



A BRAXTON BROTHERS SERIES

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Luke

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*This is for all the women who know what they want and go  
after it.*

# Contents

[1. Luke](#)

[2. Luke](#)

[3. Luke](#)

[4. Luke](#)

[5. Luke](#)

[6. Eve](#)

[7. Eve](#)

[8. Eve](#)

[9. Luke](#)

[10. Eve](#)

[11. Luke](#)

[12. Eve](#)

[13. Luke](#)

[14. Luke](#)

[15. Eve](#)

[16. Eve](#)

[17. Luke](#)

[18. Luke](#)

[19. Luke](#)

[20. Luke](#)

[21. Epilogue – One month later](#)

[About the Author](#)

[What's Next?](#)

# Luke



“Why does the damn tux have to be so tight,” Luke grumbled as he tugged at his collar that sit snug around his thick neck. Luke was oblivious to the women staring at his large physique, his tattoos peeking out from his collar and adorning on his fingers.

“Don’t blame the suit brother,” Jackson chuckled next to him. “You’ve gained weight. You’re getting soft in your old age.”

“I’m thirty-six, you dickhead. And its not weight. Its muscle. Something you seem to lack.”

Jackson tried to control his laughter as Kane glared at them from across the room. “You’ve done it now Jackson. Kane looks pissed.”

“Only because Sarah would kick his ass if he didn’t play nice for the investors.” Luke said as he watched Kane wrap an arm around the blond woman next to him, drawing her in

close. The woman smiling at something that he whispered in her ear.

“She’s the best thing that has happened to him,” Jackson muttered.

Luke grunted in agreement, happy that his brother had found someone, but frustrated that they had to stand at the fundraiser and be ogled because of it. Luke usually like to stand in the background. His large frame normally made people apprehensive around him, but Luke knew it was worth it though. Sarah, and her friend Olivia, had opened a family shelter several years ago, and these fundraisers only helped their doors stay open. Kane, Luke and Jackson were happy to use their own money to fund the centre forever. All six of the ex-combat brothers were successful in their security business, *Threat Assess*, but Sarah was stubborn and refused any of their financial help. She just wanted the brothers to dress up and be present tonight in case of any incidences. Like the one that bought Sarah and Kane together.

Luke frowned as Sarah left the comfort of Kane and wandered towards them, greeting people by name, before she stopped to hug a short, curvy dark hared women. Luke’s eyes narrowed, wondering how he had missed seeing this woman earlier. Her dress skimmed over her ample curves, stopping just over her knees. Her calves were thick but shapely.

*She was mouth-watering.*

The woman moved to let someone past, Luke watching as her dress swished just enough to show some inner thigh.



“See something you like brother?” Jackson teased, elbowing him in the ribs. “She looks like a mouthful.”

“Watch your fucking tongue,” Luke growled at him. “You know better.”

“Just teasing you brother. I’m just watching all the mammas shielding their daughters from you; and yet you only have eyes for the one woman who hasn’t even looked your way.”

“The mammas have it right, although half of them would gladly step over their daughters to get to any of us.” Luke shook his head. “I don’t understand how women work.”

Jackson chuckled again as Sarah approached them. “As long as they are as satisfied when I leave them, then my job is done.”

“Evening Sarah, everything okay?” Luke asked softly as she walked up to him. “Its been a good turnout for you.”

“This is perfect. There has been enough money raised in the auction to fund the centre for the next year.” Sarah looked at both brothers. “I have been approached several times to see if you boys would be actioned for night.” She said as her eyes twinkled at them.

Luke went pale. “The mammas are fierce. I’m not sure that would be a good thing.”

Sarah laughed, causing Kane to look over at her again. “Don’t think I’m not temped. There are what..five? of you left and single. That could fetch a pretty penny next year.”

“It almost makes me WANT to commit to someone to get out of it,” Jackson muttered, a look of despair on his face.

“Don’t you act innocent with me Jackson.” Sarah said, poking him in the chest. “I’ve seen you glancing at Maya. What’s the story with her?”

“No story,” Jackson mumbled. “Old friends from high school.”

“Hmmp. It looks more, but I’ll find out,” Sarah grinned.

“You should be more worried about Luke,” Jackson said, throwing Luke under the bus to shift the attention away from him. “He seemed to like your friend you were just talking to.”

Sarah turned her attention onto Luke. “The dark-haired girl? Eve?”

Luke didn’t meet Sarah’s eyes, “I don’t know what he’s talking about.”

Sarah narrowed her eyes and stood in front of Luke, reaching up to pull his chin down to face her. “Now listen here. Eve is a friend of mine. A good friend. I know you boys are good at heart, but you’re also allergic to commitment. Man whores even.”

“Hey,” Jackson said laughing. “That one stung.”

Sarah tipped her head to one side and studied Luke who remained silent. “But you have been all work and no play for a while now, haven’t you?”

“No comment,” Luke said trying to avoid her conversation, thankful that Kane materialized beside Sarah, nodding at his brothers.

“Let’s call it a night.” Kane said. “I’ll see you back at the ranch Luke.”

Luke grunted, relieved when Kane and Sarah left.

“I’m going to get a drink,” Jackson said before moving off.

“Say hello to Maya for me,” Luke called out after him and started to laugh as Jackson flipped him off.

Luke didn’t feel like going back to the ranch yet. He grimaced as a tall, thin redhead broke from a group of women and start to head over to him, a predatory gleam in her eyes. He had grown tired of the casual hookups that had sustained him for years. He was feeling unsettled for no reason. He wanted what Kane and Sarah had. The peacefulness of someone standing beside you, supporting you.

*Nope. Not tonight. Not unless she was the darkhaired woman with luscious curves. Eve.*

Luke’s gaze swept over the diminishing crowd and was disappointed that she must have left. He turned and walked away before the redhead could capture him. Luke frustrated that he was going to have to ask Sarah more about Eve.

Luke nodded to his brothers, Ethan, Alex and Ryan as he left, knowing how lucky he really was. Bonded now as a makeshift family, the six of them had fought together in combat for many years. Kane had made sure they all stayed

together by starting Threat Assess, the security company where he appointed each brother an equal partner. Under Kane's direction, the company had built quickly. So quickly that they now employed several hundred people and serviced clients worldwide. Luke knew, like himself, each brother would lay down their life for Kane. He had saved them in more ways than one – both in combat and out.

# Luke



Luke Harrington's peace was broken by the sharp wail of a siren, seconds before his phone vibrated with a message. He glanced at the phone before sitting upright to read it closer, his body in motion, responding to the call from his combat brother, Kane. He and his girlfriend were in trouble.

*911. Fire at Sarah's apartment. Get here.*

Luke could smell the fire as he stepped outside The Book Nook and started to run the few blocks in their direction. He knew his other four brothers in arms, Jackson, Ethan, Alex and Ryan, would also be rushing to help.

Luke rounded the corner to see Sarah and another woman huddled together. He reached them just as Kane exited the building, holding something that was orange and hissing, which he then thrust into Luke's arms, before Kane turned towards Sarah to check her over.

Luke could feel the scrappy creatures' claws dig into him, its yowl in distress was ear splitting. Luke went to pitch the

creature away from him but stopped still when he felt a soft touch on his arm. A hand that belonged to the woman he saw with Sarah. A woman who was now crooning to the orange ball of fur as her other hand grasped Luke's forearm tightly, the sensation making him tense as he felt his dick twitch in delight at the touch.

*What the fuck.*

Luke like to stand in the background. His large frame normally making people apprehensive around him.

*But this woman is touching me. She's s not scared of my scars and my size.*

His gaze followed the hand to see the woman gazing up at him, her violet eyes bright with unshed tears. Luke handed the creature to her, and watched as the cat snuggled against her large breasts, its eyes narrowed at him before it let out a long and angry hiss.

Luke growled at the cat before taking in the woman standing before him. She barely stood five foot two, just reaching him chest height. She was obviously dressed for bed in her worn t-shirt and tights. The t-shirt doing nothing to hide the curves and dips of her body and breasts, Luke noticing he could see her nipples through the threadbare material. He shrugged out of his jacket and slung it carefully over her and the cat to keep them warm, noticing her shiver slightly in the cool breeze.

Kane interrupted his thoughts, as his brother bought Sarah over to them and they watched the fire being bought under control.

“I think its only a few apartments that would be damaged. The firies got here quick and the damage looks minimal.” Kane said to the group as they watched their other brothers emerge from their car’s and join them. Kane quickly let them know what was happening before he turned back to Sarah and her friend.

“Everyone. This is my neighbor Eve,” Sarah said as the brothers nodded to her. “And her cat. Fred.”

Jackson put his hand out to pat Fred, but quickly retracted it as the cat hissed and spat at him, making Eve snuggle the cat closer to her.

*Lucky cat*, Luke thought.

The group talked for a few minutes longer before the fire chief came over to let them know that they wouldn’t be going back into their apartments any time soon. They needed to investigate the cause of the fire first and make sure its structurally sound.

“Looks like you are coming home with me baby,” Kane leaned at Sarah as she sighed against him.

“But my things.”

“We can get whatever you need tomorrow,” Kane said as he placed a kiss on her head. “But first let’s get you home and showered. We can figure everything else out tomorrow.”

Sarah looked at Eve and Fred, before looking up at Kane.

Kane nodded and looked over at Eve. “Eve, you’re coming with us as well. We have more than enough room on the

ranch.”

Kane and Sarah started whispering about sleeping arrangements and where Eve would be most comfortable.

“Eve can have my house.” Luke said, stopping them all mid-sentence.

Luke could see confusion on his brothers faces. “I can bunk in my swag for a few weeks.”

Jackson smirked as he nodded. “Smooth move brother,” quickly shutting up as Luke glowered at him.

Eve put her hand on his forearm again, her touch warming the area for him. “I don’t want to put you out. I’m sure there’s a motel I can stay at.”

“No. Its settled. You’re coming with us,” Sarah said. “There’s loads of room.” She said as she drew Eve towards the cars. “The ranch is enormous, multiple houses.” Sarah glanced back at the brothers. “They all live there, so you will be safe.”

Eve stopped and looked back at Luke. “You all live together?” she asked.

Another brother laughed as he stepped forward. “Not together. Separate houses but on the same ranch.”

“Yeah, they’re not weirdos that all live in the same house. Could you imagine sharing with these mountains of men all the time,” Sarah huffed as she sent a small smile in Kane’s direction.



“Right then. Let’s get home and settled,” Kane directed as they all disbanded, leaving Luke standing still on the sidewalk, wondering why the hell he had just done that.

# Luke



Luke settled into a routine for the next few nights, staying out of Eve's way as much as possible, unsure why she had such an effect on him. He was usually a take charge man, getting what he wants and not slowing down for anyone. He had never had any trouble with women before, but he had also never met anyone so contradictory like Eve either. She was all curves and curls. Sass and steam. Spice and sweetness.

*How is that possible? I want to sink my hands into her while she breathes my name under me, begging me for more.*

Each night he camped in his swag close by to Eve. Tonight, he moved closer to the house after Sarah had confided that Eve might need some support after the fire investigation showed it was arson. Eve's ex-boyfriend had been arrested after he turned up at the local hospital with burns to his arms. Once the brothers heard about Eve's ex, they banded together to support her. She was now one of them.

*One of mine.*

Sarah managed a family violence shelter, and three years ago Eve was her first client as she ran from her ex. He was recently released from prison where his obsession with Eve had not diminish with time. Sarah and Eve had formed a friendship, then neighbours and soon were each other's support systems. Until Kane came along. Now the family have expanded to include all of them.

The ranch was always a place where the brothers didn't take their women. They each had apartments in the city for that, but Sarah, and now, Eve soon changed that. Sarah and Kane had settled into living together, their wedding date getting closer and their new house nearly built. They had both decided to stay in the city for a few weeks. Luke knew the real reason was that Kane wanted Sarah all to himself, and didn't want any interference from his brothers. It was the one downfall of the ranch. He loved that they were so close to one another, that they were always on hand, but it was also a burden when you wanted solitude. After tonight, Luke would live in Kane's old house and do some minor repairs for Eve to eventually live in.

*And stay on the ranch with me.*

Luke had never felt so attracted to a woman before. He usually kept to himself and only socialised with his brothers; women when he needed the company. His social skills also weren't great, but he had spent most of his life in combat, and there was no need for small talk then. Combat taught him not to trust anyone but his brothers and he relied on that instinct.

“And now Sarah and Eve,” he muttered, “and Fred, her ginger ninja cat.”

Although Luke was happy Eve was staying in this house, he had one rule for Eve about the house.

Don't go into his office.

That was his own private space. His space for what he loved to do best. Reading romance novels. And the room? That was his private sanctuary and home to hundreds of romance novels. That room and the Book Nook were his spaces. His alone time to completely relax from the outside world. Especially the pressures of managing logistics at Threat Assess.

His thoughts wandered to his brothers, who relied on him to make tough decisions and lead them through the challenges of security breaches and threats. He felt the weight of their expectations pressing down on him, but he also knew that they respected and trusted him. The books, and now The Book Nook that he had recently bought, allowed him to escape the pressures of his everyday life and lose himself in the world of love and adventure.

Luke couldn't help but think about the contrast between his love for romantic fiction and the persona he maintained at work. In the cutthroat security industry, vulnerability was a weakness, and he wondered what his competitor's might think if they discovered his secret. His brothers already knew he had a liking for the books, but not to the extent of what it actually was.

And now he had to keep it from Eve as well.

# Luke



Within the week, Luke had settled into Kane's house and had begun fixing some small handyman tasks, ready for Eve. Each night, Luke had made it a habit to walk from Kane's house to his, just to say good night to Eve, and each time Fred had taken a swipe at him. The wedding of Kane and Sarah was approaching and he wanted to ask Eve to be his date. Luke couldn't wait to feel her in his arms as they danced. He felt himself stiffen at the thought of holding her against him.

"Settle down", he muttered to himself, "I haven't even asked her yet."

He looked towards Jackson's house as he walked towards Eve's, and was surprised to see Maya leaving, her hair messy as she yelled something to Jackson over her shoulder. He watched as Jackson stopped by the gate and scratch his head as Maya sped off, Jackson shrugging his shoulders at Luke, as if unsure what happened.

Luke chuckled to himself. He had some dealings with Maya in the past. She was a spitfire of a journalist and Sarah had let it slip that Jackson and Maya had history together.

Apparently, history Jackson would like to repeat by the looks of it.

Luke now had an understanding on how their security company would be hard on their women. They were sometimes away for days on a job. They had each made enough money to live very comfortably, but their work ethic was still there, so each brother only took the jobs they wanted to and delegated the rest. Luke thought it was interesting that each one always took the jobs that involved protecting women. It was like it was a given that they would be there no matter what.

*As I am with Eve.*

But Eve was no job. Luke wanted her. Just being near her made him relax. Luke wanted desperately to breathe her in when he saw her each day. She smelt like fresh baked apple pie. Exactly like the ones she baked for him every day. Each brother got a baked pie every morning, as Eve tried out her new recipes, but Luke got apple. His favorite.

The baking had also bought Eve into the Book Nook each day as she dropped off his treats, and some for his staff. The store smelt amazing every day; so much so that the customers were now asking to buy her pies from her.

It had sparked an idea in him that he was still thinking through. One that would tie Eve to him in business.

*And hopefully more.*



# Luke



*H*ow do you befriend a cat fast? Luke Harrington entered the command into the search bar and waited for the results. It's not like he wanted to make friends with old ginger ninja, but it was the only way he could think of to get closer to Eve. Even now, in his private sanctuary, he could hear Eve crooning to Fred, the ginger devil that had swiped at him one too many times.

The laptop glowed as he scrolled through the results.

The most important thing to do is to make sure you do everything on their terms.

*Wait. What? I'm not letting a cat dictate to me.*

Be as small as you can so you don't threaten them.

*Well, that's me out.*

Luke let out a huff as he thought of ways to make his six-foot, solid frame smaller.

*Nope, can't happen.*

He kept on scrolling.

Offer out a hand for the feline to sniff.

Luke slammed the laptop shut, grumbling as he cracked his knuckles on his right hand, the five deep scratches still visible from last week when he tried to pat the ginger nuisance.

Luke stood and stretched, taking in his office. It was the one room he missed since he moved to Kane's old house. Kane and Sarah had settled into their new house now and Luke was trying to find ways to keep fixing up Kane's old house so Eve would stay in his. It gave him hope that, even if he couldn't join her in his bed yet, that at least she was sleeping in it.

*Hopefully naked and thinking of him.*

Luke stood and opened the door to the hallway, peeking out to see if Eve was nearby. He stepped out and shut the door behind him, just as he heard her voice.

“Good morning cowboy. Do you want a coffee?”

Luke didn't know how the nickname had started, but he loved it coming from her lips.

Luke closed his eyes briefly, as even the sound of her voice was torture for him; the knowing something you want so badly is at arm's length away and you cannot reach for it.

Luke turned toward her sweet sound, taking in a breath as she smelt apples and spices. Fresh and clean.

“Come on. I just put the jug on,” Eve said as she walked down the hall to the kitchen. Luke watched as her full-figured

hips swayed as she walked, enticing him forward. He never knew what men saw in thin and skinny women. He liked his women full and heavy, with dips and curves to explore. Exactly like Eve had. He wanted to reach out and grab her silken dark hair, gathered in a pony tail that was sweeping over her shoulders, and pull her back to him. He wanted her against him, over him, under him. He just wanted her.

And that's when he saw it. The ginger devil slinking out and sitting between him and Eve's retreating back, right before he launched himself at Luke and sunk his teeth in.

Luke held back a yell as he shook the cat off his leg, just as Eve turned around to see what the noise was.

*He has to go.*

"Fred has to meet his maker," Luke muttered as he looked down at the teeth marks and its trademark cuts and knicks on his leg, adding to the collection on his arms and back.

"You scared him," Eve had said, as she crooned to the ginger furball she was holding. "And you know he doesn't like men."

"For the thousandth time, he's a male. How can he not like his own sex?" Luke muttered, getting more frustrated at himself for letting the small creature get to him.

He left soon after and decided to burn the excess energy with a run. The one thing that clears his mind. Just being in close proximity to Eve caused his body to react. Even now his cock thickened at the thought of her.

*And my hand is just not cutting it any more.*

He bent down to tie his laces tighter. Running had become his obsession lately, Luke knowing it had to do with trying to expend the excess energy so he didn't just grab Eve and throw her onto the nearest bed. But he knew he didn't deserve to even think those thoughts about Eve. He was not the sort of man who won women like her.

*Christ. That woman will be the death of me.*

"Five miles," he repeated to himself, his breath visible in the cool air as he picked up speed.

"Focus, Harrington," he chastised himself, shaking off the intrusive thoughts and increasing his pace. "Just run." He had run another mile before the tell-tale signs shuddered through his body.

"Damn," he muttered under his breath, feeling an all too familiar wave of anxiety wash over him. It was the same sensation he'd experienced so many times before - his chest tightening, pulse quickening, and breath coming in short gasps.

"Come on, focus on the run," Luke urged himself, shaking his head to chase away the memories that threatened to resurface. As he rounded a corner, he felt the weight of his past slowly begin to lift, replaced by the simple pleasure of feeling his body in motion.

"Remember your training," he thought, recalling the hours spent with his fellow soldiers practicing breathing exercises and grounding techniques. "Breathe in, breathe out. Stay in the present."

He allowed the rhythm of his footfalls and the sound of his own breath to fill the gaps left by the intrusive thoughts. As he did so, the tension in his chest began to ease, and his mind wandered back to his life before the military - a time when love and adventure were only found within the pages of his favorite romance novels.

“Things were simpler then,” he admitted, allowing himself a small smile at the memory. But as quickly as the nostalgia came, it vanished, replaced by the stark reality of his life now.

*Adjusting to civilian life hasn't been easy*, he admitted to himself. The bookstore had become a sanctuary for him, offering solace in the form of vivid storytelling and the promise of love against all odds. His thoughts were broken by Elsie's greeting.

“Morning, Luke!” Elsie called out from her porch as he sprinted past.

“Morning Elsie,” Luke grinned at her small form bundled up, coffee in her hand. Luke worshipped Elise and her husband John. They kept the ranch and their lives intact, and took the mundane duties away from them so the brothers could concentrate on their company. Elise was like their surrogate mother, and having no kids of their own, he knew Elsie and John felt the six brothers were their family as well.

Luke continued to run down past his own house, just turning his head slightly to see if he could glimpse Eve again, before he ran up to the porch of Kane's old house.

He smelt the food before he saw it. He inhaled the aroma of butter mixed with spices and apples. Apple Pie. But not just any ordinary apple pie. This was with a crust mixed with so much butter that it flaked as you touched it. The apples so sweet that they dissolved like floss on your tongue, and the spices were her own creation, and they sometimes lingered on her skin and the air around her. Luke often wondered if she tasted as good as she smelt. If he would ever get a taste of her.

Luke picked up the pie. It was still warm. He turned toward his house hoping she might also be looking out the window searching for him. He wanted her in his arms. Her fullness was such a turn on for him that he couldn't wait to taste her skin on his lips.

*But first I have to at least kiss her.*

Luke was determined that he was going to take charge and make Eve his. Finally.

# Eve



“I’m not sure what to do,” Eve said to Sarah as she made them a cup of hot chocolate, the milky steam wafting into the cool air of the kitchen. “I’ve never seen Fred behave this way around anyone before. He just doesn’t like Luke.”

Sarah sighed and placed a comforting hand on Eve’s shoulder. “You know Luke’s had some experiences that make him come across as intimidating. Fred might just need some time to get used to him,” she suggested.

Eve looked doubtfully at her friend. “I don’t think time is going to help here, Sarah. I’ve seen Luke try to make friends with Fred.”

“Or Fred is just being a bastard,” Sarah asked, her eyebrow cocked at Eve.

“Maybe,” Eve said with a small smile.

The two women fell silent, the only sounds being the quiet bubbling of the hot chocolate as it heated and the clink of mugs being taken out of the cupboard. As she thought about

the situation, Eve felt a pang of guilt. Fred had been her constant companion ever since she had left the shelter and the only source of unconditional love she had known. She didn't want to let go of her furry friend, but she was aware that he was becoming a problem.

“But, what if it's me?” Eve suddenly asked, voicing a thought that had been gnawing at the back of her mind. “What if Fred is picking up on my...anxiety around Luke?”

Sarah looked at her friend with understanding eyes. “Eve, you've been through so much. It's only natural that you'd have some reservations about getting close to someone again. Fred could indeed be picking up on that.” Sarah hesitated. “And Luke's.”

Eve frowned, not quite understanding what Sarah was getting at.

“Luke's been through his fair share of trauma too, you know,” Sarah continued. “Perhaps Fred is picking up on that as well. Animals can be surprisingly sensitive to such things.”

Eve considered Sarah's words. She had been so caught up in her own struggles that she had barely spared a thought for what Luke might have been going through. She was living under his roof, yet she barely knew anything about him. Sure, she was attracted to his rugged good looks and had caught herself more than once admiring his muscular form. But beyond that, Luke remained a mystery.

“I need to know more about him,” Eve decided aloud, her resolve hardening. “The first step to resolving the issue is



understanding what had caused it. And if it means I have to spend more time with the burly, handsome ex-soldier, well, I will just have to suffer through it.” Eve grinned at her friend.

Sarah chuckled, a glimmer of amusement in her eyes. “Well, I suppose there are worse fates,” she joked, earning a playful swat from Eve. But beneath the jest, both women knew the task would not be an easy one. Luke Harrington was one stubborn man.

With renewed determination, Eve decided to confront the issue head-on. She would learn more about Luke, come to understand him. She looked at Sarah, her rock and anchor, and Eve knew she was not alone.

“You’re right, Sarah,” Eve affirmed. “I need to understand Luke better.” She took a deep breath. “And talking about letting me in, what’s up with the locked room? Do you know what he is hiding?”

Sarah chuckled. “I can guess, but I’m sure he’ll tell you when he is comfortable.”

Eve wiggled her eyebrows. “You don’t think it’s a sex room, do you? They always say it’s the quiet ones to watch out for.”

Sarah shook her head as she changed the subject.

*I can just break in and see for myself.* Eve thought as she tried to focus on Sarah’s conversation.

# Eve



Sarah burst through Eve's door the next day. "I've got it," she grinned at the stunned Eve. "We need to make sure you are everywhere he is, that way he can't avoid you, so you will get to know him better."

"You have been watching too many romance movies again." Eve laughed. "I have nothing in common with Luke." Eve hesitated. "Well besides the fact that I like to cook and he likes to eat that is."

"I think Luke wants to sample more than your pies," Sarah said as Eve blushed at where she would like his mouth to be.

"Look, Kane did it to me and it drove me insane. He was everywhere I was, until the point I just gave in to the feelings and opened up to him. And look where we are now," Sarah said, a wistful look in her eyes.

"But Luke won't even stop running long enough to have a conversation with me," Eve complained. "Literally running. I cant keep up with him."

Sarah took a sip of her coffee, studying Eve thoughtfully. She knew her friend was smitten with Luke. Sarah also knew Luke enough to know that he was a man of few words, but his actions spoke volumes.

“I think you’re overthinking it,” Sarah said finally. “Remember, Luke’s a guy who’s been in combat. He’s used to reading situations, not conversations.”

Eve’s brows furrowed, and she bit her lip. “So, what do you suggest?”

Sarah hesitated for a moment before offering her idea. “I think you should join me at the gym.”

Eve grimaced. “The gym? Why?”

“Luke’s there every day,” Sarah explained. “You can go and try to make some conversation with him. And I’ve seen him watching you around the ranch Eve. I think he’s just as taken with you as you are with him.”

“But I don’t even work out,” Eve protested. “This body is made for comfort, not to sweat.”

“It’s not just about making Luke notice you more, but also doing something good for yourself,” Sarah said, giving her a pointed look. “Getting out and making more friends and meeting people again.”

Eve bit her lower lip, knowing Sarah was right. She and nodded. “Alright, I’ll give it a try. But I’m warning you, I’m not exactly the athletic type. I fall over my own feet.”

“I know,” Sarah said, smiling. “But remember, you’re not doing this for Luke. You’re doing it for yourself. To get to Luke, mainly so then he will get under you,” Sarah laughed at her friend as Eve licked her lips liking the idea. “The fact that Luke will get to see you in your gym clothes is just a bonus.”

Eve blushed at the thought of showing off her curves and fullness. She was proud of her body and knew that Luke liked what she had also. Maybe this was the push she needed to finally make a move on Luke. Maybe, at the gym, they could find a common ground and get to know each other better.

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The following day Eve went to the gym with Sarah. It was nothing like she expected it to be. There was no blaring music or mirrors lining the walls. This was an airy room, filled with weights and benches and everyone was minding their own business.

“See,” Sarah said as she pulled Eve further inside. “I told you that you would fit in.” Eve had fretted over wearing an old loose t-shirt and had borrowed some black gym tights from Sarah, unsure if they were supposed to feel that tight on her. Sarah suggested starting with an easy exercise routine, and Eve followed Sarah’s movements with some simple weights. She started with light exercises and gradually increased her efforts. Luke, true to Sarah’s words, was there. He was with his brother Jackson, and they were deep in conversation. She watched as he moved to a weight bench, and lay down, Jackson standing behind him to spot him.

Eve's mouth watered as Luke lifted the weight bar, his forearms and biceps rippling under the strain. Eve went to wipe her mouth, sure she was drooling, and instead choked on her own saliva. She tried to cough delicately, but was soon red in the face and coughing loudly, drawing attention to herself and her now beet red face. She tried to hide behind a laughing Sarah, who was doing nothing to help her. Eve soon felt the warmth of Luke, his heat radiating behind her. Her arms were lifted in the air and she was pulled back into his solid chest, so her back was resting against him.

“Just take a breath,” Luke rumbled in her ear, as she struggled to lower her arms. He resisted her attempts. “This opens the lungs so you’ll stop coughing,” he said as he slowly lowered her arms, his large hands grazing her breasts as he steadied her, keeping her close to his chest.

Eve's breathing slowed and embarrassment flooded her at the thought of everyone at the gym watching them. She turned her head to see, but found no one was staring at her, which was good as she was now on fire from Luke's touch. She was pretty sure he was also developing some dark feelings towards her, if the hard length of steel jutting into her back was anything to go by.

*Holy big penis. That's a lot of man.*

Eve groaned. She finally got Luke to notice and touch her and she chokes. On thin air.

*I'm an idiot.*

Eve went to move away, but Luke held her in place. “Just let me get my body under control,” he whispered in her ear. “It had a reaction to you and I don’t particularly like the thought of everyone else seeing it.”

“Really? This isn’t a habit for you.” Eve said, trying to make light of the situation. “Maybe if we walk around the corner, out of sight. It might be better.”

Luke hissed in her ear as she went to move. “Slowly,” he said as his hand pushed her hip into his thighs and they walked slowly around a corner away from the others.

“Come to the wedding with me,” Eve blurted out before the spell was broken.

“I wasn’t going to let you go with anyone else,” Luke said as he shifted against her, his erection pressing into her.

Eve sucked in a deep breath.

*This is it. Just turn around and kiss him.*

The cool air drifted over Eve’s back. She went to turn to kiss him but all she saw was his back as he walked away from her.

*I will get him naked, she thought smiling. At least I know he wants me too.*

# Eve



A week later, Kane and Sarah's wedding day arrived. Eve was so excited to see her friend get married, and she felt so lucky that the brothers had included her in their family. Eve had also become close to Elsie and John, the caretakers, of the ranch. They kept the boys' fridges full and on track and spent time with each brother and gave advice when they needed it.

Eve was nervous about seeing Luke. She had felt something sizzle between them, evident by his reaction to her at the gym. She had been trying so hard for him to notice her, now she was finally going to get to touch him again.

*And I plan on touching him a lot.*

Eve didn't know why Luke was a little standoffish with her. She didn't think it was because of her looks or size, knowing she was larger than most women. In fact, she was pretty sure Luke liked that about her, and that she was so confident with it. Eve loved her body and would never be with anyone again that belittled her for being larger. Her ex had done that for

many years, until finally she left. Going to the shelter and finding Sarah was the best move she had ever made. Eve had blossomed under Sarah's friendship.

She ran her hands over her emerald dress, noticing the dress swayed with her hips as she walked, exposing her knees and thighs as the dress flared around her. She loved the feel of the silky fabric on her body and with a close fit sleeveless bodice and flirty skirt, she knew she looked good. Eve had left her hair loose, pulling a lock over her shoulder to contrast her dark hair with the dress.

“What do you think Fred?” she asked her cat skulking in the corner. “Am I getting lucky tonight?”

Fred growled seconds before a knock sounded at the door.

“Be nice,” she chastised Fred as she opened the door to Luke who took her breath away.

The tuxedo fit him firmly across his broad shoulders and large biceps, but hugged his narrow waist, before the slim fit of his dress pants showed off his impressive muscles bulging under his pants. Eve peeked a quick glance at his groin and was disappointed that the jacket covered up what she really wanted to see.

She looked up into Luke's deep whiskey-coloured eyes before twirling before him.

“What do you think?” she asked, fishing for compliments but didn't care.



Luke's lips curved into a half smile as he appraised Eve. Eve knew he liked what he saw, and that she was going to make him beg for it.

*Although I kind of want to just have him, just so he knows what he is missing.*

"You are." Luke gulped. "You're perfect." He said as she slipped her hand in his and shut the door behind her. They slowly walked the short distance to join the other brothers and guests.

Elsie and John had outdone themselves with bright red and yellow flowers dripping off arches contrasting to the white wooden chairs. The sun glimmered off the silver vases holding white peonies lining the walkway for Sarah, who looked stunning in her simple white shift dress and sandals. The perfect outfit for her.

The wedding ceremony was short before Kane gave his new bride a resounding kiss and the brothers shook off their suit jackets, ready to have some fun. Eve watched as Luke rolled up the sleeve of his white shirt, exposing his sun kissed forearms.

*This is like watching porn. Forearm porn.*

Eve had seen Luke's forearms daily but for some reason seeing him in suit pants and the white shirt made her mouth water. Her hand twitched at the thought of running her fingers over his forearms and stepping into his embrace.

*And that's what I'm going to do.*

Eve stepped closer to Luke and held her hand out. “Dance with me?” she asked as the others started to take to the small makeshift dance floor. She could feel Luke’s gaze on her as she took his hand and led him to the outskirts of the floor, before placing his hand on her ample hip and she stepped closer to him. She heard his intake of breath and smiled, knowing he was having the same reaction to her as she was to him. “Can you dance?” she asked, before Luke gently pushed her away and swung her around, before gathering her close again.

“I know how to dance Eve,” he growled in her ear and she felt his hands grip her hips tighter. “And I like to lead.”

*Holy Moly. He likes to take charge. I’m in heaven.*

Eve ran her hand up his forearms, one hand resting on his chest over his heart. She felt it thumping against her fingers, the tempo speeding up as her other hand dipped lower over his hip.

“You need to stop touching me.” Luke said, his voice sounding gravelly as if strained.

Eve tilted her face to his, watching his eyes glare down at her.

“Give me one reason why,” she teased, not at all afraid of him.

Luke pulled her against him, his erection hard against Eve’s stomach. Eve smiled as she shimmied, her eyes growing wide as she felt him twitch against her, his heat burning into her.

“Stop fucking moving,” Luke growled. “I feel as if I’m going to bust out of these pants.”

Eve gave a throaty laugh. “That’s a bit presumptuous, considering we haven’t even kissed yet.” She said as her hand wandered to his waistband.

“That’s it,” Luke said, before his hands circled her waist and he picked her up and marched off the dancefloor towards his house.

“I’ve thought of you in my bed every night for the last few weeks. Its about time I joined you there.” Luke said, closing the gap to his house in quick time.

“I can walk you know,” Eve laughed as he continued to carry her.

“I needed a shield to hide my..”

Eve laughed out loud again. “Your very large erection that was poking me in the stomach?”

“I’m glad you think it’s very large,” he said as Eve heard the teasing in his voice.

“Looks like I’m about to find out,” Eve said as they finally reached the porch and he set her down gently. Eve went to open the door as Luke bent down to claim her with their first kiss.

“What the?” he called out as he pulled back in pain as he saw an orange blur climb his pant leg and cling onto his back, Fred’s claws digging in deep before Fred let out a deep yowl in annoyance.

“Fred!” Eve said as she tried to pry Fred off Luke’s back, seeing the white shirt turn crimson as Fred’s claws cut deep. Fred finally let go, taking a final swipe at Luke’s forearm leaving five deep red lines in his wake.

“I’m so sorry Luke. I don’t know what’s got into Fred tonight.”

Luke glared at the cat.

Eve sighed. “Maybe we should call it a night. The mood is broken now.”

Eve could clearly see Luke didn’t like the idea, but watched as he nodded before bending down to try to kiss her goodnight. Fred’s hiss had him stepping back again, as Eve sighed.

“We will pick this up again Luke. When the time is right.”

Luke went to turn away but Eve grabbed his shirt, scrunching it under her hand. ‘I want you Luke. Make no mistake about that. My body wants you. But now is obviously not the time,’ she said as Fred continued to hiss at Luke’s proximity to Eve.

Luke growled at Fred, before nodding and walking off, Eve knowing Luke would be under her soon.

Eve shut the door softly behind her, her body screaming at the thought of what they should be doing right now if they weren’t interrupted.

# Luke



Two days later, Luke watched as Eve walked into the gym, her dark hair pulled back into a tight ponytail. She wore her usual leggings and a loose grey t-shirt that she'd stolen from Luke. One that he left discarded on the porch that morning when she was delivering one of her apple pies.

Luke's hands sweated at the thought of his scent mingling with hers on the soft material. He watched as she glanced around, apprehension flickering behind her eyes as if searching for him among the rows of equipment.

Luke could see two of his brothers, Alex and Ethan, walk up to Eve and start to talk to her. A wave of anger coursed through him at the thought of someone else moving in on her. Rationally, he knew his brothers already thought of Eve's as his, but he had yet to convince Eve.

"Hey, Eve," Luke called out, his gruff voice tinged with warmth. He stood by the free weights, his broad shoulders flexing as he set down a dumbbell. Beads of sweat glistened on his skin, clinging to his tattoos.

“Hi, Luke,” she replied. She smiled goodbye to Alex and Ethan and approached him, Luke feeling his pulse quicken as he took in her impressive curves.

“Need some help to get started?” he asked, his eyes locking onto hers with an intensity that made Luke see a soft blush starting to form on her neck.

Luke wondered if she had the same thoughts of wanting to strip naked and him nuzzling into her softness right then and there.

Luke released a deep breath, letting it out slowly as his mind raced with thoughts of her. He couldn't help but feel a surge of possessive pride knowing she was wearing his t-shirt. But the sight of her so close, her curves outlined by the clinging fabric, sent a wave of lust coursing through him. He fought to keep his emotions in check, the turmoil inside him threatening to overwhelm his carefully maintained composure.

“Alright, let's start with some stretching,” he said, forcing himself to concentrate on the task at hand. As they stretched side by side, he couldn't help but steal glances at her, drinking in the sight of her lithe form as she moved gracefully through each position.

As they worked together, Luke's thoughts drifted to what he wanted more than anything—to kiss her, drink her in until she moaned against him and then make her his. He wanted to lean in close, desperate to feel her skin against his, his mouth on her wetness.

“Luke?” Eve’s voice brought him crashing back to reality, his face flushed with embarrassment as he realized he’d lost himself in his fantasies.

“Uh, sorry,” he grunted, rubbing the back of his neck awkwardly. “I just... got lost in thought for a second.”

“I hope it was good thought. Of me. Maybe the same as I was thinking of doing to you.” she asked grinning at his response. “Are you okay? You looked flushed.”

Luke groaned.

“Are you in pain? Do you need me to rub something for you?” Eve teased

“Christ woman, you are killing me. I’m trying to be a gentleman.”

“Are you about done, because I don’t want a gentleman. I want a man, preferably you.” Eve hesitated. “In fact, only you Luke,” she said as she touched his chest, her finger drawing a line across his chest to his bicep.

“Don’t play with fire Eve.” Luke growled as he pulled her to him, bending down to whisper in her ear. “It’s a crowded place but it won’t stop me from fucking you here. I’m not nice once you antagonise me Eve.”

Eve moaned as his hand swept over her breasts and his finger ran over her waistband. “This feels like the longest foreplay in the history of the world, but from what I’m feeling,” Eve said as her hand grazed his hard length, “it will so be worth it.”

Luke pushed Eve away, his eyes darkening before he replied,  
“let the foreplay begin.”



# Eve



**E**ve couldn't help but steal glances at Luke as they continued their workout, her thoughts straying to the way his muscles flexed beneath his damp T-shirt. She kept waiting for him to make his move, her body aware of his every movement. Eve was excited she had met her match with Luke. He liked to play as much as she did, but now she felt they were circling each other, waiting for the one to pounce first. The sweat on his brow and the determined look in his eyes only fuelled the fire of her attraction, making it difficult to focus on her own exercise routine.

*Enough. Its time to make him sweat.*

“Hey, do you think you could give me a hand with the weights?” Eve asked, her heart racing at the prospect of being so close to him.

Luke grinned, trying to sound casual. “What do you need help with? Do *you* need *me* to rub something now?”

*This foreplay is killing me.*

“Um, yes and also no,” she said, licking her lower lip, grinning when she heard the soft groan of Luke. She gestured at the array of dumbbells before them. “What one first?”

“Start light and work our way up,” he suggested, picking up a pair of five-pound weights and handing them to her. “We’ll begin with some bicep curls.”

“Thanks,” Eve murmured, taking the weights from him and trying to ignore the electric shock that ran through her fingers when they brushed against his.

Eve couldn’t help but daydream about how good Luke would feel pressed against her, his strong arms wrapped around her body. She imagined the taste of his lips, the heat of his skin, and the intensity of his gaze as he whispered sweet nothings in her ear. The thought sent shivers down her spine, and she found herself struggling to maintain her grip on the weights.

“Let me help you with your form,” Luke offered, Eve growing wet at the predatory gleam he gave her as he moved closer to her. He adjusted her stance, his hands spanning her belly, sliding lower. Eve couldn’t help but tremble under his touch. Every point of contact felt like a spark threatening to explode within her.

“I told you not to play with fire Eve,” Luke growled as his hand skimmed her hip as he pretended to adjust her stance again. “I could touch you all night. Taste you. Lick you, worship you. Make you mine.”

Eve could feel the wetness pooling between her legs at his words.

“Big words and no action again,” she teased as she pushed back into him. “So until you are ready to put some heat behind those words, let’s just keep playing.” Her voice barely above a whisper, she continued. “Until you eventually fuck me that is.” She could hear Luke take a deep breath and hiss behind her, as wiggled back into him.

“Such a dirty mouth on you,” Luke grunted as Eve pushed further back into him. “I can think of a few others ways for you to use that mouth instead.”

Eve reached back and wrapped her hand around his cock. ‘I can too,” she smiled.

The heavy clang of weights hitting the floor punctuated the charged atmosphere between Luke and Eve. Sweat glistened on their skin. The air seemed thick with unspoken need, making it difficult for either of them to breathe.

“Im enjoying the foreplay too much to stop. Let’s try one more set,” Luke suggested, his voice husky with suppressed emotion. “But this time, I want you to focus on your breathing.”

“Okay,” Eve nodded, trying to ignore the shivers that danced along her spine as Luke moved closer, positioning himself behind her. As she bent down to pick up the weights, she felt him press up against her, his arousal unmistakable.

“Ready?” he asked, barely able to contain the tremor in his voice. She could tell he was struggling just as much as she was.

“Yes,” she replied, gritting her teeth as she tried to maintain her composure.

“Good,” he breathed into her ear, setting off a new series of goose bumps. “Now, inhale as you lift the weights, and exhale as you lower them.”

They began the set, each repetition bringing them closer to the breaking point as Luke's hand was firm against Eve's ribcage, his splayed fingers trouncing her breasts each time she moved. Her body now screamed for a release.

Eve could feel her nipples pucker. Every touch from Luke shot through her body, as she felt the heat surge between her legs. She knew he reacted to her as well, with every small groan she heard as she found a reason to be close to him. His erection was evident and her mouth watered at the sight of the bulge that was growing by the minute.

*This was it. No more playing.*

“Luke, I—” Eve started to say, but her words were cut short as he interrupted her.

“Fuck this,” Luke growled. Without waiting for a response, he grabbed her hand and led her around the corner, away from prying eyes.

In the dimly lit corridor, any thoughts of continuing the foreplay evaporated. Luke pulled Eve close, capturing her lips

in a rough kiss that soon deepened into something more. She opened her mouth to allow his tongue to flick into hers, her groan loud as she tried to pull him closer. Her hands roamed over his muscular back, feeling the ridges of his scars beneath the damp fabric of his shirt.

“Luke,” she murmured against his lips, her breath hitching as his hands slid up her sides, roughly touching and kneading her body through her clothes. She could feel the heat radiating off him, threatening to consume them both.

“Fuck, Eve, I want you so badly,” he confessed, his voice thick with need. “But we can’t—not here.”

“Yes, here,” she gasped as his fingers skimmed over her breasts.

“Fuck it,” Luke growled before his hand dipped into her tights. “Fuck,” he said as he touched her, Eve pressing into his fingers, angry at the barrier of her panties.

“More,” Eve begged, knowing she was close. But just as Luke pulled her panties aside and plunge a thick calloused fingers into her, the sound of footsteps echoing in the hallway reached their ears.

“Luke? Eve?” called a familiar voice—Luke’s brother, Alex, no doubt searching for them. They froze, their hearts pounding in unison as they reluctantly separated and Eve readjusted her clothing and she watched as Luke’s eyes grew dark as he licked her off his fingers.

“Fucking sweet,” he growled before he called back to his brother.

“Holy mother,” Eve said. “That was so hot.”

“Not yet little one, but it soon will be. I want my mouth on you, to drink more of that sweetness.”

Eve could hear Alex getting closer and started to readjust her clothing.

“Coming!” Luke called back; his voice strained as he pushed away from Eve, quickly heading towards the sound of his brother’s voice.

Eve leaned against the wall, her chest heaving as she tried to catch her breath, the lingering taste of Luke on her lips a sweet torment.

“That’s it. It’s time to make him mine,” she muttered as she gathered her things. And then she remembered the locked room.

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Eve rushed home, her hands trembling as she searched the kitchen draws for something to open the door. Finally, she held a small screwdriver up and smiled.

*This will do.*

Eve was adept at unlocking doors. She taught herself after her ex kept her locked in a cupboard for punishment for some

small thing that he said she had done. She preferred the confined space to his fists though.

Eve lifted the small flat edged knife from her dress and started to wiggle it down the edge of the door, while she wiggled the small screwdriver in the lock. She heard the lock turn and smiled, happy that she hadn't forgotten the skill.

She took a deep breath, preparing herself for whatever she might find and opened the door. Her eyes adjusted quickly to the darkened room as her hand found the light switch.

Eve gasped as she took in the room. Every wall was filled with bookcases, overflowing with books. Eve ran her fingers over the glossy, colorful spines of the books, knowing that these meant something to him. There was not a speck of dust in the room. He treasured these books, some with notes spilling from them. She walked over to the large leather chair and small table sitting next to it, with a book open. That's when Eve realised what sort of books she was looking at.

Romance. Smut and spice books.

Eve smiled at the thought of Luke, his large muscular form easing into the chair and picking up a romance book, scribbling notes as he went.

Who would have thought that books were his kink.

*And hopefully not his only one.*

Eve smiled.

*He won't walk away from me again.*

# Luke



Luke stood leaning against the window frame of The Book Nook, with a steaming cup of coffee in hand. His eyes tracked Eve who was strolling down the sidewalk across the street, her hips swayed gently with each step. Her quirky smile and infectious laughter echoed in his mind. He could feel the heat of her against him, her lips on his.

His hand tingled at the thought of touching her again. He knew he could have made her come there and then at the gym. She was so wet, so close. But since then they hadn't had a moment alone.

*Fucking Alex.*

But Alex had come to let them know Eve's ex had been granted bail and Alex was concerned he might come to the property looking for Eve. Luke hoped that he would, knowing exactly what to do with the body once he found him.

*No one messes with my Eve.*



“Damn it,” he muttered under his breath, taking a sip of his now lukewarm coffee.

“Alright then,” he murmured, rolling up the sleeves of his flannel shirt to reveal the intricate ink work on his forearms. He grabbed his pen and a worn leather notebook from the counter.

He knew he had work to do to win Eve over.

All his books said to do a grand gesture. Something that left no doubt in the mind of the woman that the man loved her.

*Loved? Yes. Loved.*

As he began jotting down more ideas for the gesture, Luke could feel his confidence growing. He knew that if he could just show Eve how much he cared, how deeply he understood the language of love, maybe she’d see past his rough exterior and want to spend a life with him. Not just a night.

Now he just had to deal with the cat as well.

“Hey Luke!” Sarah, Eve’s best friend, called from the doorway, startling him out of his thoughts. “What are you working on?”

“Uh, nothing,” he stammered, slamming the notebook shut. “Just, you know, some ideas for the bookstore.”

“Right,” Sarah said, her eyes narrowing as she looked at him sceptically. “Well, I’m off to see Eve.” She waited for a response but Luke just grunted.

“Alright, I’ll catch you later then,” Sarah said, giving him a knowing smile before disappearing down the street.

“Okay, time for action,” Luke muttered, ignoring the butterflies in his stomach. He reopened his notebook, his pen dancing across the pages as he crafted more ideas for the gesture. He knew he had to combine her love of cooking in the plan. As he looked around his store a plan formed. One that would tie them together for both of their loves.

*A coffee shop. Bakery!*

He had the space and the money to outfit the back of the shop as a small bakery and coffee shop. His customers loved her cooking as much as he did. Then he would see Eve every day.

*And hopefully every night.*

“Fuck,” Luke muttered as his thoughts turned to scenarios between him and Eve. The scenes between them hot and steamy as he thought of every dirty act he wanted to do to Eve. He felt his body respond but then had a cold realisation.

“But first I have to date her,” Luke muttered as he opened his book to a fresh page and started to jot down ideas for the ideal first date.

“Plan. Implement. Action.” That’s what he was taught in the military and it might serve him just as well to win over Eve. “But that also means making friends with the damn cat also.”

*Fuck, I’m becoming soft. If my brothers could see me now they would have a field day.*

*But she is worth it.*

# Eve



“Honey, all men need to think things through on their own.” Elsie said as she patted Eve’s knee.

Eve looked at her crowded lounge room. She had asked each brother and Elsie to meet with her about what to do about her ex and Luke. Eve knew she only had about an hour until he finished his morning run and she didn’t want him involved in this.

“This is my problem and not anyone else’s,” she said again to the group. “My ex won’t want to harm anyone else except me. And I’m now ready for him.” She said as the brothers started to grumble. “What?” she said in frustration to the group.

Alex stepped forward. “Like it or not, you are now family and your problem is now also ours.”

Eve went to respond but was interrupted by Jackson. “This is our business Eve. This is what we do. We will find him and take care of it.”

Eve paled. “By take care of it, you mean..?”

“Put him back in prison. That’s all. Look Maya knows some people on the force. She’ll be able to talk to someone who can help. I’ll call her today.”

“So, you have been spending time with Maya then?” Elsie asked, her eyebrows raised.

“We’re getting off track,” Jackson said as he grinned at Elsie. “I’ll arrange it today and we’ll all keep an eye on you until we find him.”

“Can you find him fast?” Eve asked. “I don’t want Luke to think he has to be a protector for me. That is not the role I want him playing.”

Alex gave a loud laugh. “You’re on your own there Eve, but I can say with certainty that Luke has met his match in you.”

Eve grinned. “Now let’s find my douchebag ex so I can get back to winning Luke over.” She said as the brothers and Elsie chuckled and wished her luck as they left.

Elsie hung back to talk privately with Eve. “I’ll talk to the boy. I’ll make him see that he needs to be close to keep you safe. That should give you time enough to make your move.” Elsie chuckled. “I miss being young. Especially around these fine lads. You’ve picked yourself a good one Eve. He just needs to relax enough to see it.”

“I can help him there,” Eve said as she gave Elsie a hug before shutting the door. “I can’t wait to help him with that.”

# Luke



“Okay,” Luke whispered, “I can do this.” He knocked on the door, his heart pounding in his chest.

Elsie had talked to Luke the day before and told him he was being an idiot for not getting busy with Eve. For not taking care of his woman. Luke knew she was telling the truth but he felt like a dick for not following through with his plan to date her. He was knee deep in getting the shop fixed up for her that he lost sight of the fact that he needed to win her over first.

*Now here I am.*

The door swung open, revealing Eve standing there with a surprised expression. Her dark hair was pulled back in her usual ponytail, and her eyes sparkled with curiosity.

“You’re up early.” she said, eyeing the gifts in his hands.

“Couldn’t sleep,” Luke admitted gruffly, his gaze never leaving hers. He felt a shiver run down his spine as their eyes locked, the intensity of their connection sending a jolt through him.

“Me neither,” Eve confessed, a gentle smile playing at the corners of her lips.

“Um, I just wanted to stop by and say hello,” he said in a low voice, taking note of Fred lurking nearby, his green eyes narrowed suspiciously at Luke. “And, uh, I brought you these.”

“Wow, thank you!” Eve said, genuinely touched as she accepted the flowers and chocolates. “Come in!”

As Luke stepped into the living room, he couldn’t help but feel like he was entering enemy territory as Fred watched him closely from the corner of the room, his bushy tail flicking back and forth.

“Fred sure seems to be keeping an eye on me,” Luke mumbled, trying to sound nonchalant.

Eve laughed. “Yeah, don’t worry, he’ll warm up to you eventually.”

“Really?” Luke asked, attempting to hide his apprehension as his felt his past wounds from Fred start to tingle.

“Of course,” Eve reassured him, her smile melting away doubts. “You just have to give him time.”

“Yeah, but how much time?” Luke grumbled, determined to win over both Fred and Eve. He crouched down and extended his hand towards the ginger cat, a friendly gesture he had read about in one of the many cat behavior books.

“Here, Fred,” he coaxed gently. “I’m not so bad.”

Fred stared at him for a moment, considering the outstretched hand before him. Luke held his breath. The books said a non-threatening stance and to extend a hand.

*Here it goes.*

Hoping against hope that this small gesture would be enough to win the cat over, Luke stepped toward the cat. Suddenly, Fred hissed and swiped at Luke's hand with lightning-fast reflexes, narrowly catching the tips of his fingers. Luke yanked his hand back, frustration simmering beneath the surface.

"Ouch," he muttered under his breath, rubbing his stinging hand. "Okay, maybe it'll take a bit more effort than I thought."

"Sorry about that," Eve said, her face falling. "I promise, he's really a sweet cat once you get to know him."

She hesitated for a moment before asking, "Do you want to go for a walk? Maybe clear our heads? I don't think the gym is a good idea, considering last time it got a bit...overheated."

*Overheated? I nearly fucked her against the wall!*

Luke agreed, knowing that he would feel heated around her wherever they were.

"Let's go to my porch. Then we'll have some privacy." Luke suggested. They began to walk side by side, the morning sun casting warm golden light upon them.

"Luke?" Eve's voice pulled him back to the present. He looked at her, noticing the vulnerability in her eyes. "Luke, I..." Eve hesitated, then bit her lip, looking away. "I can't keep



pretending like my heart isn't racing every time I'm near you." She gave a small laugh. "And let's face it, you already know my body responds to you."

"And mine to you," he admitted, taking her hand in his, feeling the warmth of her skin against his. Their eyes locked, and Luke knew he had to take his chance. Eve could be his finally.

"Would you like to come in and see what I've done so far?" Luke offered, trying to ease the tension building between them as they wandered towards the house he was fixing for her.

Eve nodded. "Very much so."

Her words sent a shiver down his spine as he realized what she was implying. He couldn't help but feel a surge of desire course through his veins.

"Are you nervous?" Eve asked gently, sensing his hesitation.

"Truth be told, I am," he admitted, his voice barely above a whisper. "I want this to be perfect for you."

"Perfection is overrated," she said with a reassuring smile. "What matters is that we're here, together."

Their eyes locked, and he took a deep breath, trying to steady himself as he reached out to brush a stray lock of hair from her face.

"I need you Eve. But I don't want to hurt you. Physically we don't match" he said, his voice husky with desire.

“I’m not delicate Luke. You don’t have to ask me. I’m ready. You know I want you.”

Luke pulled her into his arms, a low growl radiating through him as he went to lower his lips to hers.

And then he heard it.

“Fuck,” he muttered.

Eve also frowned as she heard his brothers call over to them as they walked towards them. Luke stepping back, creating a chasm between them. One Luke planned to close very soon.

“What the fuck brother?” Luke snarled as his brothers approached.

“Eve’s ex has been found on the property.” Alex started.

“I’ll fucking kill him.” Luke growled, his hands clenching at his side.

“He’s been taken care of now. Ethan and Kane have him in the house and I’ve called Maya’s friend in the police. She is on her way to arrest him.” Jackson said, placing a hand on Luke’s shoulder to calm him. “It’s done brother. Its over. He won’t be a problem again,” Jackson said to both Eve and Luke.

Eve stepped forward and hugged Jackson. “Thank you. Can you thank Maya for me too please?”

Jackson nodded. “I’m going back to help. You two stay out here, Talk. Calm down. It’s over.”

Eve and Luke watched the others walk away, Eve slumping slightly against Luke who tightened his arm round her. “Are

you okay?” he asked gently.

Eve smiled up at him before raising herself on tiptoes and placing a soft kiss on his lips. “I am now. Can you take me home?”

Luke took Eve back to her place. Elsie was waiting for her when they arrived and took Eve inside, patting Luke on the arm. “Maybe leave us for now Luke. I’ll make sure she is okay.” Elsie said before Luke nodded and walked away, wondering if he and Eve would ever have their chance.

# Luke



**E**ve stood outside the bookstore, peering through the window at Luke, her heart aching. It was like they just couldn't get their timing right. Lately, he had spent more and more time there, absorbed in his books, and she couldn't understand why. Her fingers nervously toyed with her ponytail as she watched him scribble in his notebook. Taking a deep breath, she pushed open the door and strode in, her footsteps echoing off the wooden floor.

"Luke," she called out softly, trying to catch his attention without startling him. He looked up, surprised with a hint of embarrassment flickering across his face.

"Hey, Eve," he said gruffly, hastily closing the book and shoving it aside. "What brings you here?"

"Is everything okay?" she asked gently, folding her arms across her chest, unconsciously shielding herself. "You've been spending a lot of time here lately."

“Everything’s fine,” he replied, avoiding her gaze. “Just... trying to catch up on some reading, that’s all.”

“Reading?” she echoed skeptically, her eyes narrowing as she glanced at the discarded novel. “It looked like you were writing. Can I look?”

Luke tried to push his book aside, but Eve was too quick and grabbed the book, flicking it open to where he had written his last passage.

“Is this us?” Eve asked, her mouth forming an O as she read more. “Or more specifically, is this me and what you want to do to me?”

Eve began to read from his notebook:

*I have her on her knees as she slowly swallows every inch I give her. The line between pleasure and pain blurs as her teeth run over the soft skin of my cock. I watch as her eyes widen as I grow more engorged, my hand captures her head to hold her still as I surge into her mouth.*

Luke hesitated, his fingers tapping rhythmically against the table as he weighed his response.

“Look,” he began, taking a deep breath. “I’m not good with words, Eve. You know that. I thought... oh fuck. I don’t know what thought.”

“I’m liking what I’m reading so far,” Eve breathed out slowly. “This is something I really want to do.”

Luke stood and stalked towards her. “Don’t tease me Eve.”

Eve stood on tip toe as she reached up and nipped Luke's lower lip. "I'm not teasing. I like what I've read but I'm going to love acting it out for you." Eve hesitated. "I'm ready now Luke. I'm wet and ready. Let's *finally* do this."

Eve reached down and circled her hand around his erection, stroking him through his jeans.

"I'm going to explode like a teenager if you don't stop that." he said quietly, grasping her hand tightly as he moved it in the rhythm he liked.

Luke stopped and cupped her chin in his hand. "I plan on taking my time with you Eve. I can still taste you on my fingers. That's a taste I want more of."

Eve whimpered as Luke's hand thrust into her pants only to find her bare to him.

"No underwear?" he groaned as he stroked her wetness.

"I thought I would try something different." She smiled against him as she ran her hand up his length, wanting more. "God Luke. Stop teasing me." Eve gave a soft moan as his hand ran up her back and grazed her breast. "Take me home now."

"Fuck, I need you naked." Luke picked her up and stalked out to his car, where he quickly deposited her into the passenger seat as he jumped in, ready to take them back to the ranch.

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Luke grunted; his gaze fixated on the road as he felt Eve's hand stroke his thigh. Eve turned in her seat, her hand growing bolder as she stroked him harder through his jeans, Luke worried the zipper wouldn't hold much longer. He held his breath as her hand tugged at his button, Eve whispering a soft, "there," when it pulled free, allowing her to slowly undo his zip.

Luke growled as her hand hovered over him, but didn't say anything, waiting for Eve to do the exploring.

"Luke, I need to taste you," Eve whispered, her voice cracking under the weight of her emotions. She couldn't bring herself to look at him.

"Fuck it," Luke growled out as he stopped the car and pushed his seat back.

Luke pulled Eve onto him so she straddled him, her legs falling open over his lap.

Luke inhaled deeply, as he felt her heat against him, smiling that she was as turned on as he was.

He reached up to brush a stray strand of hair away from her face, his heart thumping wildly in his chest. Eve reached down and freed him from his jeans. He hissed through his teeth as he ran his hands up her thighs.

Luke growled as he captured Eve's lips with his, opening her mouth with his tongue before invading her mouth, exploring as his hands roamed over her body. Eve was squirming against him, panting that she wanted more.

*This is not the place for this,* Luke thought as he broke from Eve.

“Don’t you dare pull away,” Eve snapped as she drew him to her again. “Finish what we started Luke. Finish me.”

“I don’t have protection with me Eve.”

Eve moaned as she ground herself against him. “Please?” she moaned.

Luke crashed his lips to Eve’s as he shifted onto his thigh, thrusting two fingers in to her in one move.

“Yes,” Eve cried out as she moved with him, both of them frantic as they tore at each other, sweat mingling before Eve gave a loud moan and collapsed against his chest as Luke tried to collect himself.

Eve wiped a bead of sweat running down his forehead. “Now let’s finish you also,” she said as her hand went to wrap around him.

“You are some woman,” Luke said as he kissed the side of her neck, as he removed her hand. “But I can wait. I just needed to see you fall apart. Just once. The next time I’ll be buried deep inside you as you call my name.”

“I’m your woman,” she answered as she leant back and took in his hooded eyes.

“All mine,” Luke agreed before he kissed her deeply,

“Come on,” Luke said, his voice husky with need. “Let’s go home.”



“Home,” Eve echoed, her heart swelling at the simple yet powerful word. She looked at Luke, “Even better is home and nakedness.”

Luke’s laughter boomed out around as he held her closer, wondering how he got so lucky.

# Eve



Eve was trembling as she followed Luke into the house. “I feel like we have waited forever for this,” she breathed as she stood in front of him.

“You’re fucking perfect.” Luke said gently, his large hands fumbling slightly as he moved to unbutton her blouse. The need in his voice added an unexpected intimacy to the moment.

Eve smiled, her dark eyes shining with trust. “Luke, there’s no rush ...go slow,” she whispered, feeling a tremor of anticipation run through her body.

“Slow it is,” he murmured, placing a tender kiss on her collarbone as he carefully undid each button, exposing the delicate skin beneath. His fingers traced the curve of her shoulders, making her shiver with want.

“Your turn,” she said softly, reaching for the hem of his shirt and slowly lifting it up over his head. As his tattoos came into view, the scars underneath seemed to tell a story of resilience

that only made her care for him more deeply. She allowed her fingertips to graze the inked lines, feeling the heat of his body beneath them.

“Does it hurt?” she asked hesitantly, not wanting to cause him any discomfort.

“Only when I forget they’re there,” he replied, his voice tinged with a hint of sadness. “But right now, all I feel is you.”

“Good,” she said, and pressed her lips to one of the intricate designs on his chest, feeling his heart leap beneath her touch.

They continued to undress each other slowly, savoring every new revelation of skin and sensation. They were finally bare to one another, both physically and emotionally.

“Fuck Eve. I’ve want to be inside you forever,” Luke said, his eyes seeking hers for any signs of doubt or fear.

“Luke,” she gasped, arching into his touch as he expertly flicked her peaked nipple, the sensation of pain and pleasure flooding her body.

“Your body is beautiful,” Luke murmured, tracing a finger over one of the marks on her skin, a gentle reminder of the strength she’d found to survive her previous relationship.

“Yours too,” Eve replied.

Luke pulled Eve over her on the bed. He sat on the edge, his hands cupping her bottom as she stood in front of his spread legs. Eve reached down and ran a finger over his swollen cock. Her finger wiping the fluid leaking from his tip before

bringing a trembling finger to her lips to lick it off, her eyes closing at the taste.

“Fuck,” Luke said, his hand tracing over her nipples and down towards her sex, glistening before him.

“I’ve changed my mind,” Eve said as he bent his head to taste her. “I don’t want slow. I want rough. I want it quick and dirty. I want you now Luke.”

“After I’ve had my fill,” Luke growled as his hands spread her legs wide, his tongue swiping over her core.

He held her in place as she squirmed against him, his hand, huge, broad and warm rested over her hips, moving in only the slightest of caressing motions

Luke’s fingers replaced his tongue.

*God, even his fingers are huge.*

Her stomach muscles still quivered and clenched at the thought of how large he would be inside her again. And she wanted it now.

“Luke?”

Luke looked up; Eve’s question silenced when she saw the look of raw pleasure on his face. Luke ran his hands up Eve’s thighs.

Eve could hear Luke whisper to her, before sliding his hands under her ass and lifting Eve so she straddled him.

Heat bloomed over her as her legs settled around his waist.

Luke positioned his cock pressing into Eve's entrance and she gasped.

"Protection," he grunted as Eve could feel him try to restrain himself.

"Not needed," was all Eve got out before Luke straightened, lifted her and drove straight into her.

Eve cried out. The line between pain and pleasure blurred while she struggled to take him all. Eve bit her lip before Luke gathered her to him and flipped them so Eve was on her back, before Luke thrust into her again.

"Will I stop?" Luke asked, his voice raspy, as he pulled back again.

"Fuck no," Eve cried out as he thrust into her, her body adapting to his size as the pleasure built inside her.

"Give it to me," Luke whispered in her ear. "Let go."

His words set Eve off as she lost control and arched into him more as he continued his onslaught against her body.

His name fell from her lips as she climaxed. Hard. Every time Luke's eyes met hers with each thrust, it felt like a caress. Deep inside her.

Their cries of pleasure mingled with Fred's frustrated howls from beyond the door, but neither paid any heed to the cat's protests. Fred's howls eventually faded into silence, as if even he had accepted that Luke and Eve were now bound together.

Eve screamed Luke's name, her body quivering, her body screaming after her release. Three hard thrusts later and Luke stills as a long groan rumble through his chest. Eve reached up and pulled him close, their foreheads resting on one another, sweat mingling.

*In this bed forever. Luke and me forever.*

# Eve



*L*ife was good. Better than good. It was near perfect.

Eve's heart pounded against her ribcage as she watched Luke move effortlessly through the routine at the gym.

"Earth to Eve!" Sarah exclaimed, snapping her fingers in front of Eve's face. "You're practically drooling."

"Sorry," Eve muttered, wiping her mouth and flicking a strand of dark hair from her eyes. "I can't help it. I want him, Sarah. I want him all the time."

Sarah raised an eyebrow, her curiosity piqued. "Really? You're ready for something long term again?"

"More than ready. I just need the space to see if he is open to the idea." Eve replied, her voice unsteady but determined. She had left her past behind and was ready to embrace a new beginning. And there was no one better to share it with than Luke.

"Alright then." Sarah grinned, mischief glinting in her eyes. "Let's come up with a plan. I know Luke would want more."

He has just convinced himself he's not worth of it for some reason. Come over tonight and we will devise the plan." Sarah wrung her hands in glee at the thought.

Late that night, Eve sat on Sarah's bed later that evening, biting her lip as she listened to her friend outline their strategy. "So, you cook dinner for him at your place and invite him over. The leather couch in your living room is perfect – just imagine the two of you sitting there, watching a movie together."

"Sounds simple enough," Eve said, unable to shake the nerves fluttering in her stomach.

"Trust me, Eve," Sarah reassured her, placing a hand on her shoulder. "Luke may be a grumpy sunshine, but I've seen the way he looks at you. He's in love as well. And besides, you two have so much in common."

"Like what?" Eve asked skeptically.

"Well," Sarah said with a knowing smile. "You both obviously like sex."

"That I do," she grinned at her friend. "And I'm partial to romance novels."

"OMG. You broke in and had a look, didn't you?" Sarah laughed. "Luke would spank your butt for that if he knew."

"Here's hoping," Eve grinned back at her friend, blushing at the thought of Luke bending her over his knee.

*Maybe I can get him to write a scene and I can act it out.*



“Okay,” Eve conceded, her confidence growing. “Dinner and a movie it is. But what should I cook?”

“Something simple yet delicious – like homemade lasagna,” Sarah suggested. “It’s comfort food, perfect for setting a cozy atmosphere. And something that can be left for a few hours in case things escalate between you quickly. You don’t want to stop in the middle just to check the oven.”

“I like the idea of things escalating. Now I’ve had a taste of him, I want everything he has to offer.” Eve agreed, feeling excitement bubble up inside her. The thought of spending an intimate evening with Luke was both thrilling and nerve-racking, at the thought of wanting something more permanent.

“Alright, girl,” Sarah said, clapping her hands together. “Let’s get to work. We’ve got a seduction plan to execute.”

“Do you think he would be open to something more permanent?” Eve asked.

“I think the real question is, are you?” Sarah said. “You have come a long way and I know Luke would look after you in every way. And you have the support of the brothers and Elsie no matter what you do.”

“I’m ready and I need to make him see I’m in this for real.”

“Okay then. Let’s get to it.”

As they began preparing for the big night, Eve couldn’t help but imagine the hot moments that awaited her with Luke. And

she was ready to show him that he was worth every ounce of what she had to give.

# Luke



Luke's heart raced as he read the text from Eve, inviting him over for dinner and a movie. He couldn't help but grin at the thought of spending another intimate evening with her. He just hoped his body didn't continue to respond like a teenager around her. He wanted this night to last.

As he stood in front of the mirror, he adjusted his shirt collar, trying to look presentable without appearing overly eager.

"Get it together, man," he muttered to himself, taking a deep breath. "She likes you. Just be yourself."

Upon arriving at Eve's place, Luke was greeted by the delicious aroma of homemade lasagna wafting through the air. His stomach growled in anticipation as he followed her inside, where candles flickered and soft music played in the background.

"Wow, this looks amazing," he said, admiring the cozy atmosphere she had created. "You really went all out."

Eve blushed and tucked a strand of dark hair behind her ear. “I wanted tonight to be special,” she admitted. “Do you want to go to the lounge room while we wait?”

*I'd rather the bedroom,* Luke thought as he tried to control his body and followed her, watching her hips sway, imagining his hands pulling her against him.

As they settled on the leather couch, Fred, Eve's ginger cat, sauntered into the room and perched on the armrest, eyeing Luke warily. He tried not to let the felines presence bother him, focusing instead on the warmth of Eve's body beside him.

“Ready for the movie?” she asked, picking up the remote.

“Absolutely”, Luke replied, his heart pounding as he prepared to make his move.

Seizing the moment, he attempted to slide his arm around her, only for Fred to suddenly leap onto his lap, claws digging into his thigh. He winced but forced a smile, determined not to let the cat ruin their evening.

*Thank God it wasn't any higher.*

“Fred, behave,” Eve scolded, trying to coax the cat away. “I'm sorry about that, Luke.”

“No worries,” he assured her through gritted teeth, mentally cursing the Son of Satan's impeccable timing.

Throughout the movie, Luke tried several times to initiate physical contact with Eve, but each time, Fred seemed to sense his intentions and intervene, either by scratching or growling

at him. It was as if the cat were actively trying to sabotage their night.

In spite of Fred's interference, the chemistry between Luke and Eve crackled.

*Tonight, I'll show her how much she means to me.*

As the movie credits started to roll, Eve felt a sudden surge of boldness. She looked into Luke's eyes and saw the same naked need she felt.

"Luke," she said, her voice slightly shaky, "I have wanted to talk to you about something." Eve moaned as Luke's hands started to wander. "Nope, let's go to the bedroom first. I can't concentrate with you doing that. My body wants you too much."

His gaze was a mixture of curiosity and lust and he just prayed for the strength of his zipper as he approached Eve. She led him through the dimly lit hallway towards the bedroom.

"Fred," she said firmly, pointing towards the living room, "you stay here." The cat stared back at her, his green eyes narrowed in apparent disapproval, but he didn't follow them as they entered the bedroom.

Luke closed the door behind them, effectively shutting out the world – and Fred – for the time being. The moment the latch clicked into place, he turned to face Eve, his large frame towering over her as he cupped her face in his rough, calloused hands.

“Are you sure about this? Do we need to talk first?” he asked, his voice rough with need. “This feels different. This feels ... more.”

Eve nodded, her dark hair swaying with the movement. “I want this, Luke. I want you.”

A smile tugged at the corners of his mouth, and he leaned down to capture her lips in a searing kiss. Their bodies pressed together, the heat between them palpable as their hands explored each other’s skin. Soon they were lost in each other.

*I’ll talk to her tomorrow.* Luke thought as the warmth of Eve overpowered any other thought.

# Luke



The first light of dawn cast a soft glow over the room, as Luke stirred from his slumber. He felt the warmth and weight of Eve's body pressed against his, her steady breaths tickling his chest. His heart swelled with affection, and he tightened his arms around her, savoring this moment of vulnerability and connection.

"Morning," Eve whispered, her voice laced with sleepiness and contentment as she snuggled closer to him.

"Morning," Luke replied, brushing a stray lock of hair behind her ear. "How did you sleep?"

"A bit tender and sore, but well worth it," she grinned, her eyes meeting his with a tender smile. "Maybe I need another round?"

"Maybe it should be gentle this time," he said, unable to keep the grin off his face. Their gazes held for a moment, communicating a thousand unspoken words and promises.

“Hey,” Eve said softly, sensing his inner turmoil. “What’s going on in that head of yours?”

“Listen, Eve,” he began, his voice thick with emotion. “I’m scared as hell. This feels too good. Too good to last maybe.” His hands shook slightly, betraying his outward confidence.

Eve’s eyes widened in surprise, but she didn’t let go of his arm. Instead, she squeezed it gently, her grip firm and reassuring. “Luke, why would you ever think that?”

“Because of my past. If you knew what I’ve done. What I wanted to do to your ex.” he replied, his eyes darkening.

She took a deep breath before speaking, her voice steady and unwavering. “We all have a past. And besides, we both have scars. But they don’t define us – they only make us stronger together. We’ve both been through so much, but that doesn’t make us any less deserving of happiness. And I’ve realized that I care for you deeply, Luke. You’re not just some hero straight out of a romance novel. You’re real, and I want you in my life.” Eve took a breath. “This is what I wanted to talk to you about last night. but I listened to what my body wanted first. But I want you. Only you.”

The intensity of her words washed over Luke, filling him with a sense of relief and gratitude that he hadn’t known he needed. For a moment, they simply stared at each other, the connection between them growing stronger with each passing second.

Luke then realized. “What? You looked, didn’t you? You looked in my room.”



Eve grinned. “Yep. I sure did cowboy. So, what are you going to do about it?”

Luke scooped Eve and placed her over his stomach. “Did you read anything you liked?” He asked as his hands ran up her thighs and teased her sex with his thumbs as she started to squirm against him.

“I didn’t have time,” Eve said as she tried to direct his hand to her clit. “But I do prefer you write everything down so I know what to do for you.” Eve grinned at him, as Luke groaned at the thought of everything he had written about her, what he wanted her to do, what he wanted to do to her.

Luke batted her hand away. “No Eve. There needs to be a punishment for what you did.”

“God, I hope so,” Eve laughed as her own hand started to pleasure herself as Luke watched. “Or you could just tell me your favorite section of a book and we could act it out.”

Luke watched as Eve started to softly moan as her hand became faster. “I’m watching it now,” he said as he gripped his cock and stroked in time with Eve. “Make your self come Eve. Come for me.”

Eve’s head rolled back as her hand worked herself, Luke feeling Eve grip his thighs as she was close. Luke gripped himself hard so he wouldn’t come before her as he watched her come apart on him, before he tossed her onto her back and dragged her to the side of the bed.

“Are you too sore Eve,” he rasped out as Eve reached for him as he notched himself at her entrance, wet from her climax.

“Do it,” Eve said as Luke thrust forward into her, Eve arching her back to take him further as Luke shuddered into her, not lasting as he spilled into her.

“I couldn’t last Eve.”

Eve rested her body on her elbows as she looked at Luke before her. His large body shuddering at the force of his climax into her.

“I love that I did that to you. Best punishment ever,” she grinned as Luke gathered her in his arms.

# Luke



With renewed determination, Luke threw himself into fixing up Kane's old house for Eve. He spent hours sanding down rough edges, patching up holes, and painting the walls with care. Every detail was chosen with her in mind: from the cozy window seat where she could curl up with a book, to the vintage chandelier that would cast a gentle glow over her dining table. Where he once wanted to go slow and take his time with the house, now he had renewed determination to fix it up, to keep Eve on the ranch, closer to him.

Luke had previously thought about inventing a burst water pipe or something where he could move in with her now, but he already felt bad about lying about the house taking so long. And he had other plans for her. For both of them.

He had to take things one step at a time and wait for the right moment.

"Looking good, man," Kane called out as he approached, clapping Luke on the back. "Eve's going to love this place

when it's done.”

“Thanks,” Luke replied gruffly, his cheeks flushing at the mention of her name. “Just trying to make it perfect for her.”

Kane nodded, understanding flickering in his dark eyes. “She deserves it, you know. After everything she's been through, she needs a place where she can feel safe and happy.”

Luke swallowed hard. He knew all too well the pain that marred her past, the scars that she bore both physically and emotionally. All he wanted was to help her heal, to show her that love could be a powerful force for good.

“Trust me,” he said quietly, his voice laced with conviction. “I'm going to make sure this house is everything she's ever dreamed of.”

“I hear the Book Nook is going through some transformation as well,” Kane said, a question in his voice.

Luke grinned at his brother. “I built a bakery and coffee shop just for her.”

Kane frowned. “Does she know?”

Luke shook his head, “no but she brings in pies every day for customers, and she always grumbles that one day she will save enough to get her own shop. I'm just bringing the timeline forward for her.”

“And keeping her close,” Kane chuckled. “Good thinking brother.”

“She’s the one for me Kane. I saw it with you and Sarah and now I’m lucky enough to have it myself and I’m not letting it go.”

Kane nodded. “I’m happy for you Luke. You both deserve this.”

“So, what about this house? It seems like you are fixing it up for no one now if your plan is for Eve to live with you.”

Luke nodded, “maybe, but I want her to have a choice. Eve might not want to move in right way. I want her to not feel forced into anything.”

The brothers talked a little more before Kane walked away and left Luke to put the final touches on the house.

# Luke



Luke stood outside the Book Nook, his heart pounding in his chest. This was it – the moment he’d been working towards ever since he’d realized his feelings for Eve. He had spent countless hours setting up a surprise for Eve.

*His Eve.*

“Luke?” Eve’s voice broke him out of his reverie, her presence like a warm embrace as she approached him, her dark hair cascading down her shoulders in gentle waves.

“Hey,” he replied, his gruff voice betraying his nerves. “I, uh, have something I want to show you.”

“Sure, what is it?” Her eyes sparkled with curiosity, and Luke couldn’t help but grin at her enthusiasm.

“Follow me.” He led her inside the bookstore, his large frame dwarfed by the towering shelves filled with stories waiting to be discovered. The smell of aged paper and leather bindings created an atmosphere of comfort, and Luke felt a sense of pride for having created this space.

“I love the feel of this place,” Eve said, her fingers brushing against the spines of the books as they walked. “What are we doing here?”

“Remember when you said you always wanted to open your own little bakery and café?” Luke asked, his heart swelling with anticipation.

“Yeah, of course. It’s my dream,” she replied, her face lighting up at the thought.

Luke watched as Eve took in the small kitchen and cabinet, surrounded by white and yellow tables and chairs.

“You put in a bakery? For me?”

“I bought this place for me so I could read, but now I want to make it ours,” he confessed, watching as her eyes widened in surprise. “A safe haven where we can combine books and baking. We can create something together, Eve.”

“Luke, that’s... incredible,” she breathed, tears welling up in her eyes as she threw her arms around him. “But more importantly, will you be writing these books?”

“Fuck no. That’s just my fantasies in word Eve.”

“Well... Id like to see you write more. Something we could act out each night.” Eve teased as she ran a hand down Lukes chest, hooking a finger in his waistband.

“I have a new one that I wrote that involves me dominating you right here,” He grinned down at her, his eyes growing dark at the thought of Eve being submissive to him.

“Wha-”

Before she could finish her sentence, Luke bent down, capturing her lips in a deep, rough kiss. He smiled against her lips as he heard her whimper against him, her body limp in his arms as they tightened around her.

*She feels like I'm coming home.*

As they broke apart, panting and flushed, Luke gazed into her eyes, his voice thick with emotion. “Eve, I love you. Fuck, you consume my every thought. I want to spend the rest of my life with you. Will you have me?”

“Luke,” she whispered, tears streaming down her cheeks as she nodded fervently. “Yes. A thousand times, yes.”

Luke groaned as her hand started to wander over his jeans zipper.

“Now about your new idea to act out,” she said as she lowered herself to her knees.

Luke knew he had met his match and equal in every way.



## Epilogue – One month later



Inside The Book Nook, Luke carefully arranged the new arrivals, his strong arms effortlessly lifting the heavy boxes of books. The familiar scent of ink and paper filled his nostrils, bringing a contented smile to his face. He glanced over at Eve, who was nestled in the corner, her dark hair cascading over her shoulders as she flipped through the pages of a cookbook.

“What are you reading there?” Luke asked, his voice a deep, gravelly rumble that never failed to send a shiver down Eve’s spine. She looked up, her eyes sparkling with mischief.

“New recipes,” she replied, a wicked grin spreading across her face. “I think I’ll try this one tonight: chocolate-covered strawberries with whipped cream. Sounds delicious, don’t you think?”

“Sounds like heaven,” Luke agreed, his tattoos rippling as he flexed his muscles, moving another box into place. “And if you need help with the, uh... taste testing... I’m your man.”

Eve laughed, her melodic chuckle a balm to Luke's soul. "I was thinking we could sample some of the cream now?" Eve said, the meaning clear in her eyes. "I bought extra. I read something recently about how men like to- "

"Closing time," Luke announced, his voice carrying through the bookstore as he flipped the sign on the door.

Luke hustled his brothers out of the store as Eve laughed at the grumbling men who now hung around wanting her pastries from the bakery.

"That seemed rude," Eve said as Luke scooped her up and shut the door of the Book Nook behind him.

"They can get their own woman," Luke grumbled as he settled Eve in the car, ready for the drive back to the ranch.

"Home," Eve demanded as she took the whipped cream out of the bag and licked the top of the nozzle where the cream was exploding from.

"Our home. Together." Luke said, his eyes taking in his woman before him. "Distract me woman, otherwise we won't make it home. I'll pull onto the side of the road soon."

Eve laughed, loving the power she had and felt confident that he meant every word. They drove in silence for a few minutes until Eve piped up and said, "Well, did you hear about Kane and Sarah?" Eve asked, slipping off her shoes. "They're expecting a baby."

"Really? That's great news!" Luke exclaimed, his face lighting up at the thought of their growing family.

“And Olivia and Alex are circling one another. Maybe he has found his match in her.” Eve continued, her excitement infectious.

“About time,” Luke agreed, grinning broadly as he imagined the look of sheer joy on his brother’s face. “And Ryan, Ethan, and Jackson?”

“Ryan’s still traveling the world, but he’s met someone special in Australia, so who knows where that could lead?” Eve mused. “Ethan’s been spending more time with a local artist, and it looks like they might be getting serious. And Jackson... well, let’s just say that Maya has him completely smitten.”

“Good,” Luke nodded, satisfaction spreading through his chest as he contemplated the happiness that awaited each of his brothers. They all deserved it. He parked the car out the front of their house and watched as Eve gathered her bag, ready to go in. He reached across and took her chin and drew her to him, kissing her deeply, feeling her melt against him.

“Come on,” he urged, taking Eve’s hand and leading her towards their front door. “Let’s go make some memories of our own.”

Luke eyed the ginger feline as it slunk after them. Luke knowing the uneasy treaty he had made with the cat would only last as long he kept giving him treats. He slipped some catnip out of his pocket as he followed Eve, smiling as the cat stopped and lost interest in them as he nipped his treat. It took

a while but Luke had finally found something that made Fred tolerate him.

He turned to Eve who gave him her knowing smile before their laughter echoed through the house. Their house.

His life was now complete.

The End

# About the Author

The author of multiple short, steamy stories, and author in an Amazon number one bestselling romance anthology, Debra grew up on the Mid North Coast of NSW, Australia, where she lives today. When Debra is not writing, you can find her travelling, breakfasting with friends, or curled up with a good book and a cup of tea. Although writing steamy and sizzling stories, themes of friendship, family, and strong female characters all feature in all her writing.

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**See what happens next with Jackson and  
Maya.**

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