching the wall. Do I make myself clear?"

She gulped. "Yes, Daddy."

Ronnie hustled to the corner, stripping her clothes off as she went.

"Veronica."

"Yes, Daddy?"

"Come back, please."

Her body trembled as she took her time returning. "Do you see your clothing on the floor?"

"Yes."

"Do clothes belong on the floor?"

"No?"

The question in her response was almost comical. I felt for her, I really did. Because we grew up in the same circles, I knew picking up after herself was not part of her modus operandi. She would learn discipline and rules.

“Bend over and pick them up, fold them nicely, and place them inside the closet.”

She scrambled to do what she was told. Having never had to do much for herself, her folding job was in keeping with a kindergartener’s. Frustrated, she threw them on the floor and crossed her arms. Unshed tears glistened in her eyes as she stared at the messy pile on the floor.

Her theatrics did not move me in the least. “Pick them up and place them back on the bed. Daddy will show you how to fold pajamas.”

“Yes, Daddy.”

Once she’d placed the mess on the bed, I said, “Okay watch me now.”

I folded the pajama bottoms at the seam, then folded the outer leg where they slid over the butt until the pants aligned at bottom and top. Once they were even, I folded them in quarters.

“Now you try.”

Her lips pouted out like a duck’s beak as she did her best. It was a far better job than what she’d done before. “Well done, Ronnie.”

She beamed at the compliment.

“The top is a little harder. Watch,” I instructed. “Place the shirt face down.” I extended the arms out to the sides. “When you fold back the first sleeve, you also want to include about two inches of the shirt to create a folded line, like so. Now you try the other sleeve.”

Ronnie did her best and repeated her efforts until her side looked like mine. “All right. Great job. Now, we ensure the sleeves are flat with no crinkles and then we fold the bottom half a third of the way up and once again until you have the

same size as the bottoms, place the top right side up on top of the bottoms and *je suis fini!*”

Ronnie crinkled her nose. “What does that mean?”

“The literal translation is ‘I am done’.”

She repeated the French saying.

“Now, put these in the closet and back in the corner with you.” Lesson one complete. I would add folding and putting away of her clothing to her to-do list, but later. Right now, there was a naughty bottom to blister.

Retrieving my implements from the closet, I chose three and laid them out on the side of the bed so she would see them when I recalled her from the corner. I considered the best place to administer her punishment and decided my bedroom wasn’t it. I didn’t want our play spankings and sex to be associated with punishment.

“Come to Daddy, Ronnie.”

Immediately, her gaze fell on the implements. A hint of shock and fear quickly appeared on her face before ending with curious desire.

“I want you to go to the kitchen and retrieve one stool and place it in the center of the area rug in the living room. Bend over that stool and place your hands on the legs, with your bottom facing the fireplace. Understood?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

She scurried off, and I waited until there was no noise before following with the implements. The sight that met me gave me an instant hard-on. Her luscious bottom was up, and her legs spread as wide as the stool legs allowed. With her feet resting on the first rung as she needed that extra elevation to get her hands down the legs on the other side.

Placing the implements down. I stood back and admired her body. She was so damn perfect in every way. “All right, naughty girl, we are about to start, but before we do, I want to ensure your safety. This is a punishment and will hurt, but if

you need a way out for any reason, I want you to say red. That will call an immediate stop. Understand?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

“Good girl. I will break this spanking down into parts with the three implements you saw. The first round is for taking the cart without permission. The second round is for drinking before you took the cart and risked your safety. That is unacceptable, so expect that one to hurt a lot. The third round is for going alone without letting your friends know.”

“But—”

“No, Ronnie, leaving a note in a room no one knows you’re in doesn’t count as direct communication.”

Her stiffening body told me she still didn’t get the monumental fear all the men had felt on the ride back to Rawhide Ridge. “You endangered your friends’ lives when they came after you. I’m sure some of them had a lot more to drink than you did and were at even a higher risk of things going wrong than you.”

A sob of, “Ahhhhhhhhahahaaaahh,” came from the other side of the stool. Now she got it. “How do you feel, knowing you endangered seven lives, not including your own. Or, that all of them received a punishment. Your backside won’t be the only one blistered today. As such, I have revised your to-do list for today. After we finish here, and are sufficiently recovered to make some phone calls, you will phone all of them, and their men, and apologize. Is that understood?”

My voice had become darker and deeper throughout the lecture I’d given her, and her crying increased exponentially. But it had to be done. She needed to feel the guilt in order to feel fully absolved from her actions the night before.

“Sniff, sniff, ughhhh, mmmh!”

I hated hearing her sob; it broke my heart in two knowing she was hurting emotionally, but this had been missing for her all along and it took last night for me to see the forest through the trees.

I picked up the paddle and laid into her ass, bringing it down with a medium intensity. Harder than a warmup, but not as hard as it would become.

“Whaaaa!”

Her cries with each stroke were not from the pain. She didn't flinch or dance on her toes on the stool's rungs. Her bottom reached for that paddle and for the redemption she so desperately needed.

“That's my girl, let it all out.”

After twenty with the paddle, I helped her down from the stool and placed her in the corner, near the fireplace for warmth. Her body would be going through a lot and it was up to me to ensure that happened in a way that showed my support. Break her down and build her up. That was my job as a Dom and Daddy, as a man who loved her deeply. It was also my job to show her the love she'd been lacking for far too long.

I handed her several tissues as she wiped and blew her nose before sticking it in the corner. Leaving her to mull over her transgressions, I grabbed two glasses of water from the kitchen. One I downed and the other I took to her.

“Drink all of this, little one.”

She pulled her nose away and, taking the glass from my hand, she downed the water before sticking her nose back in place. I loved seeing the two pink circles about four inches in diameter decorating her bottom.

“Ronnie, it is time for round two. Please lay over the arm of the couch and rest your elbows on the cushion.”

When she turned around, I saw two similar circles on her pretty face. A true mark of shame and regret confirming for me we were on the right path at last.

Because she was tiny, having her bottom raised meant her feet dangled a good foot off the floor. This was intentional, as it would heighten the feeling of no control.

Standing back a few feet, I measured the distance, aiming the leather strap at the meatiest portion of her bottom. This session would test her endurance, as the leather crossing over the tenderized muscles from the paddle would create a sting and throbbing. In a play session, this would increase the warmth in all the right places, but in punishment, this would leave a searing aftereffect.

I brought the strap down, the zing of it moving through the air her only signal before the sharp *snap* as it landed on her bottom.

“Ow!”

Thwap

“Owie!”

Down her backside I went until I arrived at her sit spot. I had not spanked that, as the area was more tender than the meatier part of her cheeks.

Smack

“Dadddeeee! Nooooo!” Her legs churned the empty air as she struggled to process the new sensation. I brought the strap down several more times until she was blubbering and making promises of being good that not even an angel could keep. We were at the desperation stage. The part where every penitent would do or say anything to make it stop. As much as this tested their resolve, very few ever called out their safeword. Deep down, they knew it was consensual, that this was what they’d signed up for.

I painted her thighs with the strap before moving it back up to the now tenderized sit spot.

“Yeowl!”

Snap the leather sounded as it continued to paint her bottom red. On her twentieth stroke, I placed it down. “Good girl,” I cooed. “Back to the corner with you, little one.” I helped Ronnie to stand and walked her to the corner. Once she was in place, I went back to the kitchen to refill her glass and grab a piece of chocolate.

After she drank, blew her nose and wiped her tears, I left her to recover. Standing back, I admired her backside. The pink had now morphed to red and was almost as shiny as a polished apple.

Her bottom was swelling and would be painful to sit on for the next few days, which is why I'd wanted to wait until after the wedding, to have no issues during the actual ceremony. Yet here we were.

"Okay, darlin, time to come back for your last spanking." I sat on the couch and pulled her over my lap, and forward so her bottom was directly on top of my thighs, and her legs dangled in the air. I swept one of my legs over both of hers and laid the Lexan paddle on her hot bottom.

"Ronnie, you will receive eight strokes, one for each of the lives you put in danger last night, plus one for yourself, and then your punishment will be over."

"Yes, Daddy."

Ronnie lay exhausted from fighting the inevitable. Now the time to surrender was upon us and I planned on making those eight strokes so memorable she'd never pull a stunt like that again.

"Place your hands on your back."

I grasped both her wrists in my free hand. Now she was snug and there was no way she'd be getting out of my hold.

I brought the Lexan paddle down with force, more than I'd used on the last two rounds.

Smack! The sound echoed in the room, a silent pause and then "EEEYOUCH!" from Ronnie as she tried to buck her hips.

"IcantIcantIcanttttdoit!!!!" came out in one long string.

"Yes, you can, baby, you only have seven to go. Do you need to call red?"

I felt her hesitation as she deliberated with herself and the cost of doing what she did.

“No, Daddy.”

The great thing about this paddle was the material. They’re made from polycarbonate, otherwise known as Lexan, and packed a punch with maximum impact and minimum long-term effects. It would sting like a son of a gun now, but it would dissipate in a few hours.

“After each stroke, you will say, ‘I’m sorry I put lives in danger’.”

“Yes, Daddy.”

The paddle whistled and landed with a *thwap* on her lower cheeks.

“I’m sorry I put lives in danger!”

She’d barely gotten the words out when the next stroke landed.

“Yeow! I’m sorry I put lives in danger!”

“You got this, babygirl. On the last stroke you will say, ‘I’m sorry, Daddy, that I put my life in danger’.”

“Waah!”

There was no doubt in my mind that she felt the depths of the emotions she should be and now I just needed to tip her over the edge into forgiveness. I brought the paddle down hard in the center of her bottom.

“I’m so sorry I put lives in danger!”

By the sixth stroke she lay over my lap all the fight gone out of her.

Smack

“I’m soorryyyy I put lives in danger. Please forgive me.”

“I already have, Veronica. This spanking is for you to forgive yourself.”

I landed two more in quick succession, and then it was time for the last stroke. “This is it, baby. Do you remember what to say?”

“Yes, Daddy.”

I raised the paddle, aiming for her sensitive sit spot, and landed my hardest stroke.

Despite it being the harshest spank of the session, she didn't cry out like she had through most of the others. I ran a hand lightly over her bottom, in soothing circles.

“I... I'm sorry, Daddy, that I-I put my life in da-danger.”

Her apology came out in stutters, but I had no doubts that it was sincere, and I was extremely proud of her. After a time, I sat her up and held her still on my lap. She winced but didn't complain.

I hugged her tightly while her silent tears tracked down my skin and caught in the waistband of my shorts.

“Shhh. You're okay, Ronnie, I've got you.” Picking her up, I moved to the rocker by the fire and sat down, wrapping her up in a blanket and holding her on my lap, rocking her until she fell asleep.

I was in no rush to move her and held her until the afternoon sun dipped toward the horizon. Sunset was at 4:15 pm which meant we'd been rocking for two hours. The rehearsal dinner and run-through would start at 6:30 pm. I considered waking her up but laid her on the couch and placed a full glass of water and pieces of chocolate on a plate on the table closest to her head in case she woke while I showered.

The hot water felt amazing, and I stood still while the jets massaged my neck, shoulders, and back. Thinking back over the session and critiquing my part, I felt I'd delivered the message and took all the right steps. I was curious to hear what Ronnie's thoughts were as the receiver. Honestly, after a session like she endured, it could make or break a relationship. The Daddy Dom/Submissive Little dynamic was unique to each couple and while punishments were designed to teach a lesson and assist the Little in overcoming her fears, doubts, or whatever she needed was theory until practiced. As I'd learned with Bianca, saying and doing could be two entirely different things.

CHAPTER 13



Veronica

I WAS FLOATING AS LIGHT AS A CLOUD WHEN THE SOUND OF water woke me. I blinked several times, yawned and then rolled onto my back to stretch.

“Yeoch!” I rolled back to my side. Then tentatively, just a bit at a time, I rolled to my back. My ass felt like it had a sunburn, but once I lay still for a bit, the burn subsided to a dull throb.

That session was like, wow, total craziness. Never in my life had I experienced anything like it. Things differed from before. Everything for me had changed in one afternoon. All the guilt, and not just from what I did last night, but from my entire life had evaporated. With each stroke, something negative left me, and then the last one set me free.

Despite the warmth of the blanket and the blazing fire, I was cold. I’d read about the side effects of coming down from subspace. Chocolate and water were what I needed. Slowly, I moved to a sitting position, grimacing at the ache in my bottom with the contact. I drank the water and grabbed a piece of chocolate and beelined for the bathroom, where I could hear Jacob taking a shower.

The bathroom was steamy, but I could still see the outline of his body. I drooled as I took him in... his thick legs, and his well-muscled ass, trim waist followed by a well-developed back that slowly expanded as it flowed up to his powerful shoulders. His biceps flexed as he rubbed the shampoo in his hair.

“May I join you, Daddy?”

He startled, and I enjoyed catching him off balance for a change. Smiling, he stepped aside, making room for me. The water hit from every direction, and I yelped, moving back from the nozzle which was pointed at my sore backside.

Jacob chuckled. "I guess I don't need to ask how your butt is doing."

It may have increased the pain in my bottom, but the multifaceted water streams felt amazing everywhere else. Closing my eyes, I relished the heat pulsing and relaxing my muscles.

Jacob moved behind me, running his soapy hands over my shoulders and down my arms.

"That feels amazing. Don't stop."

He continued to soap my back and run his hands around my belly. My nipples tingled then hardened when his hands slid up to cup my breasts.

"Mmm, Daddy, that feels fabulous. You really do have the best hands ever."

His nose nuzzled my neck.

"Do I?"

He gripped my nipples between his forefingers and thumbs, rolling and pinching them.

Electrical currents zapped my needy kitty as he continued to torture my aching peaks.

"Do you deserve a reward for being such a good girl?"

That was a really good question that startled me from the sensations and put me back into my head. I had to explore that question, was I a good girl?

"I don't know."

He dropped his hands and turned me to face him. His hands gripped my bottom and parted my cheeks. The water hit the inner part of my butt where it wasn't sore, the pain pleasure combination was heady, I was back out of my head and into my body.

“The answer, little girl is, ‘Yes, Daddy’. You took your punishment like a champ, and I absolved you of all guilt. You are not only a good girl, but a very good girl.”

He released my battered backside and spun me back around. “Remember when I told you I’d take you in all of your openings?”

I wasn’t really listening because he was distracting me by torturing one pebbled bud.

“Uhuh.”

A soapy finger slid between my cheeks, penetrating my tight rosette. I froze at the intrusion.

“Relax, baby. There are therapeutic purposes for spanking. Right now, your blood is pumping and rushes to the surface of the skin and then the heat is released from the body.”

“That can’t be right. My ass feels like it has a roaring fire just below the surface of the skin.”

“Exactly! That process in eastern medicine is moving the wind in the body. Trapped wind creates stagnate blood flow that leads to disease in the body. So as weird as it sounds, spanking opens that up and helps you release it and keeps you healthy.”

“How do you know that?”

“From a guy who came through a few years ago, back when I was new. He did a seminar here on the benefits of spanking.”

His finger slid deeper inside my bottom, massaging the tight ring of muscle. What had been uncomfortable a moment ago shifted to feeling pretty darn good, especially when he moved his other hand from my breast to cup my mound.

The dichotomy of both sides being stimulated felt so dirty and perverse, yet I craved it. Grinding against both hands, my body begged Jacob for more. My core was pulsating and my need for release grew until it was all I could think about, completely consumed with desire.

His finger in my bottom slid past the tighter inner muscle. He gently stimulated a spot deep within that caused explosions of light behind my closed eyes.

“Oh my god, what is that? It feels so damn good!”

I wasn't really asking but when he replied, 'The anal g-spot,' I had to process that.

“We have two g-spots. Wow, who knew.”

He curled his finger and continued to hit that bundle of nerves deep inside. “Technically, named, the anterior, meaning back, fornix erogenous zone.”

Interesting, but I rather be educated physically than mentally at the moment. “Daddy, play with the front one too, please I want to feel them at the same time.”

Jacob slipped a finger between my slick lips and curled it.

“Daddyyy!” The orgasm hit me like a thunderbolt, the sensations almost too much to bear. I went slack against him as my body vibrated with the release. He stopped pumping his fingers while my body coiled and spasmed in a ballistic reaction to the stimuli.

I needed to sit; my legs were trembling so bad I couldn't remain standing. Jacob lowered me to the marble shower floor, where I remained panting.

Jacob kneeled in front of me. His package was hard and stuck out in front of him like a sword.

“Are you okay, kitten?”

“Better than okay. I want to return the pleasure you gave me.” I gazed meaningfully at his cock.

“Oh, baby, Daddy would love nothing more.” He stood to his full height, and I clambered to my knees. Gripping his cock in my hand I admired the velvety soft skin encasing his hard length.

As I squeezed, precum oozed from the tip. My tongue darted and dipped into the slickness at his tip. “Mmm, Daddy, you taste good.”

“Music to my ears, kitten.”

I wasn't sure what to do, but I'd seen it done enough in videos that I could duplicate what I'd seen on the screen and hope it felt good for him.

I ran my tongue along his shaft from tip to balls. He was well groomed in the downstairs department, so I continued with my tongue, licking and suckling as I went.

One of his hands snaked into my hair and gripped, but not so tight that it hurt. Guiding my head to where he wanted, I navigated his cock inside my mouth. He was big so only half of him was inside and my fist gripped the rest.

He set the rhythm by gently pumping his hips and I fell in sync, doing my best to keep up with the constant thrusts. Having never had a cock in my mouth before, it didn't take long for my jaw to get sore.

Jacob must have sensed this or just knew it would happen, because he added his second hand into my hair and thrust deeper inside my mouth, hitting the back of my throat. I spluttered and gagged, as he claimed my mouth. His erection grew in my mouth, and I choked.

He instantly pulled back. “Stand up, Veronica, and place your hands on the ledge.”

I bent over and gazed back at him over my shoulder. His cock looked angry and swollen, and his tip was seeping.

“I have one hole left to claim, baby, and I'm taking it now.” He lathered my bottom and sunk a soapy finger inside.

“Ooo. That feels so good.”

He added a second finger, and the fullness surprised me.

“Spread your legs.”

He slid his hard length inside my sheath with one thrust. He felt so damn good inside of me, but I wanted more. Arching my bottom and dropping my chest a bit allowed for a deeper penetration.

Daddy let out a growl and I answered with a needy moan. His appendage was as big as the guys in the videos, what I didn't realize is that meant he was much bigger than average, but being ignorant has its advantages. With nothing to compare his to, there was nothing to fear.

He pulled out as I was about to come. "You will ask permission from Daddy before you come, little one."

Before I could argue, he pressed his cock head against my tight rosette and sunk part way in. Holy Crap! Now I knew, size really did matter and his was too big. I panicked.

"Daddy!"

His fingers found my engorged nub and pinched. "Come!" he demanded.

Thank goodness he did because there was no way I could have stopped myself. I was greedy and the moment it tapered off, I chased my next one. Jacob dove two fingers inside my womb, his thumb pressing against my throbbing nub. He ran his thumb over the slickness, creating a delicious friction. I was so focused that when his shaft impaled me, it took a moment for my body's sensations to signal my brain what had happened.

By then I was past the uncomfortable breaching stage, and on to the fun. Several thrusts later, I was climbing the mountain to fulfillment when Jacob uttered in my ear. "Get ready, kitten."

Thrust, thrust. "Now!"

I fell apart over his fingers while spurts of his hot seed shot inside me.

An hour later we exited the house and got in his truck and headed over to the reception. I was a thoroughly ravished, punished little brat and I'd never felt so good.

CHAPTER 14



Jacob

WHEN VERONICA GAZED AT MY COCK AND LICKED HER LIPS, I knew I was done for. Her tentative tongue on my tip, and along my shaft was magical. She needed time to learn how to take me into her throat, but we had that in spades.

Releasing in that fine ass of hers was incredible and something I definitely wanted to repeat, and she'd taken to it so fast. I was indeed a lucky man. She washed me after that and despite having just had an orgasm, I was instantly hard.

“We don't have time right now for a round two, darlin, best you let me rinse off and you can have the shower to yourself.”

“Okay, Daddy, can you pick out my dress for tonight?”

“Of course. I'll lay everything out for you.”

I hustled to dry myself off and get my raging hard on under control. My dick had taken a slide back to when I was seventeen and just looking at a woman had made my rod hard as iron.

There were messages on my phone from Harmony, but I didn't have time to listen. We were in a time crunch to get to the lodge for the rehearsal and dinner. After donning my clothes, I looked through Veronica's wardrobe. It was lucky we had it all here and despite not leaving her home in the past few years, she had lots to choose from. Probably an online shopper I surmised.

A sexy black dress with a tulle skirt, paired with strappy red heels with an enclosed toe. I got a picture in my mind of

looking like a couple and went back and changed my outfit, adding a red tie to my black suit and white shirt.

When Ronnie exited the bathroom, she had swept her bountiful curls into an updo, leaving a few stray ringlets to frame her face. She looked like a sexy tiny goddess.

“You sure clean up nice,” she joked. “Your outfit reminds me of the old days at those stuffy dinner parties our parents were forever throwing.”

“Thank you, I think.”

She giggled, and her large blue eyes held only happiness with a dab of humor.

“How much time do we have?”

“We leave in fifteen minutes. And don’t keep me waiting. I don’t think your bottom could take another punishment tonight.”

She pretended to pout. “Oh pooh! Are you sure?” she asked, then ran away in a peal of giggles when I acted as though to chase her.

Fourteen and a half minutes later, she waltzed down the hallway.

“You look stunning. Poor Harmony.”

She looked puzzled. “Poor Harmony, whatever do you mean?”

“Well obviously, you’re going to steal the show in that outfit.”

She beamed up at me. Then a frown crinkled her brow. “You know I’ve always been envious of Harmony’s stature, long legs with a classic Marilyn Monroe figure. All the guys were always staring at her and Porsha, never at me.”

“Things change, darlin. You are gorgeous without even trying. Trust me, all the men will notice you. On second thought, you should change into a pair of track pants and a baggy shirt.”

“Don’t be silly,” she said with giggle. “I don’t own any sweat pants, so you’ll just have to put up with me getting all the attention for a change.” She winked and turned to retrieve her coat. I helped her into it and escorted her to the garage.

“No golf cart tonight, the weather looks a bit dicey and it’s too cold.” I lifted her into the cab and did up her seat belt. “You ready, baby?”

“As ready as I’ll ever be.”

Though the wedding would be held at the Remington’s home, the rehearsal and dinner, were going to be hosted by Derek and Sadie at the lodge. Driving to the Ranch, my phone vibrated in my pocket several times, reminding me I had messages from my cousin. But as I was seeing her in a few minutes, I decided it could wait. When we pulled up, I parked right out front of the main resort and turned to V. “With our afternoon activities taking as long as they did, you didn’t get a chance to do your task list.”

She looked blank, and then realization dawned on her. “Right! I can do it here. Is that appropriate?”

She was learning. Asking when doubtful is always the best strategy. “If you get the opportunity to say your apologies, then take it. All of those couples will be here tonight so singly or in pairs, your choice. If you need me with you, just let me know.”

She looked relieved. “Thank you.” Her eyes teared up a bit. “I mean it, Jacob, thank you for everything. I feel so different than when you picked me up. I can’t believe it’s only been a week.”

“Time flies with good company and great sex,” I teased.

I scooped her out of the truck and carried her to the front entrance so she wouldn’t get dirt on her shoes. I pressed the door open with my ass, and before I could turn around and walk in, I heard a voice I’d hoped to never hear again.

“Hello, handsome.”

“Hello, Bianca, what are you doing here?”

Ronnie's gaze shifted from our childhood friend and then to me and back again. She'd obviously not heard about the colossal mistake I made with this woman. My phone buzzed in my pocket. Harmony... and now I knew why she called and texted so many times—to warn me.

I placed Ronnie on her feet and took her coat. The two standing opposite each other was like seeing David and Goliath. With her heels on, Bianca must have been almost six feet, while Ronnie even with her heels was at least half a foot shorter.

“Hello, Veronica, I see you haven't grown much since we last saw each other.”

Ronnie remained quiet, used to Bianca bullying and insulting her along with her compatriots, Porsha and Juniper.

Speaking of, the other two vultures rounded the corner and stood beside each other. Three New York socialites banding together to what end?

“She has grown, Bianca, in all the right places too.”

I placed Ronnie's arm through mine and led her away, but not fast enough to escape Porsha's rude comment. “In what places? She still looks like a little girl to me.”

I hustled Ronnie across the lobby.

“What is going on? Was it my imagination or was Bianca on very familiar terms with you?”

“It's a bit of a long story. It'll have to wait until we are back home. Tonight is about Gray and Harmony, not the gossip girls.”

“I forgot we called them that.”

Gray and Harmony were standing by the large fireplace with Derek and Sadie. “Come on, there they are.”

She was reluctant to let the topic drop but followed me obediently to join our friends. Harmony gave me a deer in the headlights look and pulled V in for a hug. “You look fantastic, both of you and dressed as a power couple to boot, I love it,”

she oozed enthusiasm with her tone, but I don't think anyone was fooled.

“Harmony, what is going on? Why are you acting so strange and why are the gossip girls at your rehearsal dinner? Did you invite them to your wedding? I thought you hadn't spoken to them in years.”

“Before we get into that,” I interrupted, “I believe Ronnie has something to say to all four of you.”

“Right. About last night. I wanted to apologize to my friends. Da-Jacob, helped me to see how dangerous my little exploit was, and I'm very sorry for having endangered your lives and I hope you can forgive me.”

“There is nothing to forgive, bestie, but thank you for the apology.” Harmony wrapped her in another hug.

“Gray, Master Derek, I apologize for being thoughtless and ruining your night. I'm so sorry and I hope you can forgive me.”

Gray nodded in acceptance, but Derek wasn't won over that easily. “You are a very lucky young lady,” he said in a commanding tone. “And I hope you learned your lesson over your Daddy's knee.”

Ronnie's pale complexion turned scarlet and she dropped her gaze to the floor. “Yes, Sir. I promise never to do anything like that ever again.”

Derek nodded, like the topic was decided on. “Then I forgive you, but we must discuss a contract if you're planning on staying.”

Veronica's eyes darted to Derek's, opening wide in her signature astonished look.

“Stay. Here? I—uh, have absolutely no idea.” Her gaze traveled to mine looking for help.

I was about to bail her out and tell him it was on the docket for discussion later that evening when Sadie interrupted.

“I really don't like those three.” We followed her gaze to the gossip girls heading our way.

“Derek, don’t we have a guest waiver that everyone must sign?” Gray asked.

Getting his meaning, Derek ambushed the three women. “Ladies, would you please come with me.”

All three of them took in Derek. Porsha narrowed her eyes but the other two fluttered their eyelashes at him.

“Oh no they don’t.” Sadie said crossly and stomped over to her husband’s side.

He wrapped an arm around her shoulders. “Angel, can you escort these lovely ladies to my office where they can sign the mandatory waiver.”

“Of course, husband.”

Her kissed her long and hard and patted her ass as she led the gossip girls away.

“Do you think she’ll be okay?” Ronnie asked. “Maybe we should go with her, those three can be a lot to handle.”

Derek laughed. “Are you kidding? Sadie will put them in their place. I’m just giving her a moment to establish dominance before I take over. Good idea, Gray, the night should prove interesting.”

He tipped his hat. “Folks, if you’ll excuse me,” and off he went in the direction his wife had gone.

“I’m so confused right now. Can someone please tell me what the heck is going on!”

Gray intervened. “Derek is effectively ensuring good behavior from Harmony’s unexpected guests by having them agree to the rules of the Ranch while they are here.”

“Why are they here?” I inquired.

“If you’d answered your phone, you’d know,” Harmony retorted, clearly exasperated with the situation and the night was young, we had hours to go yet.

Gray tugged Harmony into his side. “Would you like a spanking, sweetheart? If so, I am more than happy to escort

you to my classroom and bend you over my desk for a hard paddling.”

Harmony pasted a smile on her face. “No, thank you, Daddy.”

Sam and Catherine approached. “There’s the couple of the hour,” Sam said shaking hands with Gray.

“You look beautiful as always Harmony, and Veronica that dress is stunning on you.”

Ronnie blushed.

“Thank you, Catherine, you both look fantastic, and I’m so glad you’re here.” Harmony replied. She grasped each of their hands in hers. “Without you and Gray, I don’t know where I’d be, you have done so much.”

She was right. My cousin had gone through a metamorphosis and changed into a beautiful woman, inside and out.

“Sam, Catherine, I wanted to apologize to you both for last night. It was very irresponsible of me and thoughtless as well. I hope you can forgive me,” Ronnie said.

Sam and Catherine were both tall people and Ronnie looked so small standing in front of the couple. I tugged her to my side, lending her my warmth and strength. She smiled gratefully and then returned her gaze back to the couple.

“That is very mature, Veronica, to see your mistake and take responsibility for it. I know someone else who took quite a while to make the same realization.” Catherine winked at Harmony who, in turn, blushed.

“There is nothing to forgive, Veronica, but thank you for offering,” Sam finished.

“I think it’s time to begin,” Gray announced.

“But what about Jilly, she’s not here yet,” Harmony wailed. “And Sadie disappeared. They are my bridesmaids and have to be here. And Master Derek is supposed to be showing us what to do!”

Before Gray or I could address the issue, Samantha approached. This couldn't be good news. This entire night felt like a comedy of errors and somehow, I needed to get it back on track before my cousin completely lost it.

“Hey, Samantha, have you seen Jillian by any chance?”

“I'm so sorry, Harmony. Jillian is sick in bed. It came on really fast and she's been throwing up. I'm not sure what's wrong with her. She sends her apologies and says she hopes she can make it tomorrow, but I don't know, she isn't looking good.”

Harmony had hit her limit and burst into tears, throwing herself into Gray's arms. His parents who had been sitting patiently in the comfy leather chairs near the reception desk came over to inquire what the holdup was which only increased Harmony's reaction, to all out bawling.

Time to save the day, or the night rather.

“Veronica, please take your best friend to the ladies' room to freshen up. Samantha, tell Jillian our prayers are with her for a speedy recovery and not to worry about a thing.” I moved to the center of the room. But before I could speak, the door flew open, allowing extremely cold wind and one of the volunteers for the wedding to enter. He walked speedily toward us. He not only looked half-frozen but was the bearer of even worse news. He informed us that while he and some other volunteers had been getting a head start on prepping things for the wedding, a freak ground blizzard took out not only the tent but half of the furnishings inside were now scattered all over the yard and the tent was now halfway up a strand of trees in the woods, completely shredded.

It really was a comedy of errors.

“Grab some volunteers and load up the trucks with whatever tables and chairs are still good and bring them here.” Thank goodness Gray had booked Rawhide for tonight's dinner banquet and wedding rehearsal.

I approached Gray. “We have an issue. The tent is down, well, up really, but location doesn't matter, I'm told by a

ground blizzard. I've ordered the guys to bring the tables and chairs back to the lodge. We will move the wedding here for tomorrow. Tonight, after dinner, Veronica and I will stay behind and set everything up. Don't worry about a thing, just keep your soon-to-be-wife happy."

Derek and Sadie came back, and I filled them in on what was happening. "I just ran into the staff, dinner will be served in fifteen minutes, that going to be an issue?" Derek asked.

"It's perfect," I interjected. "Let's get everyone sitting down and eating. People are always happier on a full stomach."

"Right you are." Derek rubbed his belly.

His move broke the tension in the room in time for a much happier Harmony and Ronnie to make their way back.

"Great news, hon," Gray addressed his fiancée, "it's time to move to the dining room. Would you like one of your friends from New York to replace Jillian?"

"No, but we will need three extra spots set up for dinner."

"Already done," Derek said.

As we filed out of the room, I heard Gray ask Derek how it went with the gossip girls.

"They've been put in their place, at least for now."

Gray clapped him on the back and whatever else was said I didn't hear.

"Great job with Harmony, kitten, she seems to be in a lot better mood now."

"I think she'll be fine. She said that Porsha had heard about the wedding and immediately flew out with the other two, without bothering to tell Harmony until they'd arrived in Montana. She was taken by surprise and Gray took over, arranging for a car to get them from the airport."

Well, that explained that mystery. "Baby, I really need you tonight." On the way to the dining room, I explained what had happened with the tents and that we'd be putting in a late night

to get everything ready. After the day she'd had, I half expected her to have a meltdown like my cousin.

“No problem, Daddy, I got your back. And while we're busy setting up, you can tell me all about Bianca and why she looked at you like she wanted to eat you up.”

Oh boy, Hail Mary full of grace, I was up the creek without a paddle!

“Of course, can't wait.”

If we came through this unscathed, it would be a miracle.

CHAPTER 15



Veronica

SADIE, HARMONY, CATHERINE AND I STOOD IN THE ROOM designated for the bridal party, gushing over how amazing her dress was and how perfect she would look walking down the aisle.

“Thank you for stepping in for Jillian, Catherine, it means a lot that you would accept on short notice.”

“Anything to help make this day special that I can do, I’m here, and it’s my honor to stand with you as you make your VOWS.”

Harmony gushed her thanks.

There was a knock at the door. “Come in,” Harmony called.

“A light snack and drink for you, ladies.”

I was famished and couldn’t wait to stuff some food in my mouth. Last night didn’t go as late as we’d thought it would, but with Bianca sending me looks that could kill, I’d lost my appetite and spent more time pushing my food around on my plate than eating.

Despite suffering through the ground blizzard, the volunteers refused to leave a job unfinished and insisted on helping Jacob and me set up the new venue, enabling us to finish and be back home by midnight. We didn’t, however, get the chance to discuss why Bianca was giving me death glares all evening until later at home, when the conversation finally rolled around to the topic.

My head rested on his chest, and the rumble of his voice every time he spoke moved it up and down.

“Do you remember our conversation about me having lots of experience in the dungeon, but not outside of agreed upon scenes?”

“I do. But what does that have to do with Bianca?”

“I ran into her at a BDSM club I had just begun going to. She was brand new and looking for someone to explore her fantasies with. I hadn’t seen her in years and at first, we caught up on each other’s lives and when I felt sure she was open to what I wanted, we played a scene together later that night.”

Shock was the only word to describe my reaction to his confession. Complete and utter shock.

“Wait, just a second. Are you saying you and Bianca were a thing?”

“Yes, but not in the way you’re imagining.”

I didn’t know if his insinuation should impress or insult me.

“Is that right? And what exactly is that? Hmm?” I hated sounding like a petulant baby, but I couldn’t help myself.

“You are imagining that it was more than it actually was. We scened together once a week for months. That was all I was interested in, and she never asked for more than that, thankfully.”

“Continue.”

“One night, we were at the same party, one of those snobby who’s-who parties that we all hated growing up. I ran into her there and she insisted I go to the bathroom with her. She began unbuckling my belt, and I told her no, and reminded her that our time together was strictly at the club, not the real world. When I turned to leave, she called me Daddy and begged me to stay.”

“What?” I pulled away from Jacob and stood up on the bed, glaring down at him. “Please tell me you weren’t a Daddy

to that bitch!” Where had that come from? Never in my life had I called anyone a bitch.

You could tell by his face I’d shocked him by what I’d said. Well, well, it was his turn for a change.

“Veronica De Haviland. You will not utter filth from that pretty mouth again.”

I glared but kept my mouth shut, and dropped onto my bottom, bouncing on the mattress before crossing my legs and placing my chin on my fists. Showing my dissatisfaction in that way cost me, as my butt was screaming its displeasure.

“And if I don’t,” I challenged.

“Then a naughty little girl will get a mouth full of soap and corner time.”

Soap in my mouth. Was that a real thing? I didn’t know the answer to that question and decided it was best not to test the theory.

“For a few months, we role played Dd/lg, but that’s all it was, play.”

The green-eyed envy monster was hard to shut off. “So, what you’re saying is, you played the role of a Daddy, and she played the role of your Little? How is that different from what we’re doing, minus it being in a club? Actually, scratch that, as we are currently in bed at a Ranch dedicated to that specific kink.”

I bit my lip to keep from saying something I knew I would regret. But had a burning question I had to ask. “Was that it? You played scenes where you acted as a Daddy and her a naughty brat and what then? Did you spank her and put her in the corner?”

He didn’t answer at first, almost as if he was weighing out the words he would say. “You had sex with Bianca, didn’t you? And not just once, but many times, right?” When he still didn’t answer, I screamed, “Right, Jacob?”

I don’t know why I was so upset. At no point had he lied to me or told me he was a virgin. He lived in a place filled with

Littles and it had never dawned on me he may have been with half the women I'd met since my arrival. Oh my god, how could I have been so stupid?

“Ronnie, when you pulled away from society, I thought you just needed time to recover. For a year, you never answered a single text or phone call. You stopped going out and never invited me over, despite my efforts to keep in touch. I gave up on a vision I'd had of us being together.”

The truth of his words stung something fierce, but I didn't interrupt him and continued to listen.

“You know, if it hadn't been for you, it may have taken me longer to discover who I was.”

Admittedly, I was curious and wanted to know how I'd helped him learn who he was.

“You're four years younger and as the eldest in our friend group, I took it upon myself to watch over Harmony and because you always tagged along after her, you as well. I can't tell you how many times my hand twitched with a need to spank your backside when you didn't listen to me. Compared to my cousin, you were an angel. But the fire in your eyes when I'd tell you what to do... that sparked something in me.”

He scrubbed his face with one hand and ran it through his hair. Where had I seen that exact move before? A memory I'd long forgotten of him emerged, of Jacob jumping in the pool to save me when I'd decided I was good enough at swimming to go in alone when no one was looking. I'd jumped into the deep end and cried for help when I was too tired to make it to the shallow end. The pool was bigger than it appeared. Jacob had come to my rescue. He must have only been nine years old, but the way he'd looked at me with such concern. After he was sure I was okay, he'd done that exact move and mumbled something about deserving a spanking as he tugged me to my feet.

In that moment, I'd fallen in love with Jacob Andrews and now, looking back, realized I always had been.

“As I got older, and the urges increased, I did some research and found the world of BDSM. I learned I was a natural Dominant, but it took longer to discover I was a Daddy Dom. There was no shortage of willing submissives, to help me with the real-life application of everything I was learning. The environment was very supportive toward newbies, and I felt I’d found my people.”

“And Bianca? Was she your people too?”

“Bianca was an opportunity to play and learn from. We’d discussed it up front, and neither one of us wanted anything more. We met at the club once a week and parted ways afterward. We didn’t talk or spend time together until that night, several months later. By then I was ready to begin my search for a Little, or at least that is what I thought at the time. In retrospect, what Bianca did probably is what saved me from going through with my plan. I came to Rawhide after she started a rumor in certain circles that I was a pedophile and lousy in bed.”

“She did what?” I couldn’t believe what he was telling me. “That is awful!”

“It was. I’d booked us here, at Rawhide, for a Daddy/Little weekend and she lost her shit. That’s when she started the rumor, and I learned a valuable lesson.”

“I can’t believe I didn’t know any of this. I’m so sorry, Jacob, that you had to go through that.”

“We were young, and I found out later that she pulled that stunt because she’d been playing with a switch who she liked a lot better than me and did it to make me look bad when he called her out on her double dipping. We’d been unaware of each other, but I guess he saw her leaving the club one night and asked around.”

“What a tramp! That is pure evil.”

“I’m so sorry, V, that I didn’t tell you sooner, but it’s a part of my past and one I’d rather forget about. When I saw her here, my first instinct was to turn around and leave, but Harmony depends on me, us, to get her through the most

important event of her life, and I couldn't in good conscience allow for that to be jeopardized."

I felt stupid now for being envious of what Bianca and Jacob had shared. "Before I forgive you, are there any other nasty surprises I should know about?"

"No. There is nothing else." He reached forward and tugged me on top of him before gripping my bottom in his powerful hands, and I let out a yelp.

"Still sore I see."

"Haven't you heard? My Daddy is ruthless."

"He is? Well, that's not good at all. Maybe your Daddy should be a tickle monster instead."

Jacob held me captive with his legs while his fingers dug into all of my sensitive places. I laughed so hard I was afraid I'd pee. But he stopped just in time; funny how he always knew when I'd had enough.

"VERONICA? DID YOU HEAR ANYTHING I SAID?"

"Oh! I'm so sorry, I was zoning out. We didn't get much sleep last night."

She looked mildly amused. "Did my cousin keep you up all night? I better have a word with him."

"That's unnecessary. Now tell me what I missed."

"I was just saying how proud I am of you, V. Look how far you've come in only a week." She held up her champagne glass. "Cheers to Veronica for being brave."

I blushed as usual but accepted her praise because she was right. I was brave, and I was finally in a place where I could accept that.

"It's time for us to get changed or Harmony will be late to the altar."

I WATCHED AS CATHERINE AND THEN SADIE WALKED STATELY down the aisle to an orchestrated version of “Every Breath You Take”. And then it was my turn. I fluffed out my deep-rose tulle skirt and followed Sadie down the aisle.

The room was packed because everyone at Rawhide was there. With the venue being switched at the last minute the invitation to attend was open to anyone who wished to be there.

I joined the other two at the altar. The wedding march began, and Jacob started down the aisle with Harmony on his arm. Her parents weren't here, and she'd asked her cousin to step into the role. They both had the same blonde hair, and both were tall. They looked amazing together and I beamed at my man and best friend as they walked toward me.

I knew the moment Jacob saw how amazing my boobs looked in the low-cut bodice. I'd paired it with an underwire strapless bra, and I could tell even from this distance that he liked what he saw.

I barely heard the vows being exchanged as Jacob and I made googly eyes at each other from opposite sides of the platform. The room erupted in cheers when it was done, bringing me back into the present.

The wall separating the multipurpose room was divided in half, because on the other side was the reception slash Valentine's Day party. Everything had already been arranged weeks ago when the wedding was to be at Remington House, but the ground blizzard changed all that.

As the wall separating the rooms slid open there were *oohs* and *ahhs* from the wedding party as Nanny J and her crew of Littles stood back wearing huge smiles at the compliments over the decorations being thrown their way.

The two rooms merged as the wedding party was led away for pictures by the stone fireplace in the massive lobby.

Jacob sidled up to me as we walked to the photo op's location.

“What do we have here?”

I felt my face heat. “Dessert if you behave yourself,” I replied with a smirk. That’s right at some point during my stay I’d learned to smirk and was pretty proud about it.

Jacob slid his hand under my puffy skirt and gripped my bare bottom.

“Please, Sir, have some respect. My boyfriend is around here somewhere and if he catches you, it’s lights out.”

“A dual to the death then.”

I broke out in a peal of giggles as Jacob pretended to feint and stab as we followed the others down the hall.

When we passed a darkened doorway, he pulled me in and quietly shut the door.

“Jacob, what about the pictures?”

“The pictures can wait; I have something to show you.” He pulled a homemade Valentine from his pocket. “I believe this belongs to you.”

“How did you find it?”

“I didn’t have to; Harmony gave it to me this morning and told me it was the one you’d been making that day in the hall.”

“Did you read it,” I asked accusingly.

“Of course not, milady, this knight has honor. Here’s one for you. I thought we could open them together.”

I passed his back and took the new one from him.

“At the same time... now!” I tore the envelope open. “Ronnie, will you be my *Little* Valentine, now and forever?” I read it aloud.

“Jacob, will you be my Daddy Valentine, now and forever?” Jacob read aloud.

“I will, kitten, for as long as you’ll have me.”

I felt a storm brewing inside of me, an emotional tidal wave of happiness.

“Yes, Jacob, I have been yours from the time I was five, and now, will be forever.”

He leaned down and drew me into a passionate kiss that made my toes curl.

“We better go, before we both end up in Derek’s office,” Jacob joked.

He took my hand in his and I felt the strength of the bond, that no man, or woman either, could ever pull asunder.

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Rogue London is an author of naughty romance designed to awaken your sensual side.

Rogue has a flair for writing about the D/s dynamic and as a true romantic at heart, her books have an HEA.

She also writes as Skylar West.

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