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Maggie Ryan and Rayanna Jamison

TIZZY'S *Little* ★
THANKSGIVING ★



🌀 HOLIDAYS AT RAWHIDE RANCH 🌀

TIZZY'S LITTLE
THANKSGIVING



MAGGIE RYAN
RAYANNA JAMISON



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TIZZY'S LITTLE THANKSGIVING

A HOLIDAYS AT RAWHIDE RANCH NOVEL

By

Maggie Ryan and Rayanna Jamison

Tizzy's Little Thanksgiving

Rawhide Ranch Holiday

By

Maggie Ryan and Rayanna Jamison

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Holidays at Rawhide Ranch

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For more Rawhide Ranch stories check out this link- <https://linktr.ee/Rawhide>



PROLOGUE

Eddie

EDDIE MAYER STOOD STARING AT THE MASSIVE DISPLAY OF apples in his grocery store's produce department. Fuji, Gala, Pink Lady, Honeycrisp, it was all gibberish to him. His housekeeper, Jeannie, usually did all his shopping and she knew what he liked better than he did.

“It's only apples. How different can they possibly taste?” he muttered to himself. “Just pick one. It's not brain surgery.”

His choice of saying was playfully ironic because Eddie was, in fact, a neurosurgeon at Methodist Hospital in Houston's famous medical center. One of the top specialists in the nation, he could successfully perform feats most surgeons wouldn't even touch and yet he couldn't pick out his own damn apples. It was kind of ridiculous now that he thought about it.

“Dammit, Jeannie, you've spoiled me,” he grumbled, ripping a thin plastic bag off the dispenser, and advancing on the display.

Sure, he could just text Jeannie and ask her what kind he liked, but she was off on a well-deserved vacation, paid for by

him, and he didn't want to bother her with such a mundane task. He didn't want to be one of those people who couldn't figure anything out for themselves. He'd hired Jeannie back when he was still an intern, as a favor to his mother who swore she would get off his case if she knew there was someone around making sure he was eating well and taking care of himself.

He stared again at the pile of apples like it was his own personal Everest. "I'll just get one of each," he decided, still talking to himself out loud under his breath.

He grabbed a Gala, and a Honeycrisp, and walked around the display toward the Fujis. He was just about to grab one when someone else got there first. They'd come so fast he hadn't even seen them approaching, reaching for the pile at the same time he did, but just as they grabbed for an apple, they also slammed into the display, causing dozens of apples to fall to the floor in a pile, bruising instantly.

Eddie looked down at the now damaged fruit with growing annoyance.

"Someone is going to have to pay for that."

"Oh oopsies! I'm so sorry! I guess I didn't realize how fast I was going or how hard it was going to be to stop! Anyway, I think this is yours." A shiny Fuji apple, somehow saved from the avalanche appeared in front of him, curled into a feminine, ring-adorned hand, with long, sparkly orange fingernails each adorned with a purple gemstone in the shape of a star.

He'd seen those stones before. He'd heard that voice before.

It couldn't be.

With his stomach lurching from a combination of excitement and dread, he looked up. Straight into the face of his sister's best friend, Teresa, or as he liked to call her, Tizzy.

Tizzy because she was a high-energy whirlwind, somewhat of a human tornado, but also because she was a worrywart of epic proportions who could take the tiniest thing and worry herself into a tizzy over it.

“Oh gosh!” she exclaimed, looking first at him and then down at the mess at their feet. “Oh gosh! Oh wow! It's good to see you! Oh no! I'm so sorry for running into you this way. Literally, right? I mean what are the odds?”

So far she was just living up to the human tornado side of her nickname, but the worrywart part would soon kick in.

In three, two, one, he thought to himself.

And just like that...

“Jiminy Cricket! Look at this mess!” She dropped to her knees, and started grabbing apples up by the handful, pulling up the hem of her shirt to make a basket to store them in. She had about five in her designated shirt basket before she stopped what she was doing and looked up at the display in horror. “Oh what was I thinking? I can't put these back. They'll get all mealy and rotten and someone will bite into one expecting a nice crispy bite of juicy fall goodness and instead they'll just get rotten mealy mush.”

She looked down at the pile still on the floor. “I guess I should get an employee. I'm honestly surprised one hasn't gotten here by now.” She shook her head. “All these apples will have to be thrown out and they'll probably go to waste. And oh my gosh, what if they get so mad at me, they ban me from the store? This is my favorite place to shop! Oh crap!

What if they call the cops? Eddie! I can't go to jail—even for a night. Not even for an hour. I won't last in a holding cell with all the drunks and junkies and god only knows what else, and I'll probably lose my job!" She looked horrified at the possibilities. "Is there a law against roller skating in a grocery store?"

There she went, working herself into a tizzy, worrying so fast he couldn't even get a reassuring word in edgewise.

She finally stopped to take a breath, tears welling in the corner of her eyes, and he opened his mouth to reassure her that she wasn't about to go to jail over a few dozen bruised apples when the last part of her frenzied rant finally registered.

"Roller skating?" He looked down at her feet, folded underneath her as she knelt on the tiled floor, and sure enough, they were encased in bright orange roller blades.

Who wore roller blades to a grocery store?

"I was out for my afternoon skate—practicing because I missed your sister so much I went out and joined a roller derby league of all things—and I remembered I was out of apples for tomorrow's lunch. I eat one every day because you know what they say, an apple a day keeps the doctor away, and so I figured, no problem, I'll just grab some before I head home and then..." She looked down at the floor again and wailed, "And now I'm gonna be banned for life if I don't end up in jail somewhere!"

Eddie shook his head. He knew Tizzy well enough to know reasoning with her wouldn't work when she was in a state. He wished his sister were here; somehow Georgie always knew just what to say when Tizzy launched into one of her episodes while Eddie usually fumbled it all up.

But Georgie wasn't at the store, or even in the town. Georgie was, of all places, at a kink ranch over a thousand miles away, living with his best friend.

He was going to have to handle Tizzy all on his own.

Grabbing another bag off the spool, he knelt down and started scooping apples into it.

"You aren't getting banned from the store, and no one is going to jail," he told her with confidence. "Look, still no employees. You can just buy the apples and no one will be the wiser."

"I can't!" Tizzy wailed. "I don't have enough money!"

"What?" Worry gnawed his gut. Tizzy was a nurse. It wasn't the highest paying job out there, but it wasn't the worst. Surely she could afford a few dozen apples. If she couldn't, something was seriously wrong.

"No, I mean I don't bring my wallet with me when I skate, but I always have an emergency fiver tucked into my bra in case I need to give it to a homeless person."

He blinked at the absurdity that, honestly, was so typically Tizzy. If he didn't think fast, she was going to start spiraling again and nobody wanted that.

"I'll buy the apples," he said smoothly. "See, problem solved. Now, the only problem you have is what to do with dozens of banged up apples."

"I'll make applesauce," Tizzy replied with a snuffle. "Oh thank you, Eddie! You are saving my life! Thank goodness you were here! I don't know what I would have done if you hadn't been here. I'd probably be in the back of a cop car headed to the pokey right now. I don't care what Georgie said

about jumpsuits. I know I would just curl up into a big orange ball and die in jail.”

His mind was spinning. Applesauce, cops, pokey, and what was this about Georgie, jumpsuits, and dying? Tizzy couldn't be serious, he thought and yet he knew she was. Sometimes he wondered how someone as excitable and dramatic as Tizzy ever made it in nursing, a field that required the opposite, but not only was she a nurse, she was supposedly a great one. He didn't get it. Reaching up to pull two more bags from the spool, he handed one to her and kept one for himself. “Just start grabbing apples.”

She complied, rambling the whole time at two thousand miles a minute. “If you can just wait here after you pay for them, I'll skate back to my apartment and get my wallet and then bring you the cash. Oh wait, that wouldn't work. I mean it would, but it seems silly. Maybe you could drive me to my apartment so I could get my wallet. Oh no, that's probably too much trouble. I could just bring the money by your office.”

He finished bagging up apples and threw them into his cart, beginning his stride to the register. He had a whole grocery list he still needed to shop for, but that was going to have to wait for another day.

“I guess I could mail it, though, who really mails cash these days? That's probably not a great idea.”

Tizzy was following alongside him, gliding through the store on those ridiculous skates, talking all the while.

Finally, he'd had enough. He couldn't even hear himself think. “Teresa!” he scolded sharply, grabbing her by the shoulders so she was forced to stop moving, hopefully inspired to stop talking, and had no choice but to look at him. “You don't need to pay me back. Stop worrying about it.”

He could tell from her face that she wasn't about to stop worrying even for a second.

“Oh no, Eddie. I have to pay you back somehow. If not with money, then some other way. Maybe I could make you some applesauce!” Her eyes twinkled with mischief.

Eddie shook his head. “Do you even know how to make applesauce?”

“Well, no,” Tizzy admitted, “but it can't be that hard, can it?”

Eddie heaved a sigh. He could just picture the amount of chaos Tizzy could create trying to whip him up a batch of applesauce as a thank you. And he didn't even like applesauce, really. He preferred to eat the fruit in its natural state. “Let me buy you dinner. That's how you can make it up to me.”

“What?” Tizzy faltered, clearly taken aback by his suggestion. Her nose scrunched up, and her eyebrows furrowed and then she smiled, and he thought for a minute she was surely going to say yes, but instead, she giggled and smacked his chest. “Eddie! That doesn't even make sense! Let you spend money on me in order to pay you back for spending money to keep me out of jail?”

There she went again with the jail thing. Never mind that it would never happen, that's what they would always come back to unless he could get her off of the apple fiasco and on to something else. Besides, dinner with Tizzy wouldn't be a hardship. As exhausting and dramatic and over-the-top as she was, she was also intelligent, loyal, funny, and kind. Not to mention drop-dead gorgeous with long curly locks, an hourglass figure that was a little curvy in all the right places, and an ass that wouldn't quit. He definitely had the hots for her. And as much as he'd spent years fighting it, because she

was his kid sister's best friend, he figured that ship of obligation had sailed when Georgie had not only broken into his apartment for his best friend Lucas' address but had followed him across the country to get a job at the same kink resort where he worked. Fighting his attraction to Tizzy was no longer something he felt inclined to do. After all, turnabout was fair play.

“Come have dinner with me,” he said again.

Tizzy frowned. “Okay,” she conceded. “But I'm still gonna make you some applesauce.”

TIZZY

WAS IT A DATE? WHEN HE SAID DINNER, SHE WAS THINKING like... Taco Bell but while the place Eddie had taken her wasn't fancy, it had real menus, and it wasn't a dive either.

And Eddie, of course, was a gentleman, opening car doors, and buckling her in... swoon-worthy stuff only she couldn't swoon, as much as she wanted to. Because it was Eddie, and even though she'd crushed on him for as long as she could remember, she was sure he was only being so nice because he saw her as his little sister's hopeless, goofy best friend.

Maybe. Probably. The way he was currently looking at her had her not so sure, but even if it wasn't the case, Eddie was off limits.

Georgie had made that clear in not so many words.

Tizzy sighed and looked for the waitress. Without the apple fiasco to talk about, they'd fallen into an awkward silence. Tizzy hated silence. And small talk. If Eddie didn't say something soon, she was likely to start babbling again about god knows what and make a complete ass of herself.

"How's work?" Eddie asked.

"It's fine," she answered, biting her tongue so her inner scream wouldn't become a real one. "You know, the usual. Tumors, ulcers, broken bones, bowel obstructions. Just another day in the life of a surgical nurse."

"Yeah, I'm sure it can get pretty crazy. I know it has been for us lately." Eddie worked at a hospital in the medical center while she worked in a different branch in Sugar Land about a half-hour away.

Tizzy shrugged. Inside an OR was the only place she didn't feel like a frazzled mess, but nobody ever believed her when she tried to explain that particular anomaly.

Thankfully seeming to sense that work wasn't her favorite topic, Eddie changed the subject.

"Have you heard from Georgie lately?"

She almost wept with relief. Finally, common non-work-related ground. She could talk about her bestie all day long, and unlike most dates, Eddie would know exactly what she was talking about. "Yes, almost every day, but it's not the same." Tears pricked her eyes, horrifying her, and she heaved a deep sigh. "I miss her. She kept me sane. Without her... well, I joined a roller-derby league, I took up crocheting, I'm learning sign language, and I'm on all the dating apps, even though I never have the guts to actually go on dates with the guys I talk to. All these new things to keep me busy, and I've

never been more miserable.” She paused, hyper-aware that she sounded like a wet rag and forced a smile. “But I’m happy for her. I am. I never thought her plan would work, but the stars must have aligned. She’s loved Lucas for so long; I know she’s so happy there, and she loves her new job and her new friends...” Her voice cracked and she shook her head, fighting tears again. “Sorry, ignore me. I’m just... I’m being pathetic.”

“No, hey, no.” Eddie grabbed her hand across the table. “Don’t say that. You’re not pathetic. It’s a huge change. And it’s okay to miss her. It’s okay to feel left behind. Hell, I do sometimes, and I hardly ever saw her.”

Tizzy nodded, staring at Eddie’s hand on hers. His hands were smooth, his touch warm and comforting.

“Were you mad when she hooked up with Lucas? Are you mad because”—her voice dropped to a whisper—“you know.” Rawhide Ranch, where Eddie’s best friend Lucas, and now his little sister both lived, was a well-known BDSM and Lifestyle Ranch that especially catered to Littles. Tizzy was pretty sure Eddie knew that because how could he not, but she had no idea how he felt about it.

“Because they’re into some kinky shit?” Eddie said with a grin.

Tizzy just nodded.

Eddie grinned wider. “I try not to think too hard about it, but it doesn’t make me mad, no. To each their own, and I’ve wanted Lucas to find happiness for a long time. But he’s such a loner. It makes sense that he had to be basically forced into it. And who better to do that than Georgie?”

“I guess it makes sense when you put it that way,” Tizzy replied with a smile. Her best friend was a force to be

reckoned with.

There was a span of companionable silence, broken only when the waiter came to take their orders. Eddie ordered a club sandwich and fries and she ordered a chef salad. They both asked for lemonade.

When the waiter walked away, Eddie was still holding her hand, silence lingering between them as they sat with their own thoughts.

And just when the quiet started to feel too loud, Eddie lifted her hand, level with his face, and stared at her manicure with an odd smile. “You can’t be too upset about it,” he mused. “After all, you did help her break into my house to get his address, didn’t you?”

“I-I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Tizzy blustered, with far more confidence than she felt.

Eddie looked at her hands again. “Orange sparkles with purple gemstone stars. It’s an interesting combination.”

“My two favorite colors,” Tilly defended. “People say they don’t go together but they are both so bright and happy and... sassy... I don’t see how that could possibly be true.”

“To each their own,” Eddie replied, echoing his earlier sentiment. “But you know... it’s interesting... I found one of these little stars at my apartment a few months ago. In one of my kitchen cupboards, stuck to my favorite coffee mug. I wonder how that could have happened.”

“I have no idea.” Tizzy blushed and jerked her hand away. His favorite coffee mug? She remembered exactly which one it was. She’d needed a drink because breaking and entering made her thirsty, so she’d opened cabinets until she stumbled across glasses. She should have reached for a regular glass, but

the row of colorful mugs with unique sayings had caught her eye, and one in particular had called to her.

She'd filled it with tap water, drank thirstily, and dried it and put it back, all the while wondering why Eddie had a coffee mug that said *Don't Torture Yourself... That's My Job*. She'd assumed it must have been a gag gift from Georgie most likely as she was always lamenting how he drove her bonkers. He'd most likely held on to it because he'd feel guilty getting rid of it and hurting his sister's feelings because that's just the type of person Eddie was.

But his favorite mug? She hadn't seen that coming. And hadn't there been a picture of a riding crop between the two phrases on the mug. What did it mean? Eddie didn't leave her wondering for long.

"I've been to Rawhide once, you know," he offered, bringing the conversation back around. "For Georgie and Lucas' birthday. Interesting place. I might have to go back sometime. But I wouldn't want to go alone. Seems like the kind of place that would be much more fun... with someone."

Her cheeks flamed as she imagined the possibilities of being that someone, and when her phone rang on the table, she grabbed at it, thankful for the distraction.

Eddie's rang at the same time.

He cocked his head and looked at her with a smirk. "It's a facetime call from Lucas."

She glanced down at her screen. "Mine's from Georgie."

"Answer it," he ordered, even as he clicked the button to answer his.

"Now, bro, don't be mad..."

She heard Lucas' even voice come across the line seconds before her call connected and she saw Georgie's smiling face. Her friend was smiling even bigger than usual, and practically buzzing with excitement.

"I'm engaged!" Georgie cried, waving a hand adorned with a gorgeous cushion-cut diamond glittering on her finger in front of her face.

Tizzy's jaw dropped open. She'd expected this of course, but not quite so soon. Georgie and Lucas had gotten together in May. It was now October.

Across the table, Eddie seemed to have the same reaction.

"What?" he hollered, catching the attention of the diners around them. "It's only been a few months."

Tizzy glared at him, and he dropped his voice to a shouty whisper, but it was too late. Georgie's eyes narrowed and she seemed to notice for the first time that Tizzy was not at home. "Was that Eddie?" her friend accused. "Where are you? Are you with Eddie?" Her questions came rapid-fire, one after the other.

She opened her mouth to explain, fully ready to stammer out her whole story about rollerblading and apples, and not wanting to go to jail, and Eddie coming to her rescue like the knight in shining armor he was, but before she could start, Eddie came to her rescue once again, sliding into the booth beside her, still on the phone with Lucas.

"Hey, sis," he said with an easy smile. "It seems you have impeccable timing. I was just out attempting to do my own grocery shopping for once because Jeannie is out of town, and who should I run into but good ol' Tizzy here."

Teresa scowled. She hated that nickname. She hated even more that she knew he was right; it suited her.

“Oh hey! That’s neat. A two for one!” Lucas ended his call with Eddie, the screen going black as he slid into Georgie’s frame.

Georgie was still staring at them with narrowed eyes. “You’re not in a grocery store now. That looks like Cheddar’s.”

“Good eyes,” Eddie quipped. “Anyway, as I was saying we got to talking at the store, and it was nearly dinnertime, and we were both hungry so we decided to eat together.”

Georgie looked like she was about to jump in with more questions, but Eddie cut her off.

“So you’re engaged huh? When did this happen?”

It worked. Fully distracted, Georgie glanced down at her ring, a smile playing on her lips. “Only about twenty minutes ago. I haven’t even told the ‘rents yet. We wanted to tell you first. Well, I wanted to tell Teresa. Lucas wanted to tell you.”

“And I might have gotten the chance if your announcement wasn’t so boisterous,” Lucas teased, poking Georgie in the ribs.

She blushed and squirmed away from him.

“Anyway, there was a reason for the call, other than to share our good news. Yes, we are getting married”—she held up her hand again and waggled her fingers—“on November 25th, the Saturday after Thanksgiving, and of course, Teresa, I wanted you to be my maid of honor, and Eddie, Lucas wants you to be his best man.” She smiled widely, clasping her hands in front of her, as if she were praying. As if she needed to. There was never a question.

“Of course!” she and Eddie answered in unison.

The squeal that came from her best friend didn't sound human. “Yay! Oh thank you thank you, thank you! I'm so excited. And I promise to call you back later with all the details, both of you, but we have more calls to make! Talk to you soon!”

Georgie disconnected the call abruptly before either of them had a chance to say goodbye and Eddie got up, sliding into the chair across from her once more.

Stupidly, she left her hands on the table, and Eddie grabbed them again.

“Well, well, well,” he said with raised brows, staring once again at the gemstones adorning her sparkly manicure. “It looks like I'll be going to Rawhide sooner rather than later. In fact, it looks like we'll be going together. Imagine that.” He waited a beat, in which Tizzy held her breath, before continuing.

“You know, from what I understand, Georgie got quite the spanking for breaking into my apartment. And yet, you as her accomplice got away scot free. Doesn't quite seem fair, does it?”

Before she could even dream of coming out of shock long enough to piece together any sort of acceptable answer, their food came, Eddie dropped her hand, and the moment was broken.

And all Tizzy could think was that November, and the wedding, were far too far away.

CHAPTER 1

Teresa

COME TO GATE 35B ONCE YOU GET THROUGH SECURITY.

Teresa rolled her eyes at the text from Eddie, his third in the last hour.

Okay, Mr. Bossypants, she texted back. The name suited him. So did a long list of others. Mr. Head In His Ass, Mr. Doesn't Have A Clue, Mr. Control Freak, Mr. Pussy Tease, Dommabe... she pretty much had a different nickname for him every day of the week, but Mr. Bossypants was the only one she ever said to his face. Well, his face over text. She hadn't seen him since that night at the restaurant over a month ago. When he'd basically threatened to spank her, and then did absolutely nothing and never mentioned it again.

Which was fine, it was fine, it had been a weird night, and their emotions had been high. They'd both probably been caught up in the moment. It was just a sentence, one meaningless measly little sentence. She'd forgotten all about it. Well, she'd tried, but Eddie made it impossible.

Because even though he was barely speaking to her, he *was* speaking to her. And everything that came out of his

mouth was bossy, and domineering, and overbearing, and... panty melting.

Seriously, Eddie was acting like a Daddy.

When it came to the upcoming wedding, he'd taken over without ever asking if she wanted that or if she needed him to. She didn't. She was perfectly capable of procuring her own travel plans.

Not that Eddie would know, because he hadn't given her a chance. He'd booked her on the same flight as him, got them both seats in first class, next to each other, and given her the window because somehow, he'd known that was what she liked. Then he'd done the same with their lodging. He'd made her reservation at Rawhide, and paid for that one too, booking her into an adjoining suite. She hadn't even been responsible for her own Uber to the airport. He'd sent a car for her, like she was completely inept.

And he'd been texting her since she got in the car. Reminding her to wear her seatbelt, to make sure her jacket was on her and not in her suitcase because it would be cold in Montana in November. He'd told her which bag-check line was moving fastest and which TSA agent to avoid. Which place had the cheapest coffee, and where the bathrooms were. And that was just in the last hour. The morning had been just as bad, with a thousand reminders of what she needed to pack.

She knew he was just trying to help, but it was honestly infuriating. Where did he get off acting like such a Daddy? He didn't have the right, and when it came down to it, he probably didn't have the balls either, because if he did, well, then he'd have done something other than just make offhand threats, wouldn't he have?

And simply because she wanted to remind him that he had no right and it wasn't his place, she was late getting to the gate, because she'd insisted on going through the slow-moving baggage line, using the grumpiest TSA agent, and stopping at the worst coffee shop she could find. She'd also left her winter coat in her checked bag. Now she was stomping up to the gate, in a flimsy tunic and leggings, holding an overpriced coffee that tasted like sludge, and the moment she laid her eyes on Eddie Mayer, she was pretty sure she was gonna kill him.

Hopefully he'd already boarded the plane, and when she got on she could put in the earbuds he'd reminded her six times to bring, turn on a movie, and ignore him until they landed. Maybe longer.

Except Eddie wasn't on the plane. When she got to the gate, finding it almost empty because most of the passengers had already boarded, there he was, standing next to the agent desk, leaning against it, with an easy smile that lit up his face and brought out his dimples, an airport souvenir hoodie over his arm.

"I had a feeling you'd forget your coat." He held the hoodie out to her. Of course it was orange, her favorite color, emblazoned with H-Town in big purple and orange striped block letters.

"I'm fine," she huffed, pushing past him.

He stopped her by grabbing her purse strap. "It's cold. I saw you shivering from a mile away and it will be colder when we land. Put it on."

"I said I'm fine!" she shouted, shrinking when she realized that airline security was watching them from a distance, probably anticipating some sort of dispute. Eddie seemed to

notice too, his eyebrows raising to his hairline as he wordlessly held out the hoodie once more.

She grabbed it and shrugged into it, handing him her purse to hold while she did so. “I’m not a child, you know. I didn’t need you to do all this stuff. I didn’t need you to buy my plane ticket or book my room. I didn’t need the ten thousand texts about how to pack, and what to pack, and where to go, and I didn’t need you to send a car. I can do all those things. I’m twenty-six, Eddie. I’ve been doing things for myself for a while now.”

She jerked up the zipper, and looked at him, expecting some sort of wounded expression or even one of contrition, but he had his head cocked to the side, and was looking at her with a soft, amused-looking smile. “I know you’re not a child. But... you’re Tizzy.”

“My name is Teresa!” Grabbing her purse from him, she handed her ticket to the gate attendant, and stomped onto the jet bridge with Eddie right behind her.

Neither of them said another word until they were seated, the flight attendant had finished their “what to do in an emergency” speech, and the plane was taking off.

She was digging through her purse for her earbuds when Eddie placed a hand on top of hers. “I know you’re not a child, Teresa. I also know you procrastinate, and you can be a bit scatterbrained, and I know how important Georgie is to you. I wanted to make sure you got to Rawhide, safely: on time, and in one piece. My sister is about to marry my best friend. I want the wedding to be perfect. And part of that, honestly one of the most important parts, is you being there.”

Well shit. How could she be mad at that? She couldn’t really, but she tried anyway. “Well, I’m on the plane now, and

god willing, we'll get to the Ranch in one piece, so you did your duty. You can rest easy now. You're a good best man," she spat. At that moment, she produced her earbuds, and triumphantly dug them out of the case, popping them into her ears. Let the ignoring begin.

Eddie seemed to get the hint too, or so she thought. He reached into his backpack, withdrew a bottle of water, and a plastic-wrapped muffin, then another one. He held the second one out to her. She grabbed it from his hand, not because she wanted it but because she recognized it. "Is that...?"

Eddie nodded. "The last of the best apple-cinnamon-crumble muffins in the world."

"Eddie! These are like... a month old! How are they not just a pile of mold?"

"I kept them in the freezer and took them out one at a time for a treat. I can't eat two dozen muffins before they have a chance to go bad."

"Oh." She felt like an idiot. She couldn't believe he still had them, or that he had thought to bring them on the plane. "You really liked them?"

"Are you kidding? They're delicious. I had to freeze them or I would have eaten them all and then I'd be shaped like an apple and wouldn't fit into my tux."

"Are they really good?" She cautiously peeled back the edge of the plastic and broke off a bite, putting it in her mouth, half expecting the whole thing to be a prank, thinking she'd end up spitting it out into her hand or gagging and making a scene.

Instead, flavor exploded on her tongue. The muffin was moist, and fragrant, sweet and savory with a hint of spice.

“Wow! That actually is good!”

Eddie frowned quizzically. “Did you not have any?”

She shook her head as she took a much bigger bite. “I honestly was afraid to. And if they sucked, I didn’t want to know because I’d have felt too guilty about those poor apples getting ruined all over again.”

“You thought they were gonna be bad, so you sent them to me?” Eddie asked incredulously. “Wow, Tizzy, what did I ever do to you?”

“It’s not that I thought they were gonna be bad... it’s just after the whole applesauce fiasco, I was afraid to know.” She’d sent them to his office by courier, three days after their fateful grocery store meeting with a note. *Applesauce is too hard. Hope you don’t mind these muffins instead. Teresa.*

“Well, they are excellent. In fact I was hoping I could talk you into giving Jeannie the recipe.”

I could make you more. She thought it, but she didn’t say it. She was still trying to be mad at him. In typical Eddie fashion, he was making that hard.

“I texted you a thank you and told you how good they were.”

She knew that. She could recite that text by heart. She could recite all of them by heart.

She shrugged. “That’s just something people say.”

“Well, I meant it.” Eddie twisted in his seat and looked deeply into her eyes, his gaze boring into her soul until she had to look away. “I meant everything I texted.”

She tried hard to school her reaction, but it was immediate and visceral. Her mouth dropped open and she sucked in air in

greedy little breaths. Her hands closed into fists, squishing the remainder of the muffin into crumbs. Her heart beat wildly in her chest. Her mouth went dry, and though she told herself to ignore him, she couldn't help the reply that escaped her lips. "R-really?"

Raincheck on the consequence. It's going to have to wait until we are at Rawhide together.

You're so naughty. I can't wait to spank you.

Hmm... should I add that to the list?

She probably had at least a dozen texts like that from Eddie over the course of the last month and a half, and she'd ignored every single one of them. She'd blown them off with a roll of her eyes and a derisive laugh because if she didn't... well, if she didn't, she might just believe them. And that would be dangerous.

This was Eddie. Strong, sensible, reliable, Eddie. The exact opposite of her in every way. And there was no way he was kinky. He was just teasing her. Harmless teasing really. He probably had no idea how his innocent texts affected her.

"You never responded." There was no accusation in his voice, just a matter-of-fact statement, tinged with curiosity.

She shrugged, still finding it hard to breathe. "I didn't know what to say."

"I hear consent is a good place to start."

Such a simple statement, but it made her panties wet. She didn't say anything. Her brain was racing a mile a minute, and her eyes were getting heavy. She hated flying and she'd taken a Xanax when she'd stopped at that godawful coffee shop. She should say that. Otherwise she'd feel guilty for conking out on him, but it was inevitable.

“Eddie...I...” Even to her own ears, her voice sounded far away and tinny. “I think I’m gonna fall asleep.”

“It’s okay, Tizzy. You don’t have to say anything. Forget I ever did. I’m sorry. I just... I guess I assumed you were like Georgie in that way.”

Her eyelids were too heavy. She couldn’t keep her eyes open anymore. She could feel sleep calling her, but she had to answer Eddie or else...

I’ll never know.

The thought slid across her consciousness and she fought to croak out, “I am like Georgie.” Then she surrendered to the call of the sandman and slept.



CHAPTER 2

Eddie

SO HE WAS RIGHT. TERESA WAS A LITTLE. HE DIDN'T KNOW much about them, but he knew the title suited her. And he knew he wanted to learn more. He had a thousand questions, but he didn't get a chance to ask them, because as soon as that bombshell dropped, Tizzy fell fast asleep.

He knew she hated flying; Georgie had mentioned it. It was why he'd tried so hard to take care of everything trip related for her.

Tizzy slept the entire rest of the flight, her head on his shoulder, and didn't stir until he gently shook her awake after the plane landed. She was groggy and out of it, so he guided her through the airport to baggage claim, gathered her bright orange suitcases, along with his own more nondescript black ones, cognizant of the fact the mix reminded him of the recent holiday that had just passed, and got them a cab.

They were almost to the Ranch when she finally seemed to come out of the fog. "I am like Georgie," she said, repeating her earlier statement as if she didn't remember making it. "So

you can't say those things to me, because I want to take them seriously."

Eddie took her hand in his, leaned in super close, captured her chin between his fingers and tilted her head back so their gazes met right as the cab pulled up to the front gates. "That's good, Tizzy, because I *was* serious."

Her eyes grew wide and her whole face conveyed shock combined with a sort of deer in the headlights, what the hell have I gotten myself into look.

Perfect timing, too, because the cab rolled to a stop. "Oh look, we're here," Eddie said with a suggestive wink. "Let's get checked in and then I will demonstrate exactly how serious."

"Ummm... how are you going to do that?" Tizzy whispered, her eyes never once straying from his.

"How do you think?" he asked instead of giving her an answer.

The cutest shade of pink began to color her cheeks as her mouth opened, then closed, only to open again. Still, not a single word was uttered.

Gone was the defiant woman who'd yanked the hoodie from his hand, and in her place, was a blushing Little whose fingers were fiddling with the zipper of said hoodie as she shifted on the seat. Eddie grinned, willing to bet his next paycheck she knew exactly what to expect. Still, it was simply too tempting not to let her stew just a bit longer. After all, she had been very sassy before she'd fallen asleep.

"Let's just say I've had a month to consider a wide variety of choices," Eddie teased, brushing a lock of her sleep-tousled

hair behind her ear before sitting back against his door. “I’d hate to spoil the sur—”

An ear-piercing shriek accompanied the yanking open of his door, and the next thing he knew, he was falling backward.

“Eddie!”

He wouldn’t be able to swear in a court of law which of them screamed his name, but he didn’t particularly care as he opened his eyes to find Tizzy’s head sticking out of the car door and Georgie staring down at him.

“Whoa, you fell out of the car,” Georgie said.

“You think?” Eddie returned sarcastically.

“Well, you *are* on the ground,” Georgie pointed out as if he’d asked her to clarify her statement.

Before he could respond, Tizzy practically tumbled out of the car herself as she scrambled from the cab to kneel at his side.

“Don’t touch him!” she yelled, waving her hands over his body a couple of inches above him.

“I’m fin—” Eddie began.

“What’s wrong?” Georgie cut him off as she dropped to her knees across from her bestie.

“I don’t know—”

“Girls, I’m all—” Eddie tried again, only to be ignored.

“How can you not know? You’re the nurse!” Georgie said, her voice going up yet another octave.

“I only meant I haven’t examined all his limbs or—”

“Oh no! What if his back’s broken? We’d have to postpone the wedding.” Georgie urgently tugged on the sleeve of Tizzy’s hoodie. “You have to fix him right now!”

“We need an ambulance!” Tizzy declared, jumping to her feet.

“Teresa, you need—” Eddie attempted.

“To call a doctor!” Georgie interrupted him again as she leapt to hers as well. Only her toes caught on Eddie’s hip as she attempted to jump across him to grab Tizzy’s hand.

“Hey,” Eddie grunted, reaching down to rub the spot where his sister’s sneaker print was outlined in gravel dust against the dark denim of his jeans.

From his position on the ground, all Eddie could see were their feet churning as they took off running. “Unbelievable...”

At the sound of a strangled chuckle, Eddie turned his head to the left to see his best friend looking as if he was about to burst out laughing. Lucas offered his hand and once on his feet, Eddie swept his palms over the seat of his jeans to brush off bits of gravel clinging to them before looking to see the girls racing up the stairs of what he knew was the Ranch’s main building.

“Girls!” Eddie hollered only to be ignored.

Lucas chuckled. “I don’t believe they can hear you.”

“They can hear, they’re just not listening,” Eddie countered.

With a look that spoke volumes, the two men lifted their fingers to their mouths and rent the air with a pair of piercing whistles. Not only were they effective in having every bird in a two-acre radius taking flight, they had two Little girls jerking

to a stop as if running into the log exterior of the building that was still several feet ahead of them.

Tizzy and Georgie turned back, both looking rather shocked to see Eddie standing.

“Teresa Lynn Anderson,” Eddie called, stating her full name in case she had any question about his recovery. “Stop running and get your cute little butt back here right now.”

“That goes for you too, Georgina Rhea Mayer,” Lucas said.

“But we’re going to get a doctor, Daddy,” Georgie shouted back.

“Good grief, I *am* a doctor,” Eddie reminded them, shaking his head.

The two girls looked at each other, broke out into giggles, and then, joined hands swinging, bounced down the stairs to come back toward the men.

“I thought you said this place offered you the peace and quiet you couldn’t find in Houston,” Eddie said as the cab driver began to unload their bags from the trunk.

“That was before.” Lucas shrugged as he took the handle of an orange suitcase.

“Before what?” Eddie asked, pulling his wallet from his pocket to get money for a tip, making it a hefty one since the man had the decency to pretend none of this idiocy had happened on his watch.

“Before your sister got here, of course,” Lucas said, slapping him on the shoulder before reaching out to snag his bride-to-be around the waist to pull her to him, turning her slightly to pop his hand against her rear.

“Daddy!” Georgie squealed. “I really forgot Eddie’s a doctor,” she said and then giggled as Teresa stood gawking.

Eddie figured when in Rome and before she could blink, Teresa found her hands flying back to rub at her bottom after receiving a swat from Eddie.

“What was that for?” she asked.

Eddie didn’t miss her wide eyes or the fact that the gold in them was sparkling when it hadn’t only a moment ago.

“Just reminding you of the discussion we were having before Georgie tried to maim me.” Eddie slipped his arm around her waist as the four began to walk back to the building, each pulling a suitcase beside them.

“It’s not my fault you didn’t have your seat belt on,” Georgie quipped, not waiting for him to respond before she asked, “What was the discussion about?”

“None of your business, nosy britches,” the men answered at the exact same time as they had ever since the girl had started toddling after them in their youth.

Georgie huffed and turned to her bestie. “Remind me, why didn’t I just elope?”

“I don’t know. You tell me, you’re the bride,” Teresa teased, throwing Georgie’s words back at her. The two women were soon giggling again and Eddie looked over their heads at the groom-to-be.

“Welcome back to Rawhide Ranch,” Lucas said with a grin.

“Wouldn’t want to be anywhere else,” Eddie returned and while his words were for Lucas, he only had eyes on a certain Little whose raincheck was about to be redeemed.

CHAPTER 3

Teresa

THE FOUR SURRENDERED THEIR LUGGAGE TO A VERY TALL, large man who wore his long black hair in a braid down his back. When a pretty brunette named Erika introduced him as Moses and Teresa saw fingers flying, she understood the man was deaf. She smiled and signed her thanks which made Moses's grin go wider and nod as he gathered all the suitcases to take them to their rooms.

"I didn't know you knew sign language," Georgie said as Eddie and Lucas went with Erika toward what Teresa thought must be the registration desk.

"I had to do something to fill my time since you moved to Montana," Teresa explained. "I'm not very good yet, but it's actually been helpful. I could communicate with the sweetest deaf couple who brought their little boy to the hospital for surgery."

"That's really awesome," Georgie said. "You've always been a quick learner."

"Speaking of learning." Teresa slid her eyes toward where Eddie and Lucas were in a conversation with Erika and a very

large cowboy who had introduced himself as Derek Hawkins, owner of Rawhide Ranch. Teresa had far more important things to discuss other than where her room might be or the long list of amenities the Ranch offered.

Georgie's gaze followed hers and grinning, she nodded and took a slow step backward and then another and another until the girls were several feet away from the others.

"What's up?" Georgie asked.

Darting a glance back to the desk, Teresa lowered her voice to a whisper. "I think I'm in trouble."

Georgie's eyes widened. "What kind of trouble?"

"Does it matter?"

"Of course it does." Georgie rolled her eyes and giggled. "Girlfriend, you won't believe what I've learned since I've been at the Ranch. There are about a million different types of trouble. There's pranks, but I should really let Wren and Sadie explain those because they are like the uncontested queens of pranks. Then there is mischief which has several subcategories including—"

"The spanking kind," Teresa said, cutting to the chase.

"Well, yes, there's that kind too, but—"

"No, I mean my kind is that kind. You know, the spanking kind," Teresa clarified. "And it's all due to you!"

"Me?"

The exclamation was enough to have Eddie looking back over his shoulder and Lucas's eyes narrowing as they zeroed in on the girls.

“Shhh,” Teresa hissed, giving a little wave to the three men.

“I haven’t seen you in months, what could I possibly have to do with you being in trouble?” Georgie asked.

“Does breaking and entering ring any bells?”

“Oh, that.” Georgie flapped her hand as if to wave the memory of it away.

“Yes, that,” Teresa jumped in.

“Hey, I never ratted you out,” Georgie declared. “In fact, not only did I keep your name out of the whole thing, I got my butt smacked and—”

“And that’s why I’m in trouble! I didn’t and now that we’re here...” Teresa gestured toward the group at the counter.

A huge smile lit Georgie’s face as she patted Teresa’s arm. “You don’t have anything to worry about, I promise.”

Teresa’s head whipped back to stare at her best friend in disbelief. “How can you say that? You said there are spankings happening all over this place all day long. Did the big cowboy decide to change the rules? Are they outlawed here? Do Daddies make you go to jail instead? I told Eddie I couldn’t go to jail when the apples fell...”

Georgie took the opportunity to speak when Teresa had to take a breath. “Holy roly poly. If I hadn’t seen Eddie on the ground, I’d think it was you who hit your head and have a concussion. You’re not making any sense, Tere—”

When the sound of boots echoing against the wooden floor let her know the men were returning and time was indeed running out, Teresa gave a final attempt to make her point.

Taking a deep breath, she said, “Don’t you see, the rain might be over but I just know the storm is about to start!”

Georgia’s confusion was still clear on her face, her blue eyes puzzled, her brow furrowed, but when she saw Teresa shoot a glance toward Eddie and saw the corner of her brother’s lip curl, understanding dawned.

“Are you telling me you actually think my brother is—”

“About to spank me and I don’t know what to do!” Teresa wailed.

It was as if all Georgie had needed was the cry of distress to set her in motion. She grabbed Teresa’s hand and began walking away even as Eddie called out for them to hold up. Without breaking stride, Georgie looked over her shoulder. “Sorry, we can’t be late to our meeting.”

“You can go, but Tizzy and I have our own agenda to—”

“Sorry, not sorry. Wedding meetings trump yours. We’ll see you later!” The last was uttered in a high sing-song tone as Georgie shot a huge smile over her shoulder and then dragged Teresa down a wide hallway off the main lobby.

“Where are we going?” Teresa asked as she noticed gleaming white tile had replaced the hardwood beneath her feet.

Instead of answering, Georgie drew them to a halt a few feet down the corridor. “To be clear, are you saying my stodgy know-it-all brother is your Daddy?”

“Uh... no?” Teresa answered, feeling her face warm. “How could he be? I mean, even if I... uh, you told me he was off limits eons ago and... and... um, why would you even think that?”

Georgie looked at her a long moment and then took a step to the side to look back the way they'd come. Teresa turned to follow her gaze and saw Master Derek, Lucas, and Eddie standing on the threshold but not following them. Georgie gave the men a wave. After staring at them a few moments, her best friend nodded as if she'd somehow gotten the information she needed. Turning back to look at Teresa she asked, "But you really think he's gonna spank you?"

Forget her face, Teresa's entire body felt as if she could self-combust at any moment. "Yes! Because your Daddy spanked you for breaking into Eddie's and I got off scot-free!"

"I guess that makes sense, sort of," Georgie said.

Teresa's world took another spin into a different dimension when doors began to open and what appeared to be Big people, some dressed in clothing more often seen on people chronically younger and others wearing matching uniforms, started pouring from rooms on both sides of the corridor. Laughter and squeals reminded her that this dimension had a name and it was Rawhide Ranch.

When one of the girls called out "Here comes the bride," Teresa remembered why she'd come to Montana. "What's the matter with me! Maybe I did hit my head. This is your special time. I came here to be your maid of honor, not cause all this trouble. You go with your friends. I need to—"

"Oh no you don't," Georgie said as Teresa attempted to pull her hand free when a trio of girls joined them.

"Is this your maid of honor?" the tallest of the three asked with a bright smile.

"Yes, this is my bestest friend, Teresa. Teresa, these are my friends, Hayleigh, Sadie, and Wren."

“Hi, Georgie has told me a lot about you.” Teresa was a bit overwhelmed but pleased to meet the women Georgie was always talking about.

“I bet she has,” the one introduced as Sadie said with a roll of her eyes and a giggle.

“She’s told us quite a lot about you too,” Wren added, giving Teresa a hug.

“It’s a pleasure to meet a fellow co-conspirator. Good job finding that key in the flowerpot,” Hayleigh chirped, wrapping her arms around Teresa in a big hug.

“I thought you didn’t mention me?” Teresa said, giving Georgie a side-eye.

“Not to anyone who wouldn’t understand.” Georgie gave a little shrug.

Before Teresa could question that reasoning, Hayleigh asked, “Did your brother make it here yet?”

“Yup, he’s back there by my Daddy.” Georgie turned to waggle her fingers at the men still standing in the center of the doorway, legs shoulder-width apart, and arms crossed over their chests.

“Um, dare I ask why they are just standing there?” Wren asked softly.

“And why is my Daddy with them?” Sadie added, giving her Daddy a wave which was returned by Derek while the other two men just nodded.

“More importantly, what are they waiting for?” Hayleigh asked.

“To unleash the storm,” Teresa whispered which immediately had the attention of a quartet of Littles focusing

on her.

“What storm?” Wren asked. “I didn’t hear there was a storm coming.”

“I don’t think she meant a literal storm,” Sadie explained. “More figurative like in ‘The Clash of the Titans’ with that whole who let the kraken out thing.”

“Gee, thanks for clearing that up,” Hayleigh said, rolling her eyes while bumping her hip against Sadie’s. “Crap on a cracker, will someone tell us what is going on?”

“Let’s just say Teresa needs our help,” Georgie said. “Who’s in?”

Three sets of hands instantly shot up into the air and Teresa could only stare as the girls she just met not only jumped in without having a single clue as to what was going on, they moved silently to fall into position as if they were the rear guard protecting her flanks in some military maneuver. Of course the word *flank* had her thinking of Eddie and that had goosebumps popping out on her arms, the muscles of her butt clenching, and her knees beginning to knock.

Georgie gave her no time to consider bolting. The moment Teresa was completely surrounded, Georgie waved her hand in the air and the group began to walk further down the hall.

“Where are we going?” Teresa asked as the tide of Littles filling the hall parted like the Red Sea to let their group pass.

“To get you the answers you’re gonna need when dealing with your Daddy,” Georgie said.

“Wait a minute.” Teresa came to an abrupt halt and grunted a bit when her rear guard bumped into her. “I never said your brother was my Daddy. I—you—you told me to leave him alone.”

“Good grief, I can’t believe you even remember that. I told you that when we both got braces,” Georgie said. “I didn’t want your first time playing kissy-face to wind up lip locked with your metal stuck in my brother’s mouth. Now that you’re all grown up, I couldn’t think of a better partner for Eddie, though how he isn’t driving you nuts has me questioning the state of your head again. Lord knows the guy has been torturing me for my entire life.”

“That explains the coffee mug,” Teresa murmured, wondering why she felt a bit let down that his possession of the mug was not due to any kinky side he might have.

“What mug?” Georgie asked.

Feeling her face heating, Teresa shook her head. “Never mind, it doesn’t matter.”

Georgie gave her a long look. “Whatever, but what does matter is do you or do you not want Eddie for your very own Daddy?”

If only it were that easy, Teresa thought. “I don’t even know if he *is* a Daddy. I mean, he’s been threatening to spank me from the moment he saw my fingernails, but he never said anything about wanting more than that.”

“Fingernails?” Wren asked, her crinkled brow showing her confusion.

“She means stars,” Georgie offered as if that cleared it up. “Ladies, tell our student what is the first sign that an adult isn’t just a Big but he is a Daddy?”

“They always threaten spankings!” three voices chorused as one.

“Exactly,” Georgie said, her blonde head nodding. “And where do Daddies who like to spank go with their Littles?”

“Rawhide Ranch!” the trio shouted together.

“Correct again,” Georgie’s blue eyes twinkled as if she were having the best time ever. “And, Teresa, how many times has Eddie repeated this threat?”

“A lot,” Teresa admitted. “After the great apple slide, he gave me a rain check and I thought he’d just forget about it, but he keeps dropping hints that he’s going to cash out and then he mentioned it again when we were in the cab... well, before he fell out that is.”

“Huh?” Hayleigh said.

Sadie giggled. “I think the rain check has something to do with the coming storm.”

“And the fingernail? And apples? And falling out of a cab?” Wren asked.

“I never said I was Sherlock Holmes, I can only do so much,” Sadie said with a shrug.

“None of that matters,” Georgia assured them. “All Teresa needs to know is what makes up about 99% of a Daddy and his Little’s love language?”

“Spankings!”

The yelled word had the straggling Littles still in the hallway looking over their shoulders with more than a few hands going back to cover an unprotected bottom. It also drew the attention of tall woman wearing a black skirt and a pristine white blouse. Her black hair shot through with silver strands was worn in a tight bun, but it was her eyes framed by thick-rimmed glasses that had every Little in sight go silent.

“Is there a problem here, ladies?” she asked, her gaze focused on their group.

“No, Nanny J,” the four Littles around Teresa echoed respectfully.

“We’re just um... showing Teresa around. She’s my maid of honor,” Georgie said as if needing to justify the fifth in their group.

“It’s nice to meet you, Teresa,” Nanny J said coming toward them.

Teresa could only stare as the woman seemed to float rather than actually take steps but when she came to a stop at their circle, Teresa swallowed hard and managed to say, “It’s nice to meet you too, ma’am.”

“Since you’re a new Little, yelling is not allowed inside. It disrupts others in conversations and can upset the Littles in the nursery. Where do outdoor voices belong?”

Teresa’s mind raced as she realized this austere woman seemed to believe she was an official Little. If she corrected the assumption, would that cause Nanny J to separate her from the other four girls? Not sensing any help coming from her squad, and desperate for any advice they might offer, Teresa decided to simply say, “Um... outside?”

“Good girl, that’s correct.” Nanny J gave her a smile before looking over each of her companions. “As for you four, this is not the first time you’ve been warned. Do I need to call a meeting with your Daddies?”

“No, ma’am, we won’t shout again,” Sadie promised.

“We’re on our way to the playground,” Hayleigh offered, pointing at the door to their escape route at the end of the hall.

Nanny J nodded. “A far more appropriate place and I’m assuming one of your Daddies will be accompanying you?”

The girls looked around at each other while Teresa's gaze darted down the hall. She had a good idea that admitting they were actively trying to avoid that very thing wouldn't earn her another "good girl". Before she could tell a flat-out fib, Sadie came to her rescue.

"No, ma'am. My Daddy is talking to Georgie and Teresa's Daddies. But if there's no playground monitor, we promise we'll just go to Georgie's office."

"And talk in our indoor voices," Georgie popped up to add.

With a final glance around the circle, Nanny J nodded again, wished them a good day, and returned to her room. The moment her black boots stepped over the threshold, the four Ranch Littles released pent-up breaths while Teresa shook her head.

"Wow, she's amazing!" she said, truly impressed by the very regal air emanating from the woman.

"Come on before she decides to demonstrate her amazing talent with that paddle in her pocket," Georgie warned, tugging on Teresa's hand.

The group took off and were almost at the door when "No running!" was declared in a voice that Teresa could argue had been just as loud as the Littles' shout. However, a glance at the nanny's doorway showed the woman had stepped outside her room again. It was as if she had a sixth sense or something. Teresa had a sneaky feeling that warning she'd been offered had been her one and only. That conclusion had her thinking of spankings, which instantly had her thoughts going to the man she'd left at the other end of the hall.

Shooting another glance down the long white expanse, she wasn't all that shocked to see Eddie still standing there. When he caught her eye, his lips turned up and the dimples she so adored appeared.

"You can run, but you can't hide, little girl," he called only to have Nanny's head whipping toward him.

"See! He's doing it again," Teresa hissed to the other girls.

"Yep, and he's definitely using a Daddy voice," Hayleigh supplied.

"Meeting time," Georgie reminded.

A nanosecond before she was tugged through and the door closed behind her, Teresa hedged her bets with both Nanny J and Eddie by calling out a generic, "Sorry!"

CHAPTER 4

Eddie

“WHY DO I GET THE FEELING THIS WEEK IS GOING TO INVOLVE far more than a wedding?” Derek asked.

“Well, there is that whole roasting a turkey and stuffing oneself to the point of unconsciousness,” Eddie offered.

Derek chuckled. “Yes, there is that. However, unless I’m wrong, I was talking about the fact it appears you’ve found the Little you were missing when you were here last.”

“You’re not wrong,” Eddie confirmed.

“I’ll leave you in Lucas’ capable hands, then. I’ll have Erika follow-up on the things we discussed.”

“Thanks, Derek, I appreciate your help.”

“Welcome back to Rawhide. Have a good day.” Derek tipped his Stetson and left him and Lucas standing in what was now a completely empty, totally silent corridor.

“Shall we go after them?” Lucas asked.

“Nope. Tizzy may have run, but she’ll be back.”

“I don’t know,” Lucas countered. “She seemed a little spooked when you fell out of the cab.”

“She was spooked well before then.” Eddie chuckled. “A little longer is only going to make the coming reckoning all the sweeter. How about we grab a beer and you can catch me up with everything that’s happened since your birthday to the phone call announcing you’re marrying my kid sister.”

“And you can catch me up on when you decided to become a Daddy,” Lucas countered.

They settled on the Mexican restaurant and once seated in a chair with a beer in his hand, Eddie listened as Lucas waxed poetic about how his life couldn’t be more perfect. He took another swig and hid his grin at the thought that the catalyst of all the change he could see in his best friend, was none other than his very own little sister.

“I don’t know how you did it,” Eddie said when Lucas paused.

“Did what?” Lucas asked, after taking a pull on his own beer.

“Tamed Georgie. She’s been a little hurricane from the moment she came into this world, and—”

“She’s still a force of nature,” Lucas cut in. “I wouldn’t want it any other way. Believe me, any taming you think is being done is from her learning that actions have consequences.”

“Hey, Mom and Dad weren’t exactly pushovers,” Eddie said defending his parents as he selected another tortilla chip to dip into a bowl of spicy salsa.

“Neither were you, but I’m not talking about your parents grounding her to a room where she can lounge on her bed and

talk on her cell phone lamenting the woes of being a teenager or even your lectures when she really stepped out of line. I'm talking about consequences that make it very hard to sit comfortably for longer than it takes for a stern lecture to be over."

Eddie gave the words some consideration as he chewed on the chip and then chuckled and nodded. "As a big brother, I guess I'm supposed to get all huffy about laying a hand on my kid sister, but, as *Georgie's* big brother, I say well done. She might not be able to sit, but that girl hasn't ceased smiling and giggling since she took it upon herself to find you."

"Stalk me, you mean," Lucas corrected. "And if you tell her I said this, I'll deny it. But I've never been so grateful to have a stalker in my life. Underneath all that enthusiasm and brattiness is one hell of a woman I can't wait to make my wife."

"I can see that. You haven't smiled this much in all the years I've known you," Eddie said sincerely. "All I can say is welcome to the family. We may be a bit dysfunctional but, hell, I promise it won't be a boring ride."

Lucas' laugh rang out as he lifted his bottle to clink against Eddie's. "Just remember, you can't spell dysfunctional without the 'f u n'."

"Speaking of fun, I've always thought it was just Teresa who was the excitable, scatterbrained one," Eddie said. "But after witnessing her escape helped by not only Georgie but her three friends, I think I might have been mistaken."

Lucas snorted. "It seems we were both a bit blind. How can you have forgotten how Georgie was always bouncing about like Tigger or how many times we caught her crying her eyes out over some sappy movie, one involving animated

characters, no less? Hell, I had no clue the girl inside the very capable woman was a Little who desperately wanted me to be her Daddy. From what you've told me about your Tizzy, it seems our girls have far more in common than a love of Disney." Lucas took another pull on his beer as Eddie nodded.

"And if I'm not mistaken, my Little and her friends are about to shower your Little with all sorts of tips about how to handle her Daddy."

Eddie gave him a wry grin. "I thought it was the Daddy who handled everything."

Lucas barked out a laugh. "You have a lot to learn, my friend. You might be one very experienced Dom, but unless you've been keeping something from me, I'm not aware of you ever having a relationship with your very own Little."

"Tizzy might have admitted she's a Little, but she hasn't admitted she's mine... yet," Eddie corrected.

"I wouldn't hold my breath if I were you," Lucas said, crunching his own chip after dunking it in queso.

Eddie lowered his beer bottle to the table and stared as his best friend ate another chip. "What are you saying, Lucas? Like you said, I know I don't have as much experience as you at all this Daddy/Little stuff, but are you saying I'm not Daddy material?"

"Not at all." Lucas set his own beer down and sitting straighter in his chair, leaned his elbows on the table. "I think you have everything you need to be a fabulous Daddy. All I'm saying is that at this very moment, my Little and all her Little friends, are making sure Teresa understands that having a Daddy can be fun, but finding *her* Daddy is vital. She's getting tips on testing you to see how you measure up. She'll be

getting advice on pushing your buttons to see if you're all talk and no action. Littles are the most loving, trusting souls on this planet, but they don't give that love and trust easily to just anyone."

"Agreed, but not sure I'm getting what you're trying to say," Eddie admitted. He'd seldom heard his friend be so serious.

"I'm saying two things really. The first being that though I'm not related to your Tizzy, as a Daddy, it is my responsibility to step in if necessary. I love you like a brother, but if you're just looking for a plaything while you're here at the Ranch, there are Service Submissives who would be more than happy to spend some time with you."

"I haven't been interested in anyone other than Teresa in quite some time," Eddie stated. "What we choose to do together is—"

"Not my business," Lucas interrupted. "All you need to know is if you hurt her, don't be surprised when you find yourself laid out on the ground again. Only this time, it won't be due to an accident. Every person, Daddy or not, at Rawhide Ranch takes the responsibility of keeping every Little safe."

Eddie could only stare. He had no words. He'd grown up with Lucas since they were toddlers. He'd seen changes in Lucas when he came to the Ranch back in May to surprise him and Georgie on their birthday. But the man seated across the table? He was a man Eddie had never met before. Instead of being pissed off, Eddie felt a sense of what he could only describe as "rightness". If he even had the slightest doubt this man, this place, weren't right for his kid sister, it evaporated with Lucas' words.

"I can live with that," Eddie finally said.

“Good. Second, while Tizzy is going to be pushing you to the max, it is my recommendation that you start as you intend to continue.”

“I had planned on it.” Eddie ate a chip then added, “I’ve been dropping hints for over a month about calling due the raincheck on the spanking she has coming for her part in breaking into my place.”

Lucas sat back and crossed his arms over his chest. “That’s what I’m talking about. How do you expect Teresa to name you as her Daddy if she is left hanging for weeks about something that happened over six months ago? Dude, you’re lucky she is even considering you as a Daddy candidate.”

Wanting to debate the point, but intelligent enough to know he’d lose, Eddie sighed and nodded. “I hear you. I’ve wanted to do more than text or call her, but things have just been crazy at the hospital lately, and I haven’t had the time.”

“Make that three things and this might be the most important, so pay attention. *Make* the time. I know you’re a big-shot doctor, and I’m proud of all the good work you’ve done. But there is more to life than work. If you’re sincere about being her Daddy, it’s going to take real time and dedication. From what Georgie has told me about Teresa, she loves hard. If you’re just here to try on the title, if you can’t honestly offer her all of you, then as much as it will hurt at first, let her go.”

Eddie sat up straight himself. “I’ve given all that a great deal of thought. Hell, it’s practically all I’ve thought about since she ran into me at the store. I can promise you that if Teresa does me the honor of choosing me, I’ll make it my life’s goal to be the best damn Daddy on the planet.”

“Second best,” Lucas corrected, his posture relaxing as he grinned.

“Whatever.” Eddie rolled his eyes. “Just saying that those things we just discussed with Erika and Derek won’t be happening until I sit Teresa down to make sure we are on the same page for the long run and not only while we’re here.”

“And then?” Lucas prompted.

“Then the rain will stop and she’ll learn that her Daddy isn’t as much of a pushover as she might believe,” Eddie said with determination. “Thanks for the advice and for moving your ass to the Ranch in the first place. It seems that what they say about location, location, location is true. Rawhide is the perfect place to, as you say, start as I intend to continue,” Eddie stated, reaching a hand across the table.

“I couldn’t agree more, and I’m happy as shit you’re here.” Lucas slapped Eddie’s palm and they exchanged a flurry of twists and slaps in the secret handshake they’d invented when standing at the bus stop on their first day of kindergarten.



CHAPTER 5

Teresa

IT APPEARED THAT ALL OF GEORGIE'S ENTHUSIASTIC descriptions about her new home didn't do the place credit. Granted, she'd only seen a very small part of the Ranch, but the moment Teresa was pulled through the door, all she could think was that she was like Alice but instead of falling down a rabbit hole, she'd landed in a place better than she would ever have been able to imagine. With one of her hands in Georgie's and the other captured by Wren, Teresa was soon running toward the most incredible playground she had ever seen.

She'd sat in swings at the neighborhood park and even tried the slide a time or two, but she'd always felt like a giant in a kid's world. With Sadie pointing out the presence of what Teresa could only assume was the monitor Sadie had mentioned, the girls were free to play. The moment they all claimed swings and began pumping their legs to go higher and higher, Teresa felt the tension that had held her in its clutches since she'd awakened that morning disappear.

"This is amazing! It's like some magical pixie dusted the equipment to fit adults perfectly!"

“I’ve heard my Daddy called a lot of things, but a pixie isn’t one of them,” Sadie said with a giggle. “Though I will admit he is quite magical when we *play* together.”

Hayleigh laughed as she swung. “This is just a small part of the Ranch. Wait until you see the inside. Oh, and eat in the cafeteria.”

“Her Daddy is Chef Connor,” Georgie explained. “His mac and cheese will have you swooning!”

“And if you think this is great, wait until you see the stables,” Wren offered. “Get your Daddy to sign up for a trail ride. There’s not a better way to explore the Ranch than doing so from the back of a horse.”

Teresa smiled at the thought. She loved horses and still had an entire stable full of plastic ponies from her childhood. But, she didn’t have a Daddy of her own. But that didn’t mean she couldn’t stop fantasizing about the only man she’d ever wanted for her Daddy. Then again, if Eddie followed through with his threat, it might be a little uncomfortable to bounce up and down in a saddle. Her bottom tingled at the thought of it being spanked by Eddie and her tummy flipped at the thought of him possibly baring her butt before that spanking started. Realizing her panties were a bit moist, she blushed and turned her attention back to Wren.

“That sounds like fun,” she said, kicking her legs to go even higher. “However, we’re not really here for fun, we’re here for Georgie’s wedding.”

“Hey!” Georgie exclaimed, her indignation evident as she immediately jumped from her swing and turned to face the others, her hands on her hips. “Are you saying my wedding won’t be fun?”

“Jiminy Cricket, no! I’m sorry!” Teresa said instantly. “I didn’t mean it that way. I just meant that this is supposed to be your special time, not mine.” Thinking that didn’t sound much better, she shook her head, her curls flying in her face. Removing one hand from the chain to swipe her hair out of her eyes, she began to drag the toes of her shoes in the dirt to slow her swing. “You’re going to be the most beautiful bride anyone’s ever seen walk down the aisle at the best wedding in the history of the world. And I didn’t mean being your maid of honor won’t be fun or isn’t special, it is. I’m very excited and will do my best to make you proud of me.”

“I’m always proud of you, silly,” Georgie said, stepping forward to wrap her arms around her best friend the moment she came to a full stop. “We’ve been dreaming and practicing getting married like a gazillion different ways with a bazillion different grooms since we were little girls. You’ll be the bestest maid of honor I could ever have.”

“Thank you,” Teresa said.

“You’re welcome.” Georgie gave Teresa another quick squeeze before releasing her. “You can make it up to me by giving me the best wedding gift ever.”

Georgie and Lucas had set up a wedding site that listed the gifts they would appreciate. Instead of boring things like toasters, dishes, or towels, their list included vouchers one could contribute to such as lodging, admission tickets, a dinner at a themed restaurant or a breakfast with Cinderella to be enjoyed during their honeymoon at Disneyland. Teresa and Eddie had discussed what to give and they’d both contributed to upgrading the honeymooner’s room to a night in the Magic Kingdom’s castle, adding an additional day to their park pass, and even pitched in to purchase matching Mickey and Minnie

ears that were presently packed in Tizzy's luggage. However, she had a feeling that none of those were the gifts her best friend was talking about.

"Do you have something in mind?" she asked, not wanting to spoil the surprise of the gifts waiting for the newlyweds.

"Most definitely," Georgie assured her. "All you have to give me is your solemn oath that you are going to take this opportunity to let the Little inside you come out to play. I want you to play on the playground, swim in the pool, stuff yourself with mac and cheese, dino nuggets, hot chocolate and ice cream sundaes. You have to promise to ride horses with Wren and join in the turkey trot and pie-eating contest."

Teresa thought that was an awful lot to expect in the week she'd be at the Ranch, but she nodded. "I'll do my best to do all that... well, except for the swimming. It's too cold to swim."

"Not here it isn't," Sadie assured her. "There is a pool and another playground inside where it's nice and warm."

"Don't forget the dungeon," Hayleigh offered, still swinging but at a far less frenetic pace.

"Hayleigh!" Wren exclaimed, her eyes going wide. "Littles can't go in there!"

"Some can," Hayleigh countered with a shrug. "It depends on their Daddy and they can always try to sneak in. We all know breaking and entering is within Teresa's job skills."

Feeling her face heating, Teresa said, "I don't think—"

"That reminds me, there is one more gift I'm going to insist on," Georgie cut her off.

Teresa shook her head even without having the gift specified. “I’m not gonna promise to commit a crime. I’ve told you, I can’t go to jail!”

“Well, I still say you’d rock that orange jumpsuit,” Georgie teased with a smile. “Though, you won’t get one with this gift. You do this and it’s not even going to land you anyplace you don’t want to be.”

Teresa had seen that smile a trillion times. It meant her best friend was thinking of some scheme that inevitably would lead into trouble. And just like she had a trillion times before, she knew she was going to do whatever it was Georgie had conjured up in her evil little mind.

“Okay, lay it on me,” Teresa said and Sadie, Hayleigh and Wren all jumped from their swings to gather around them.

“I’m beyond thrilled that you’ve finally admitted you’re a Little, but before you do another thing, you pull your Big-girl panties up, march yourself back inside, find Eddie, and tell him you want him to be your Daddy.”

So people’s mouths really did fall open with no sound coming out. Well, if sound was defined as something intelligent. Teresa could only stare and make some sort of uh-uh-uh noise.

Georgie smiled and took her hand. “Hey, you know you want to. This is me, remember. I know you’ve been giving him googly-eyes for years. I bet you’ve been dreaming of this every single night since Eddie sentenced you to a spanking for breaking into his place.”

And every moment of every day, Teresa thought, but said, “That was your fault!”

“Guilty as charged and not sorry,” Georgie retorted with a shrug. “And, unlike you, I did get my butt blistered. But you know what else I got?”

Teresa shook her head, a bit scared to hear there was something worse than getting her ass roasted.

“It got me my Daddy,” Georgie said, all signs of teasing gone. “And, Teresa, we all want you to get the very same thing, don’t we, girls?”

“Oh, yes,” Wren said.

“Absolutely,” Hayleigh agreed.

“There is nothing more magical than finding the one Daddy who is meant for you,” Sadie said solemnly.

Warmth flooded through Teresa as she looked at their faces and saw the honesty and caring in them. Three of these women had known her for less than an hour and one most of her life. Yet they had the exact same look on their faces, each giving soft smiles, their eyes shining with a contentment and happiness Teresa had yet to find and wanted more than she wanted her next breath.

Still she had to point out a discrepancy in Georgie’s statement. “You said I won’t wind up somewhere I don’t wish to be. If I do this, and if any of those books we’ve read are even skirting close to the truth, then I believe I will find myself landing over Eddie’s lap with my butt bare.”

Four heads swiveled to look at each other and then four Littles started giggling.

“Oh, please, if you’re saying you haven’t imagined that countless times, then all I have to say is your nose is growing, Pinocchio,” Georgie said, using her hand to mimic a nose as long as her arm could reach.

“Exactly!” Wren said.

“If you don’t, then he’ll definitely be doing something wrong,” Hayleigh offered sagely.

“There’s always a chance he’ll let you keep your pants on,” Sadie said which had the other three poking their elbows into her sides. “Hey, I said *maybe*, but I wouldn’t count on it.”

Georgie took Teresa’s hands in hers. “Seriously though, if you don’t want this, if this hasn’t been your dream forever, and most definitely if my brother is not the man you want, then I understand. This is probably the most important decision you’ll ever make and none of us want you to make it unless you want—”

“I want him with every fiber of my being,” Teresa admitted softly.

Four squeals rent the air, sending the squirrels scurrying up a tree. Teresa threw back her head and added her own as she found herself bouncing about in a circle in a rather boisterous Ring-Around-the Rosie and feeling her heart filling with acceptance of being Little. It was several minutes later before they all fell to the ground, each giggling and holding onto tummies gradually settling. Teresa stared up at the big blue sky and stopped freaking out about the possibility of a spanking. Heck, she’d take a dozen even on the bare as long as it was Eddie Mayer delivering them.

Pushing to her feet, she helped the others up and then hugged each one. “Thank you so much,” she said. “I knew Georgie was my friend, but now I have three more.” Once she’d completed the round, she ran her hands down her sides to brush off the grass clinging to her jeans, only to hear giggles breaking out again.

“What?” she said.

“Nothing, it’s just that, well...” Sadie began, but couldn’t continue as giggles overtook her again.

“What she means is that’s *not* the part of the body we always seem to be rubbing,” Hayleigh offered.

Teresa blushed and felt her entire body tingle. She smiled and slid her hands around to cup the seat of her jeans. “Better?”

“Much!” Wren gave her a huge smile.

“There’s only one more thing left,” Georgie said.

“What is that?” Teresa asked, anxious to soak in everything these girls had to share about the wonderful world of Littleness.

“Go find your Daddy, and don’t come back until you do!”

“Wow, who knew bossiness was genetic?” Teresa teased, giving her bestie a final hug before spinning around to do exactly as ordered.

Not wishing to run into Nanny J and explain why she was alone, Teresa decided to take the long way, walking around the lodge.

“Eddie,” she tried and shook her head. If she was going to convince him of her sincerity, she’d have to present herself properly. Clearing her throat, she tried again.

“Daddy...” Nope that definitely wouldn’t do. She’d be foolish to assume it was a title he was even willing to consider. There was a huge difference between doling out a punishment they both knew she deserved and being a Daddy. Rounding the final corner of the building, she stopped at the bottom of the stairs she’d ascended only an hour or so before.

“Come on, Teresa, just breathe,” she lectured herself. “You can do this.” Closing her eyes, she took several deep breaths.

“Sir Eddie...” The moment the words were out of her mouth, she giggled. She could just imagine him looking at her like she’d lost her mind. “Jiminy Cricket. Don’t go all Tizzy now. You’re not asking him to marry you. Just if he might want to try being your Daddy.”

“Yes.”

Teresa’s eyes flew open to find she was no longer alone. Eddie stood at the top of the stairs smiling down at her. “And, just for the record, I rather enjoy when you go all Tizzy.”

“Really?”

Eddie chuckled as he came down the steps to stand in front of her. “Which one are you asking? Do I want to be your Daddy or if I like a bit of Tizziness?”

“Both.”

“Good, because again, yes. I would miss my Tizzy girl and I’d very much like to start working toward being the Daddy Teresa deserves.”

She blinked back tears as she threw her arms around his neck when he reached down to pick her up. He swung her around in a circle that felt so different than the one she’d shared with the other Littles. When he stopped spinning her and set her on her feet, he used a fingertip beneath her chin to tilt her head up so she was looking into eyes the color of the sky above them.

“We have a lot to discuss like expectations, rules, and I’m sure you’ll have a million questions—”

“Just one more,” Teresa interrupted to say. When his eyebrow quirked and didn’t that just make her insides all warm and gooey, she smiled and said, “Will you please finally spank me, Daddy?”

“Yes, little girl, I will.”

He bent to kiss her softly and when he pulled away and took her hand, they ascended the stairs side by side.

CHAPTER 6

Eddie

WELL, THAT HAD GONE EASIER AND QUICKER THAN HE'D expected it to. Not that he should be surprised. That was Tizzy's way: to dive in headfirst. And now he was a Daddy. Tizzy's Daddy. And he was bound and determined to be the best damn Daddy that ever was. Never mind that he had no actual Daddy experience and only a vague idea of how to be one or what it actually entailed. He was a damn brain surgeon. He could figure it out, right?

He had to; he had no choice. They were standing in his room now, with their luggage between them, and the door to her adjoining room open, though she'd made no move to enter it. She was just standing there staring at him, with wide wondrous eyes, waiting for him to make a move.

Swallowing thickly because he had a lump in his throat, he grabbed her luggage and stepped over the threshold that separated the two rooms. "This is nice, spacious," he said, before realizing that she hadn't followed him.

"Tizzy?" He poked his head around the corner.

She was just staring at him, unblinking, her eyes full of questions, her head tilted to the side in a way that seemed to ask, “*what happens next?*”.

Clearing his throat, he dropped her suitcases and went back to stand in front of her, bracing his hands on her shoulders. “I guess we have a lot to talk about.”

She licked her lips and nodded. “I guess so.”

Her earlier bravado had faded. She looked fragile somehow, like a Little girl, just waiting for direction.

“Have you... have you ever had a Daddy?” His logical self knew the answer wasn’t important. She was twenty-five, a gorgeous, successful woman. She’d had boyfriends. He’d met a few of them, but none who seemed too significant. None who had really lasted beyond the initial butterflies phase. The dating didn’t bother him, but if she’d had a Daddy... if one of those men had touched her in that way... he might just have to hunt them down and kill them.

Thankfully, she shook her head. “I-I had some who tried, but”—she shook her head again—“they didn’t get it. It wasn’t real. It was just a game to them. A sex thing.”

He drew a deep steadying breath when she said *sex* and had to work to keep from clenching his hands into fists at his sides.

Instead, he reached for her hand, and took it in his, bypassing an oversized armchair and its matching ottoman to lead her to a very comfortable-looking leather couch that stood in front of an electric fireplace.

Sitting, he pulled her down beside him, just close enough that his thigh grazed hers. He might not know much about being a Daddy, but he’d spent enough years getting his

education to know that in order to learn, one had to research. And the only way to know which subjects needed more in-depth study was to start with the basics.

Softly stroking his thumb over her fingers, he waited until she looked up to meet his gaze. “What does having a Daddy mean to you, little Tizzy?”

Her eyes grew wide, and the corners of her mouth drew up into a shy smile as if she couldn’t quite believe she was being asked what *she* wanted. “I dunno...”

Eddie frowned. “Don’t lie to Daddy. Something tells me you know exactly what it would mean, and you need to communicate that to me. I’m not playing around. This isn’t about sex and a couple smacks on the ass to me. I’m a dedicated person. If I’m going to do something, little Tizzy, I’m going to do it right, and I need you to tell me how to do that.”

She frowned, her button nose crinkling, and her forehead furrowing. “But... you’re supposed to be the Daddy. Daddies are supposed to be in charge.”

“And trust me, I will be, but you have input here. So tell me what it means to you. I’m not going to ask again.” He made sure to put a firmness in his voice that would tell her he wasn’t messing around, and it must have worked because her already wide eyes opened wider. Her eyes were one of her best features. They weren’t brown or green, but a shade in between the two. And with the light coming from the window catching tiny golden specs sprinkled within their depths, he was mesmerized. Thick, long lashes fluttered as she blinked and he instantly wondered how soft they’d be against his skin if she placed a butterfly kiss on his cheek. His smile at the thought

seemed to relax his Tizzy as she took a breath and the fingers he was still stroking softened their grip on his hand.

“I-I like that you gave me a nickname. I mean... I’ve always hated that you called me Tizzy, but... I like... you... um...” she trailed off.

“You like that I added *little* to it?”

She nodded.

“Okay. That’s a start. A Daddy should have lots of sweet nicknames and terms of endearment for his Little girl. What else?”

She heaved a sigh, and met his eyes, and he could see a bit of her strong will poking through. “Rules. Outside of work... I’m kind of a mess. I try to be scheduled and organized and do the things and be at the places, but I lose track of time or forget what I’m doing, and it’s okay, like I’m used to it, and at home, it’s not really a big deal, but...”

She gulped, and he could see the shimmer of tears welling in the corners of her eyes.

“I really don’t want to mess up Georgie’s wedding. There’s gonna be all these important parties and fittings, and events, and things I need to be on time for and I know she would forgive me, but I’m the maid of honor. That’s, like, a big deal! And I don’t wanna mess anything up.”

“You won’t.” He squeezed her hand, and spoke encouragingly, but he could tell she didn’t quite believe him. “Your Daddy will make sure of it,” he added, speaking with a firm conviction.

He saw the relief as her whole body seemed to deflate from the tension she’d been holding. “We will talk about rules, and those rules will include going over the schedule of

wedding-related events and parties, but having a Daddy isn't all just about rules and consequences, now is it?"

Tizzy shook her head. "No, I guess not. A Daddy..." She paused and seemed to gather the courage for the things she wanted to say out loud.

He'd never seen her quite so timid, and it broke his heart. "Go on," he encouraged, "A Daddy..."

"A Daddy is patient. And loving. And likes cuddles, and treats, and Disney movies and making sure his Little girl eats good food and gets lots of sleep, and..." Her eyes darted from side to side, as if searching for her train of thought before they found his again. "Can you talk now, please? I said all the things. Can it be your turn now, Daddy?"

"Yes, little one." He could tell there was still something she was holding back, but he could also tell she didn't feel safe enough to voice it at this point. He dropped her hand, only to grab her hips and pull her into his lap, holding her close to his chest. "How am I doing?"

She blinked quickly, obviously shocked by the sudden intimacy, but it only took a moment before she relaxed against his chest. "Good."

"Good. Then can you tell me what you're leaving out? And don't say nothing, little girl, because Daddy knows that would be a lie, and if you lie to Daddy, he'll have to wash your mouth out with soap and paddle your bottom."

"Oh."

"Oh indeed." He pulled her closer, and took her chin between his fingers, pulling her gaze up to meet his. "Is that how you want to start this, on top of the spanking you've already got coming?"

Blush crept up her cheeks, tinging her pale skin with pink at the mention of the long-promised spanking. “No, I guess not, but... it’s embarrassing.”

He raised his brows and waited.

“It’s dumb. I don’t think I can say it out loud. ‘Cause... this is new, and a little weird, and I don’t want to force you into anything.”

Eddie nodded. “Lucky for you, I have no such qualms.” With one quick move he flipped her facedown across his lap and swatted her bottom over the top of her leggings.

“Ow! Eddie!” She scissored her legs, twisting in an attempt to climb back into his lap, but he held her in place and swatted her again.

“That’s Daddy to you. Now tell Daddy what you want. This is your last chance to talk or your pants and panties come off.”

“I-What? You can’t-Ow!”

He swatted her again, much harder this time, and repeated the action on the other cheek.

“Okay, okay, okay! It’s just... Daddies and their Little girls... don’t have separate rooms!”

Eddie’s breath caught as he remembered how she hadn’t followed him into the room that was supposed to be hers. Lifting her up, he placed her on the couch beside him, and stood, striding through the still open door. He returned with her suitcases in his hand and set them next to his. “There, was that so hard?”

“It was pretty hard, actually.”

He could tell she was serious, but also teasing. He grunted. “My hand was hard you mean.”

“Yeah, that too.”

“It’s gonna be awkward, and not feel real until we move past that spanking hanging between us, isn’t it?”

“I’m trying not to make it that way, but... it’s all I can think about.” She blew out a breath, and he could tell she was about two seconds away from living up to the nickname he’d given her. “You don’t have to. Like... you don’t have to do any of it. It’s okay if you’re just caught up in the Rawhide of it all. This place... it kind of has that effect, I think. And yeah, I like you, and yeah, you can spank me. But it doesn’t have to be all this. I don’t want to force your hand, or like... obligate you. I know I’m a lot.”

“Tizzy...” He growled, and the sound must have shocked her because she stopped abruptly and looked up at him.

“What?”

“You’re the perfect amount. And I want to spank you. And I want to be your Daddy, and yeah, maybe I’m caught up in the Rawhide of it all, maybe we both are, but... what if we’re not? What if this place, and the timing of Georgie and Lucas getting together and getting married... what if it’s just finally giving us an excuse to do what we’ve always wanted to do?”

“I...” She licked her lips. “What’s that?” she asked breathlessly.

“This.” Crossing to her in two long strides, he leaned down, tilted her chin up, and captured her lips in a soft, longing kiss. He kissed her just long enough to make sure she was kissing him back, then pulled away. “I’ve dreamed about doing that for a very long time. And I think you have too.”

“I have,” she admitted softly. Her cheeks were fully flushed now, and she covered them with her hands.

He knew the skin would be warm, and he longed to feel what she was feeling. But he knew now was not the time to be slow and gentle and romantic. That might work with other girls, but not with his Tizzy. If he didn't make a very clear and possessive move soon, she would start to do her Tizzy thing. He'd be giving her just enough rope to hang herself.

He pulled her to her feet. “So stop questioning it. Stop second guessing, and talking yourself out of it, or trying to talk me out of it, and just trust your Daddy.”

He could see in her eyes that was easier said than done. He shook his head. “Enough of this. We will go over limits and rules and all that stuff later. Right now all you need to know is that your safeword is apple.”

Her eyes lit with mirth. “Apple, huh?”

He didn't answer her. Instead, he unzipped the loud garish airport hoodie he'd given her and tossed it onto the couch behind them before lifting the hem of her tunic and pulling it over her head. Her bra was bright orange and trimmed with lace, and even with the padding, he could see her nipples were hard and pointed, pushing through the fabric.

She looked at him, with her face still a mask of shock as if she couldn't quite believe what was happening, and he dropped to his knees in front of her, working the zipper on the side of her boot, removing them one by one. Then her socks, bright orange and purple striped, and finally her leggings. He was beyond pleased to know that her panties matched her bra. Her body was svelte, with long athletic legs, and wide curvy hips. A stray curl the color of the sunset draped over her

shoulder to brush over the soft swell of her breast. He looked up at her from where he was still kneeling. “You’re gorgeous.”

She hugged herself and shivered.

Pushing to his feet, he stood in front of her, dwarfing her. “It’s time for your spanking, little one.”

The pulse point in the slim column of her throat jumped. “Okay, Daddy.”

TIZZY

OH GOD. IT WAS HAPPENING. SHE WAS STANDING HALF NAKED in front of Eddie Mayer, and it wasn’t a dream. Well, it was, but like the good kind. The kind that came true. And Eddie wanted to be her Daddy. He was saying all the right things, and acting terribly Daddy-like, and it all seemed just... too good to be true. Dropping her crossed arms from her chest, she used her right hand to pinch her left arm.

Oh, god. It hurt. This was real.

“It’s real. It’s real, and you are about to get your bottom spanked.”

Oh, crap. He’d seen her.

She just nodded, watching him wordlessly, waiting for his instruction, wondering what he’d do next.

Eddie looked around the room, as if wondering the same thing. She saw his gaze linger on the bed, then on the straight-

backed chairs in the kitchenette, and finally on the couch they'd recently vacated. And then, he walked away.

Only to the couch. Her eyes followed him as he sat, his thick thighs spreading out as they hit the cushions, creating a landing place for her body. She couldn't tear her eyes away from those thighs. They were masked by the fabric of his slacks, but she wondered what they'd look like underneath his clothes.

"Come here, Teresa." He used her name when he called her to him, pointing to the space on the floor directly between him.

For a moment, she didn't think her legs were going to move. Her feet seemed to be glued to the floor, but she managed to make her way to where he pointed and stood in front of him.

"Do you know why you're getting a spanking?"

The question took her breath away. This was how the Daddies did it in the books she read, but she'd never imagined having to answer the question herself. Her throat felt like it was full of sawdust.

"I... um... we broke into your house," she admitted. Her hands flew back to cover her bottom. "There was a key in the flowerpot! It's not like we picked the lock or broke a window or something!"

Eddie gave her a look that said he wasn't buying it, a look that was so very Daddy. "Did you have permission to use the key, or to enter my house? Did you even tell me you'd been there?"

"Well... no..."

“And that’s why you’re getting a spanking. A long-overdue, much-deserved spanking. But before we begin, I owe you an apology, little one.”

“What?” She couldn’t disguise her surprise. “For what?”

“For making you wait so long. For toying with your emotions. I didn’t mean to. I wanted...” He swallowed, thickly, and for the first time, it occurred to her that he was nervous too. “I wanted to, but I didn’t want to be presumptuous. I’m an experienced Dom, but I’ve never been a Daddy. And it’s different in a club. There’s an expectation, an understanding. I didn’t have that with you, and well... I was waiting for your cue, but I should have been more forward. I should have acted like a Daddy. I should have just asked for it.”

The anger she’d felt when he dropped her off after dinner that first October night, and every bossy time he’d texted her since faded away with his heartfelt apology. Every bit of hesitation and fear she’d felt over going through with this dissolved into nothingness, and the misunderstanding flowed away like water under the proverbial bridge.

“Do you forgive me?”

“Yes, Daddy. And I’m sorry for breaking into your house. Even with a key, I knew it was wrong, and I shouldn’t have done it. I’ve felt guilty for a long time. Th—” Her apology was cut short with his finger pressed against her lips.

“I’ll hear your sorries when they are falling from your pretty little lips as my hand crashes against your naughty bottom.”

Holy shit. Her pussy clenched and whooshed, dampening her panties. “Yes... Daddy.”

He took her hand and in one quick motion, tipped her facedown across his lap. His thighs were muscular and hard against her belly, and she could feel his erection.

“I should have brought my playbag, but I didn’t, so I’m going to use my hand, and I’m going to lower your panties, and give you a long, hard, bare-bottom spanking.”

“They have stuff... um... implements and things in the gift shop,” she offered weakly. Her immediate reaction was to smack her forehead at her own silliness, but before she could, Eddie captured her hands and pinned them to the center of her back with one of his. He tucked her body tightly against his waist and crossed one leg over the top of both of hers, pinning her into place. Even if she wanted to get away, she wouldn’t be able to.

What was her safeword again? Oh yeah, apple.

“This is a punishment, and it’s supposed to hurt, but if something is wrong, or you need to say something, or you just need a minute to breathe, call out apple and we’ll stop,” he reminded her as if reading her mind.

The air around them seemed to move as he lifted his hand, poising it above her bottom. Tizzy braced herself, at the same time she inwardly scolded herself for making a big deal out of something that was probably nothing. How bad could it be, really?

CHAPTER 7

Teresa

BAD.

The answer was really, really bad. Eddies' hand was hard and he was lighting into her backside with a vengeance. He started off strong, and he wasn't holding back.

"Owiiiiie!" she cried, surprised from the pain of it all. Eddie had been right; this went far beyond sex and a couple smacks on the ass. She'd known that in theory it would, but she'd definitely romanticized the reality.

"It's supposed to hurt. Stay still or I'll add extra," Eddie grunted.

"You don't need to!" Tizzy wailed, well aware that she was being overdramatic. "I already learned my lesson!"

"Oh yeah? And what lesson would that be?"

"Ummm, ummm... uh..." Teresa stalled, her mind going blank. Dammit, why couldn't she remember what he was spanking her for? He'd been her Daddy for all of five minutes; how many options were there, really?

“Yeah,” Eddie intoned sarcastically, not pausing his barrage of smacks across her bottom, “totally seems to have sunk in.”

“Well, how am I supposed to think when you are spanking so hard?” she cried.

“You know, I’ve never been a Daddy, but I am an experienced Dom who has meted out plenty of much harder spankings across many naughty bottoms, and they all manage to think just fine.” Eddie sighed. “But, it has been a while since the original offense occurred and you are my first Little, so let’s see if we can’t refresh your memory.”

She thought that sounded promising and dared to hope for a moment to catch her breath, but Eddie tipped his legs up, giving him a better aim and started smacking even harder than before on the tender strip of skin between her bottom and thighs that she knew from her reading was called a sit spot.

“Teresa Lynn, you agreed to a long, hard bare-bottom spanking for breaking into my house back in April while I was out of town.”

Right the break in. She tried to muster up an appropriate amount of remorse, but her brain had short-circuited at *bare bottom*. She still had her panties on and couldn’t imagine how bad it would hurt when she didn’t.

“Breaking and entering is against the law, and Daddies don’t like when their Little girls act like naughty little lawbreakers.”

“Yes, Eddie,” she gasped between smacks. She really was trying to be present and listen to Eddie and learn the lesson he was dead set on imparting, but she could already feel her brain

doing the Tizzy thing it did. The one that had earned her the nickname in the first place.

Eddie had said bare bottom; he'd said it more than once, and yet her panties were still on, and he was spanking hard enough as it was. She didn't want it to get worse; honestly couldn't imagine it could, but she also knew she'd feel guilty as hell if he didn't, and think it was her fault for being such an uncooperative wimp. Also, if he didn't, she wasn't sure she would be able to respect him. She'd had enough experience with fake Daddies who said all the right things but sucked at follow-through. Daddies were supposed to do what they said. Eddie, if he was the experienced Dom he claimed to be, would know that, wouldn't he?

Her question was answered when his fingers snuck into the waistband of her panties. "Daddy promised you a bare-bottom spanking," he said in warning, "so these are going to come off."

Once again it was as if he'd read her mind, and she knew she should be relieved, both about the follow-through, and the way Eddie seemed to just *know* her, but relief wasn't in her nature, and as Eddie drew a deep breath and lifted his arm, poised above her already aching backside, her brain went to an entirely different line of panic.

What if it hurt too much, and she couldn't take it, and Eddie was disgusted by what a wuss she was? What if he decided she wasn't worth the trouble? What if she cried and got snot all over his slacks and made a fool of herself? Being spanked to tears was kind of the goal, and in books it was always made to seem like a good thing, but reality and the stuff she'd read were two very different things.

She took a breath, braced herself and tried to calm down, attempting to replace the lies taking up space in her brain with truths, but they were just too loud. Her chest was tight, and she couldn't breathe, and she wouldn't be able to take a spanking like a good girl, if she couldn't catch her breath, and, and... and...

“Apple!” she cried before she could stop herself, and promptly burst into tears.

Fuck. So much for not making a fool of herself.

As if the word was a deactivation button with magical powers, Eddie immediately lowered his hand, dropped his hold on her wrists, and freed her legs from between his. He took her hands and pulled her into his lap where she could do nothing but sob into his chest.

Eddie didn't say a word, just held her tight, stroked her hair and rubbed her back while she sobbed loudly into his chest, soaking his shirt with a combination of tears and snot.

Finally, the tears stopped flowing and the tightness in her chest seemed to ease. Pushing out a deep breath, she disentangled herself from Eddie's hold and pushed herself off his lap, standing on shaky legs. She grabbed her panties and pulled them up, scanning the room for her discarded clothes. She found her tunic, grabbed it up, and had it halfway over her head when Eddie's sharp voice cut through the silence.

“Just what do you think you're doing, young lady?”

Oh. His voice had that Daddy edge to it, stopping her in her tracks. She turned to look at him, but her head was still covered in bunched-up fabric. Pulling it down to shove her head through the neck hole, she met his gaze. “I... said my safeword,” she stuttered, not sure how to answer. She'd

thought it pretty obvious what she was doing, and Eddie was a smart man. He had like a gazillion years of education, for god's sake.

“You did say your safeword,” Eddie acknowledged, “and I stopped what I was doing and was holding you waiting for you to be calm enough that we could talk about why you'd said it, but getting dressed is not on the agenda, little girl.”

Tizzy's wide eyes telegraphed her confusion. “B-but I said my safeword! I failed!”

This time it was Eddie's brows that crinkled. “Failed at what... exactly?”

Tizzy blinked hard. “At everything!” she exclaimed. “At being your Little girl, at taking a punishment well, at not making a fool of myself, at not crying and getting snot all over your clothes...” She trailed off, knowing there were a lot more things that should be on that list.

Eddie's slow blink mirrored her earlier one as he stared at her blankly. He cocked his head to one side and then the other, gnawed on his bottom lip and then slowly nodded. “Oh, I see what's happening here. You did your Tizzy thing, didn't you?”

“What?” Teresa shrieked, offended and confused by his succinct summary. “No! that's not what ha—”

“Isn't it?” Eddie stood and took a step forward, rapidly closing the space between them until the air in the room seemed to evaporate.

Teresa took a deep breath. Had Eddie always been so imposing or had that happened naturally the second she started calling him Daddy?

“If that's not what happened,” Eddie continued, his tone haughty and challenging, “why don't you tell me what did

happen?”

Teresa nodded. She could do that. She'd just explain what she'd been thinking and then Eddie would have to admit he was wrong... right?

“Well, see, you were spanking me and it really, really hurt, like a lot more than I thought it would, and then you started lecturing and you kept saying long hard bare-bottom spanking, but I still had my panties on, and I thought, I won't be able to handle it if he takes them off, and then I thought, but what if he doesn't? What if he decides not to because he hadn't realized what a giant wuss I was gonna be? And then I thought that if you didn't, I probably wouldn't respect you afterward because you promised this was more than sex and a couple ass smacks, but if you said something like that and then didn't follow through, then you'd be just like all the fake daddies in my past, but then you did, and I was relieved for a minute, but then I was worried I wouldn't be able to take it, and what if I cried and—” She broke off suddenly and looked at him horrified. “Oh god, I was doing it again, wasn't I?”

As Eddie nodded, she could tell he was trying not to smirk.

Tizzy buried her face in her hands and groaned, mortified. “God, what is wrong with me? Why am I like this?”

Eddie walked closer, grabbing her hands and peeling them away from her face, holding them in his.

Before he could say a word, she wailed, “And I used my safeword like a ninny! God, what an idiot I am!”

“Stop,” Eddie commanded sharply. “Look at me.”

She forced herself to meet his gaze and hold it, staring deep into eyes the color of bluebonnets. To her astonishment, she saw no judgment there, just a patient understanding, a

twinkle of amusement and what she thought might be pride. But how could that possibly be? How could anyone be proud when she'd not managed to get through their very first exchange as Little and Daddy?

"You absolutely should have used your safeword," Eddie stated. "You did exactly the right thing."

"I did?"

"Yes, little one." Eddie held her hands tightly. "You wouldn't have gotten anything out of it the way your brain was spinning and then what's the point?"

"I'll never be able to stop spinning! It's who I am! It's what I do!" Tizzy shook her head. "I guess I'm not really a Little after all. Whoever heard of a Little who can't take a spanking? See, I was right: I *did* fail! I *am* a failure."

"Stop." Still holding her hands, Eddie gave them a little shake. "First of all, even I know there's no one right way to be a Little, and second of all young lady, we don't use that word."

"What word?" Tizzy cried, confused, racking her brain.

"The F word."

"What!" Tizzy was indignant. She was enough of a screw-up as it was, she didn't need Eddie adding things she hadn't even done to the list of ways she was failing. She pulled her hands free to press her fists against her hips and stomped her foot. "I didn't curse!"

"Failure," Eddie clarified. "We do not use *that* F word."

"Oh." Tizzy could actually feel the defiance seeping from her, like air leaking from a tire, deflating her ire. "Umm..." she began, only to stop and swallow hard. She used that F-

word a lot. With a sigh, she looked up at him again. “That might be a problem,” she admitted.

Eddie grinned and nodded. “I thought that might be the case.” Recapturing her hands, he gave them a squeeze. “Is there any time you don’t feel like that? Any time your brain isn’t catapulting toward disaster at a million miles a minute?”

“At work,” Tizzy answered without hesitation. “In the ER, and especially the OR.”

CHAPTER 8

Eddie

SHE WAS THE LEAST STRESSED IN THE MOST HIGH-STRESS situations, Eddie thought to himself, closing his eyes. Somehow it just made sense and, in truth, it was a dichotomy that was so typically Tizzy.

Luckily, he was a surgeon himself, so he could work with that.

“What makes it less stressful for you?” he asked, praying inwardly that for once in her life Tizzy gave the answer he expected to hear; the one that made sense.

“It’s scary, but predictable,” she answered quickly. “In the OR, I know what’s supposed to happen. Even if things go wrong, or something unexpected happens, I know what to do. I know what should happen in response. I know what the people around me need to do; how they’re going to respond.”

Bless her. For once in her life, Tizzy said the thing that made sense. The thing he could work with.

“Then that’s the answer,” he announced confidently. “We need to approach our Daddy/Little relationship the same way

we would a surgery in the OR.”

“How are we gonna do that, Daddy?”

His Little girl stood before him, a mass of mussed auburn curls half in and half out of the neck hole of her tunic where only her head poked through. The shirt had never made it further, leaving her clad in her matching orange underwear and nothing else. What should have had him shaking his head had him smiling and his cock stirring instead. She might be in a tizzy but she was the most adorable thing he’d ever seen.

He reached out and instead of tugging the shirt into place, he once again lifted it upward with the intention of removing it but found resistance as the two of them pulled the garment in different directions.

Eddie chuckled as her face was completely hidden by the orange fabric. “You look like a turtle,” he observed, giving the shirt another tug upward. “Let go, Tizzy.”

“You let go,” she said, the words muffled by the cloth.

He could stand there playing tug-of-war or he could be the Daddy he knew this woman so desperately desired. Releasing his hold had her head popping out again, her eyes wide in surprise at what she thought was victory only to squeal when he simply bent and shouldered her and her world turned upside down.

“Little girls do not tell their Daddies what to do,” Eddie informed her, landing a smack per word on the seat of those orange panties.

“Ow!” Teresa cried, her hands flying back to attempt to cover her bottom. “I thought the spanking was over!”

Her entire body bounced as he broke out into laughter. “Oh, my little turtle, you can try to pull your head into your

shell, but there will be no hiding. This spanking is only being postponed while we have a little talk.”

“And that talk has to be done with me naked?” she sniped.

“While I would definitely not be averse with that scenario, I’m afraid getting my first glance of your beautiful body in all your naked glory is going to have to wait,” he said as he reached down to snag the handle of her suitcase and rolling it along beside him as he crossed the room, passing the couch where they’d been sitting.

When he reached his destination, Teresa gave the sweetest little squeal of surprise when she found herself tossed onto the mattress of the massive king-size bed. While she bounced about a bit, attempting to find her balance, he swung the suitcase onto the bed and unzipped it, flipping it open.

“What are you doing?” she asked once she’d settled on her knees.

“Unpacking,” he said cryptically. If he’d needed more proof that organization provided an anchor to curtail her tendency to spin out of control, it was right before his eyes. Every single item she’d packed was neatly folded and put into individual zippered purple bags. He smiled as he lifted the largest from the orange suitcase. She seriously loved those two colors. He looked up to see her sitting back on her heels, her head tilted to the side, a finger twisting a curl around and around as she watched him.

“Your suitcases put mine to shame,” he said as he began to pull the individual bags from the suitcase and set them on the bed. “I don’t think I’ve ever seen anyone pack so neatly.”

“Don’t be too impressed. One time I went on a trip and forgot to pack any socks and underwear. There weren’t any

real clothing stores close by so I had to go to the dollar store and let's just say their selection wasn't the best."

He grinned and looked at her as he unzipped the first bag. "By that do you mean the color selection was limited to white?" The bag now open, he reached in to lift out a pile of silk and cotton lingerie, all in various shades that had him chuckling. "I'd say you definitely prefer the colors of the rainbow, but I'm pretty sure the prism includes more than two colors."

She reached out to smack his forearm. "Hey, there are zillions of shades of orange and purple, and Mr. Color Blind, if you'll look closer, you'll see I even like white and black."

Eddie felt his cock stirring as his fingers hooked around a piece of lace. Tugging it from the stack, he gave it little twirl. The red lacy thong had him thinking all sorts of thoughts had nothing to do with the colors of Halloween. When it was plucked from his hand, he looked down to see she'd moved and was now kneeling up on the bed beside him, the tunic gone from around her neck, drawing his eyes to her chest.

"Please tell me there is a matching bra for those as well," he said.

She smiled and scooped up the lingerie before plopping back on her butt only long enough to scoot to the edge of the bed where she jumped off. "A girl's gotta have some secrets." She walked across the room to where a large dresser stood. "Which drawers do you want?"

"Doesn't matter, you pick." Eddie stood, enjoying the view of her hips as they swayed with every step she took. And when she bent over to pull out a drawer, he had to hold back a groan. He'd only gotten the barest glimpse of the smooth, porcelain skin that was hidden beneath those orange panties. As he

reached to adjust his cock in his jeans, he was determined to see far more when he had her over his lap again. And for that to happen, he needed to get his own mind off the sexy little minx and work to get her in the proper mindset to truly accept not only the spanking she still had coming but the fact it was really her Daddy turning her little butt the color of those panties she was tucking into the drawer.

They worked together. He unzipped each bag and handed her the stacks of t-shirts, leggings, night clothes that all went into the drawers and then began with her second suitcase. Skirts, blouses, and sweaters were hung onto hangers and transferred to the closet. He'd given her a bag that she'd taken into the adjoining en suite and a high-pitched squeal had him sprinting into the bathroom to find her standing frozen in the middle of the room.

“What’s wrong?” he asked, seeing nothing amiss.

“Just look!” she said, turning in a circle, her finger pointing to various spots. “That shower is bigger than the kitchen in my apartment, and did you see the tub? You could swim laps in it!”

Chuckling, he had to admit there had been a lot of thought going into the design of the guest suites and this bathroom certainly didn't disappoint. Thick white towels were stacked neatly on shelves beneath the vanity. One basket held a selection of various sized loofas and bath mitts, though he was far more interested in the long-handled bath brush that hung on a hook. Another woven basket of lotions, shampoos, and soaps offered guests choices of scents.

“Daddy! Look what I found!”

Teresa appeared before him hugging something to her chest like it was some sort of treasure.

“Let me guess.” Tapping his finger against his chin as if in deep thought, he then took an exaggerated large step backward and then another. When the pleasure in her eyes turned to puzzlement, he shrugged. “Just giving him some space.”

“Him?” Her gaze left his to dart about as if to find someone had joined them.

“Right.” Eddie gestured to the item she held. “I just don’t want to get trampled by Aladdin when you rub it.”

Her giggle was delightful, those auburn curls getting more mussed as she shook her head. “It’s not a lamp, silly, it’s bubble bath!” She held out the bottle. “Can you just imagine all the bubbles that will fit in that tub? It’s going to be epic! Maybe I should take a bath now. I mean we did travel today, and I swung on the swings, and—”

“A bath will have to wait,” Eddie interrupted before she got too worked up. “We’ve got to finish unpacking—”

“I’m almost finished—”

“Almost doesn’t count.” Eddie moved to her and wrapped his hand around the bottle. When she attempted to tighten her grasp, he cocked his eyebrow and looked down. “This can go one of two ways. I release it and you will march your cute little self right into that corner”—he use his free hand to point to the door which would lead to many a corner to choose from—“where you will spend time thinking about the dynamics of what having your own Daddy means or you can give it to me and tonight after we’ve had our discussion and you’ve had your spanking, Daddy will give you that bubble bath.”

Her eyes moved from his finger to the door, to the tub, to the bottle in her hand and finally to his face. “How about ‘C?’”

It was his turn to be a bit puzzled. “C?”

“A third choice. That’s where I give you the bottle, we have our discussion and then you not only fill the tub, but you join me in it and we take a bubble bath together.”

Eddie’s smile was instant as was the stirring of his cock at the vision of her sitting across from him, bubbles piled high on her head and attempting to hide sweet little nipples he would be all too willing to wash as his fingers traveled down a wet body to find her little pussy that he’d bet would be slick from more than just bathwater.

“Make it ‘D’ and we have a deal,” he said, lifting a curl to push it back behind her ear.

“D? What, does D mean?”

“Daddy—”

“Oh, right, I meant Daddy,” she hurriedly cut him off.

Eddie chuckled. “That’s what I meant as well.”

Teresa leaned forward, her eyes narrowed a bit before she straightened and skimmed the top of her head with her hand. “I’m afraid that went right over my head, Daddy. You’re gonna have to be a little clearer. I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

“It’s easy,” Eddie assured her. “D is the first letter in Daddy and while your Daddy is willing to negotiate on many things, little girl, you need to understand that the one making the final decisions will always be Daddy. And that means that while I accept your most gracious offer and would love to join you in that tub, it will only be after you, little turtle, most graciously accept that beneath that mountain of bubbles you’ll be sitting on a bare bottom turned a nice shade of red from the spanking you still owe me. Deal?”

“Oh,” she said, a flush of the prettiest pink blooming on her cheeks. After a long moment, she held out the bottle and after he’d taken it, she offered him her hand.

Eddie bit back a chuckle. Setting the bottle on the vanity, he wrapped his hand over hers. “So we have a deal?”

“We do,” she acknowledged, shaking their hands and nodding her head. “But maybe it can only be a little spanking?”

Eddie let his laugh ring out and he used their joined hands to tug her closer, wrapping his free around her waist. “You are adorable, my sweet Tizzy. And since you are my Little, it will qualify as a *little* spanking.”

Her smile was huge, her eyes bright for a moment before her nose scrunched and he could practically hear the gears turning in her head. “Hey! That’s not fair. That means all my spankings would be little!”

“Indeed they will.” Eddie easily lifted her off her feet and transferred her to sit on his hip. Long, lean legs automatically wrapped around his waist and arms around his neck. “I suppose the only thing left to consider is how long and hard these little spankings will be.”

“And I suppose *you* are the one who gets to decide that too?”

“Yes and no. While Daddy will always have the last word, you can keep yourself off my lap by simply being a good Little girl. Then any spankings given won’t be for punishment.”

Teresa huffed. “Spankings are *only* for punishment, silly.”

“Hmmm, are you sure?” Eddie asked moving back to the bed and setting her on her feet as he returned to her almost

empty suitcase. “I’m pretty sure I’ve heard about something called *finishment spankings*. Do you know anything about those?”

Her face flushed a brighter pink but there was no mistaking the sparkle of interest in her eyes or the nipples making themselves known as they poked against the fabric of her bra. “No, why would you think I wo...” It was like her words were cut with a sword as she instantly went silent.

Well, that is if one could envision the very well-read romance novel he held up in his left hand as the hilt, and the purple vibrator he held in his right as the blade of said sword.

“Are you sure about that? These look like they could be pretty fun to me,” Eddie teased. And when his thumb flicked a switch, the vibrator began to twist and writhe to the buzzing filling the air.

An adorably squealed “Daddy!” rang out as his Little leapt forward attempting to grab her toy.

Eddie held them out of reach but still managed to wrap his arms around her before he lost his balance. They both fell on the bed and rolled until he was on his back, she was lying on top of his body and her squeal of embarrassment became a soft moan when he dropped the toys to cup her face between his palms and drew her mouth down to meet his.

If Eddie had any doubts that he’d made the right decision, they disappeared as their kiss deepened. His Tizzy might be a Little girl who had trouble keeping it together at times, but Teresa, the woman in his arms, seemed to know exactly what to do. Her lips opened with the press of his tongue demanding entrance. Soft, sweet gasps of pleasures were swallowed by him as he explored the sweet cavern of her mouth and when her tongue moved to tangle with his, he immediately

envisioned it dancing along the shaft of his cock as her head bobbed up and down his length.

When his cock stirred, she groaned and ground herself against him. He went from semi to fully hard in a single breath. With a simple roll, he had her beneath him, her eyes glowing with desire as he kissed her forehead, her nose and then found her mouth again. Her hands slid into his hair and he reached to find tresses that always reminded him of fire only to wrap his fingers around the pulsing toy he'd totally forgotten about. It turned his kiss into a chuckle that had her fingers stilling.

“Seems like your Daddy can be distracted as well. So much for Plan A,” he said, pulling back enough to be able to look down into her face.

“What was Plan A?” she asked.

“Unpack, get organized, discuss the process, and then finally deliver the spanking you’ve needed for so long.”

Teresa’s fingers slid from his hair to run along his jaw. “We could take it as a sign we need ditch Plan A and go with B. You know, skip all that boring stuff and keep doing this.”

He waited until the finger reached his bottom lip and then took it into his mouth and gave it a little nip. “Good try, little Tizzy of mine, but a wise man once told me to start as I intend to go.”

Her adorable nose scrunched up as she looked up at him. “Meaning?”

“Meaning, young lady, no more playing kissy-face. Well, one more.” He gave her lips a quick peck before pushing up and climbing off the bed. He had her standing beside him with a single tug and a swat against her ass had her full attention. “I

expect us both to be seated at that table in ten minutes. So no more goofing around.”

Teresa stepped away to pick up another of her smaller bags. “Do you often talk to yourself Dr. Mayer? Because last I looked it wasn’t *my* hand holding a buzzing sex toy.”

Eddie laughed, popped her ass again just because he could, and finally flipped the switch off. “Touché, my little brat,” he said as he walked across the room to where a beautifully carved wooden armoire stood. “I think this will be a good place for this little guy and anything else we find when you take me to the store you mentioned.” He wagged his eyebrows up and down at her as he opened the door. Seeing its contents, he gave a long low whistle.

“Are you okay?”

“Way better than okay,” Eddie assured her. “Care to guess what I just found?”

“Aladdin?” she joked on her way to join him.

“Let’s just say I found his treasure.” Eddie threw open both doors.

“Jiminy Cricket! That’s... that’s a lot of... of—”

“Whole lot of possibilities,” Eddie said, pulling her to him as she continued to stare at all the paddles, straps, and canes hanging from hooks inside the doors. A pretty blue bowl held dozens of condoms. Bottles of various creams, massage oils and tubes of lubricants stood in perfect rows on one shelf and neatly packaged butt plugs and vibrators sat on another. Teresa’s eyes were as round as saucers as he placed her purple vibrator at the end of the row.

“It looks so small,” she whispered.

“Hey, you’re gonna give the poor thing a complex. What happened to size doesn’t matter?” he teased.

Teresa tilted her head back to look up at him. “It doesn’t. What matters is what one does with whatever size they have been dealt.”

He watched her eyes drift down his body until they were focused directly on his groin.

“I suppose we won’t know where your ‘toy’ lines up in that row until we finish *unpacking* everything. So, let’s get to it shall we?” she quipped.

He might be very well-educated. He might be a highly respected neurosurgeon. But Eddie was also a man who took her words as the challenge they were meant as. And since he couldn’t declare victory until the proper time, he nodded, closed the doors on his new favorite piece of furniture, and said, “Why yes, little turtle, yes, we shall.”



CHAPTER 9

Teresa

TRUST A KINK RANCH TO INCLUDE AN ASSORTMENT OF KINKY toys. And not just a couple, but an entire wardrobe full. She really couldn't imagine a need to even go into the store she'd glimpsed on one side of the lobby. Not with the variety she'd seen on those shelves and hooks behind the now closed doors. As she finished putting away the last of her things, she discovered she was indeed more grounded than she had been when they'd entered their room. Did that mean she wasn't near the edge? Unfortunately, experience told her the answer was no. She couldn't always say what might push her over to become Tizzy, but for the first time, she was beginning to believe that even if she did, Eddie wouldn't immediately run in the opposite direction.

Wheeling her second suitcase into the back of the closet to store it, she brushed her hands together, her unpacking complete. Eddie entered to hang up several shirts. She smiled, loving the sight of his shirts hanging across from hers. When he then hung not one but two leather belts on the hooks provided, she felt her bottom clench.

She'd been worried about her reaction when he bared her butt to apply his hand to it. The sight of those strips of leather had her wondering far more than what he'd think. Even as her muscles tensed, she felt the butterflies in her tummy fluttering and a jolt of desire heating her blood. Would he use a belt on her? Would his strokes be hard enough to raise welts on her skin? What would it feel like knowing she was wearing his marks beneath her clothing?

Only one way to find out, little Tizzy.

She smiled at the endearment, no longer hating the name... not when it came from his lips. Pressing her fingertip against her mouth, she thought of the kisses they'd shared. Each one leaving her wanting another.

“Ready?”

The question jolted out of her thoughts and she found Eddie's hand reaching out.

Was she?

With a smile, she nodded. “As ready as I'll ever be,” she said and slipped her hand into his.

She sat at the table in the kitchenette, sipping a glass of water and swinging her feet as he moved around the suite. When he returned, he had a book and a pen. Expecting him to take a seat across from her, Teresa was surprised when he set the items on the table and then scooped her from her chair only to claim it for himself as he sat and settled her on his lap. She absolutely loved how easily he handled her, lifting her as if she weighed no more than the book.

“Okay, little Tizzy, this won't be everything, but it will be a start.” Eddie picked up the pen, surprising her again by

passing it to her. Once she held it, he tapped a fingertip on the book's cover. "Might as well begin as I intend to go."

"What exactly does that mean? You've said it twice now," Teresa asked.

"It means our goal is to ensure that you will never have to wonder what to expect. When you break a rule, you'll know what the consequence will be. Whether it's sitting right here on a hot, tender bottom writing lines or standing with your nose and nipples pressed to the wall with your hot, red bottom properly pushed out, or if you are spread-eagled on the bed, wrists and ankles in cuffs, a ball gag between your lips and a butt plug peeking out of a nicely striped, red bottom presented over a stack of pillows. No matter what, you will have no need to spin out of control in here"—he tapped the side of her head gently—"because you'll only have to look at your book and know what is about to happen here." His hand dropped to tap slightly harder against her hip. "Understand?"

Holy hell, Jiminy Cricket!

"Tizzy?"

"Uh, huh?" She shook her head as if that would clear it.

Eddie chuckled and shook his as well. "Too much too fast?"

"Um, yeah," she admitted with a little smile.

"Okay, tell me what thought immediately popped into your head when I asked if you understood."

Pretty sure repeating the first thought might make the first words she'd be writing down a reminder to add to her spanking for cursing, she made the decision to skip over the first and go to the one point that had indeed jumped out at her. "My bottom," she offered.

Eddie had the grace to at least appear to be trying not to laugh. That fact allowed her to actually relax a little and give a giggle herself. “I mean, not to be disrespectful, Sir, but wow, every one of those things has my bottom spanked and sticking out.”

“Don’t forget bare, hot, and red,” Eddie reminded.

She actually huffed and poked him in the chest with the pen. “Daddy, I do believe you might have a bare-bottom fetish.”

Eddie burst out laughing, jostling her with the force until she was giggling right along with him. When they calmed down, he cupped the side of her face and gave her a quick kiss. “Oh, babygirl, you’re gonna learn that your Daddy has all sorts of fetishes. So last chance to tell me you’ve changed your mind and want another Daddy.”

She’d never expected him to offer her a way out and she knew without a single doubt that not only did she not want out, she wanted to explore any fetish he cared to share.

“Nope, I’m good to go,” she said instead, clicking the pen and opening the book to discover it was an actual journal. “Wow, someone sure came prepared.”

He chuckled. “I’m afraid I can’t take credit. But I’m willing to guess some Ranch owner or more likely his Little wife, had the thought that their guests might want to make notes about their stay at Rawhide.”

She couldn’t argue that as she already had more memories of this place than any vacation she could remember taking and the sun hadn’t even set yet! A tap on the first page put her back on task. Capturing her bottom lip between her teeth, she put pen to paper.

“Tizzy’s Journal” she wrote on the top line. Dropping down, she inked the number one and then looked up to him. “I’m ready, Daddy.”

“I do believe you are, sweet girl.” He kissed the top of her head and then began dictating as she wrote the words that would become her Little rules to live by. At least for the week.

“THAT’S ALL FOR NOW,” EDDIE SAID WHEN A HALF-HOUR HAD passed and she’d filled three full pages of the journal.

“For now?” She set the pen down and shook her hand out. “That’s a *lot!*”

Eddie took her hand in his, massaging the cramping out of her fingers. “I remember Georgie telling me you had about a million index cards and notebooks full of lists when you were in nursing school.”

“Well, there was a lot to learn,” she defended. “It’s how I studied so I wouldn’t make a mistake and kill someone.”

Eddie tilted her head up with a single finger under her chin. “My point is, that if you can learn all that and become the fabulous nurse you are today, I have absolutely no doubt you can learn a few rules. And, when you forget one, there won’t be anything even close to death as a consequence, so I don’t want you to freak out about making a mistake.”

“Easy for you to say. It’s not your butt that will be paying that consequence.”

“See, you’ve already learned a very important lesson. What was the first line you wrote down, my little student?”

His hand flipped the journal closed so she couldn't cheat, but she didn't need to.

“Daddy is in charge.”

“Good girl,” he praised, dropping another kiss on top of her head. “The rest will soon be learned just as easily. But as long as you know and *truly believe* in number one, I promise you, Teresa, you're not only going to be just fine, you're going to know you are loved and safe. I will never, ever harm you.” When her mouth dropped open, he closed it with a tap of his fingertip. “Wash your mouth out, spank you, make your bottom burn inside and out, punish you whenever necessary, yes, there will definitely be that, but true harm... I swear on my life that will never happen.”

“I know, Daddy,” she said and realized she meant it with her whole being.

Teresa

SHE SUPPOSED SHE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT WAS ALL HE needed to hear. Because the next thing she knew, they were right back where they started. Eddie seated on the couch only this time there was a paddle sitting beside his hip. As for her, she was once again standing between his knees and she was the one whose fingers were hooked into the waistband of her panties.

“Just like when you’re in the OR, you know the equipment that will be used,” he said, patting his implement of choice from that horrid armoire, “and you know what to expect. There is no need for your thoughts to spin as you know you are safe and that I don’t care how many tears soak my jeans or how much snot is smeared on them. The entire purpose of this is to pay the consequences for your naughtiness and once we are done, your slate will be wiped completely clean,” he reminded her in what she had immediately labeled as Mr. Calm Daddy’s voice.

“The longer you take, the longer your time over Daddy’s knee and the longer your spanking.”

Make that Mr. Determined to Redden your Ass Daddy. In other words, move your ass, girl!

With a final drawn-out sigh, she released any hope that the fates were going to grant her leniency. She'd known from the moment she'd pulled that key out of that darn flowerpot that there would be a price to pay. Granted, she thought it would be her butt in jail and not over Eddie's knees, but still, she had pled guilty and the sentence had been handed down. Not knowing where she found the courage, she finally began to push her panties down, voluntarily baring herself to him. Once the orange cotton reached her knees, she knew her face was flaming. Even she could see the gusset was a much darker orange than the rest of the fabric.

The lady doth protests too much methinks.

She wanted to tell her inner voice to take a hike, but she remained silent and took one herself. Two steps forward and a slight turn to the right had her sinking down to place herself over her Daddy's knee. Her palms found the floor below her and her toes the floor behind her as a very strong arm slipped around her waist and tugged her a few inches closer to his waist.

“Very nicely done, little Tizzy. Now, tell Daddy why you are over his knee with your panties down and this pretty bottom bare.”

Oh my sweet Jiminy Cricket.

Who knew Daddies really did say things that came straight out of a romance novel? What she did know was this was the moment when she truly could identify with every single character who had ever been draped over anything, half naked and being expected to confess their sins before the first smack fell.

“I’m getting a spanking because I broke into your apartment,” she said, a little amazed at being able to get that all out without panicking.

“Correct, and what will happen when your spanking is over?” Eddie asked, the hand moving from her hip to splay over the globes of her ass.

Her thoughts didn’t begin to spin because she knew what the answer was as she’d written it down in her book.

“You’ll going to sit me on you lap and cuddle me until I stop crying.” She wished they could just skip to that part.

“That’s right. And what are you going to do if at any time you feel yourself start to spin?”

“I’ll say ‘apple’ and you’ll stop.”

“You got a perfect score, Teresa. I’m very proud of you and will continue to be proud no matter how much ruckus you put up during this spanking, so don’t even try to hold back. Daddy’s got you, okay?”

“Okay, Daddy,” she said and then shocked them both when a giggle burst free followed by its friends until she had to grab his ankle and slap her other hand over her mouth trying to keep them inside.

Instead of getting upset, belittling her, or accusing her of wasting time yet again in an attempt to put off her spanking, Eddie simply continued to stroke his fingers over her ass until she finally got herself under control. It was only then that he asked, “Care to share?”

“It-it’s...” she said, thinking she was done but found another giggle escaping. “It’s just th-that what they say is true-true,” she managed to stammer between giggles.

“And what truth is that?” Eddie asked, his tone letting her know he was finding this a bit amusing himself.

“An ‘apple’ a day really will keep the doctor away,” she managed before losing it again, giggling like a loon... her shock increasing when his laughter broke out to join hers.

“Ah, Tizzy, don’t ever change. You are just too cute,” he said when he could speak again. “Fortunately for you, this doctor is also your Daddy, and has absolutely no intention of keeping away.” He bent and she felt the kiss he gave the top of her head and then giggles were forgotten as she felt the first swat of his hand on her bare bottom.

“Ow, ow, owie!” she cried as swat after swat found their target, stinging every inch of her bottom. “Daddy! That hurts!”

“Good, because I’d really hate to have to start all over,” he said as if believed she’d given him a compliment instead of a complaint.

As he peppered smacks from the top of her buttocks to the fleshy part and then down to where her bottom became thighs, she remembered his earlier words: *I am an experienced Dom who has meted out plenty of much harder spankings across many naughty bottoms, and they all manage to think just fine.*

Yeah, they all probably had the same thought she was having right now. The man could definitely spank.

“Eddie, please! I’m sorry!” she cried, kicking her feet up only to find his leg coming down to press her legs back to the floor and a flurry of swats faster than the others given in one spot until she arched her back and wailed, “Daddy!”

“That’s right, little girl. When you are over my knee getting this bottom roasted, I suggest you remember exactly

who is the one doing the roasting.” He demonstrated exactly how good a cook he was with another dozen swats.

Forget embarrassment, forget tears, heck, even the indignity of having a snotty nose was forgotten. All she could concentrate on was making one apology after another as the smacks continued.

“I won’t ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever be naughty again!” Each “ever” was uttered after his hand landed. “Daddy, I promise!”

“Babygirl, it is so easy to make promises when your bottom is burning. Let’s just make sure that I leave you with enough incentive to try to remember to be my good girl.” To accentuate his point, he added another swat to each cheek. “But know that when you slip up and are a naughty girl, Daddy will be here to set you back on the right track. With a red bottom, of course.”

“Of course,” she snarked and then slapped her hand over her mouth praying he hadn’t heard. But she discovered her Daddy had very good hearing.

“I’m so very glad you agree.”

The next swat told her he was also very good at switching out implements.

“Owwww!” she yelped as wood connected with already tender flesh. When she blubbered her next apology for her crime, it was given with tears running down her cheeks, and complete sincerity in her tone. “Daddy, I’m sorry, I’m really sorry.”

The last syllable was uttered against his neck as he’d pulled her panties up to cover her hot bottom, lifted her and was cradling her on his lap, his arms holding her tight as he

rocked her. She clung to his shirt and let all the guilt she'd held in since that day go. She finally understood that the words he'd said were the truth. She'd been naughty, had paid the consequences with a spanking, and now it was done. The sobs turned to hiccups and his hand patted against her back until they became just sniffles and when those became a long shuddering sigh, she felt his lips press against her forehead.

“I'm proud of you, little one.”

“Now your jeans are as snotty as your shirt.”

“And I'm proud of that as well,” he said with a chuckle.

“Ewww... that's really kind of icky.” Her nose scrunched in distaste as she sat up. “Is that another fetish?”

“There is nothing icky about you, little Tizzy.” Using the pads of his thumbs to wipe the last of her tears off her cheeks, he added, “It lets me know you truly trusted me to keep you safe even when you were positive you were going to actually see flames coming off your rear. I am seriously proud of you. I know that wasn't easy for you and yet you held it together and never once let your mind spin.”

Teresa realized she was a little proud of herself as well. “Wow, I didn't, did I?”

“No, you didn't,” he said with a smile.

Tilting her head back, he kissed her and far more than just her bottom began to burn. Her fingers slid into his hair and she arched into him, wanting to be as close as possible. She could feel her nipples tightening and his cock hardening beneath her sore bottom. She'd been naughty, she'd been spanked, she'd been cuddled and forgiven by her Daddy, but now she was ready for some more in-depth aftercare from Eddie.

“I need you,” she said when he pulled back to take a breath.

“I’m here,” he answered, and she shook her head.

“I don’t need you here, Daddy. I need you over there.” She turned to point at the huge bed across the room.

“Ahh, I see.” Eddie stood with her in his arms. “My Little girl needs a nap.”

“Daddy! I don’t want to go to bed to sleep!”

“You don’t? Then what do you need?”

She realized he knew exactly what she craved when his hand moved to cup her breast, his thumb toying with her nipple. Remembering their earlier discussion and the words she’d written down about honest, open communication, she took a deep breath and said, “I need you to know that while I am beyond thrilled to be your Little Tizzy, please don’t forget that I am also your Big Teresa. In other words, I need you to fuck me, Daddy.”

Eddie grinned so wide his dimples appeared as he gave her nipple a tweak that had her gasping and her pussy flooding. “Your wish is my command.”

Teresa laughed and felt a feeling of acceptance she’d never experienced before. It was euphoric and freeing. “In that case, Aladdin, I want to see how fast you can get naked.”

She screamed as she found herself flying through the air to land on the bed, bouncing and laughing and then gasping as she landed on her butt. But when she rose up to her knees and saw that Aladdin already had his shirt off and was working on the buckle of his belt, she forgot all about the spanking and concentrated on the pleasure she had absolutely no doubt he was about to gift her with.

“Wow, Daddy, you’re really hot!” she cried, causing him to look up from where he’d been bent over to untie his shoes.

He grinned and she wanted to kiss his dimples more than she wanted her next breath. He stole the very oxygen from her lungs the moment his zipper came down and his cock burst free, its crown slick with his own arousal. Forget dimples, she wanted to wrap her lips around his cock and lick it, then run her tongue up those abs that she could bounce a quarter off of, and then suckle on a nipple to see if doing so would affect him as much as it did her...

“Did you say something, Daddy?” she asked when realizing he’d called her name.

“I asked where you went, little one,” he answered, tossing his jeans aside to stand in all his naked glory.

“I-I was just wondering where to start.” She felt a blush run up her neck to color her face. “I-I’m really not very experienced at this.”

“Don’t fret,” he comforted, as he climbed onto the bed to join her. “I am.” With that, he pushed gently on her shoulders and she fell back with a squeal and then gasped as his fingers finished the job he’d started hours ago, removing her panties and tossing them to the floor. Her bra followed and it was the most glorious feeling in the world when his naked body covered hers.

CHAPTER II

Teresa

“WELL, LOOK WHO FINALLY DECIDED TO SHOW HER FACE!” Georgie exclaimed when Tizzy entered the cafe the next morning for their pre-scheduled bridesmaids’ breakfast.

“Oh, gosh, I’m so sorry!” Tizzy exclaimed, blush heating her cheeks as she thought about all the naughty ways Eddie had occupied her time the day before. After her very thorough spanking, he’d tossed her on the bed, and that was where they stayed, breaking only to order room service for dinner, which they also ate in bed, and for Eddie to join her in a giant tub of bubbles as he’d promised.

It had been the most glorious night, but now she was overcome with guilt. She was here to support Georgie in the days leading up to her wedding, not to play hide the sausage with Georgie’s brother—even if it was a very nice sausage and she knew just the perfect hiding place.

“I’m so sorry,” she repeated again as she slid into a seat across from Georgie’s, gearing up to apologize profusely and over-explain as was her way. She opened her mouth again and her bottom twinged as of to remind her of how capable Eddie

was of centering her when her guilts, emotions, and unjustified fears got too big to handle. “I was really beat from the trip,” she offered instead, hoping Eddie wouldn’t take issue with a little white lie for a good cause.

Not that it mattered. One look at her bestie and Tizzy could see that Georgie wasn’t buying it.

Georgie raised her brows, and crossed her arms over her chest, while the corners of her mouth turned up in a knowing smirk. “Well, that’s a giant load of bullhonkey if I’ve ever heard one,” she accused.

Shit. Tizzy had conveniently forgotten how well Georgie could read her like a book. “I...” She opened her mouth, searching for something to say, but nothing came.

Georgie waved her off. “Don’t,” she said firmly, sounding bossier than Teresa had ever heard her, “don’t try to make up some excuse, and don’t worry about it. While I would have loved to have seen you last night, there was nothing important on the schedule. This is the first official pre-wedding event, and not only are you here, you’re early.” Her expression clearly conveyed how unbelievable of a feat she considered that to be. “Whatever that brother of mine is doing, it’s working. You’re here, you’re early and you’re not so... Tizzy.” Georgie ended her speech by using the nickname that as far as she knew Tizzy hated and sticking her tongue out.

Teresa didn’t quite know how to answer. Sure, Georgie had been urging her on yesterday, but how did she really feel about it? Brothers were supposed to be off limits.

“Are you sure you’re not mad?” she whispered, feeling a little more Tizzy-like. Her thoughts were starting to tumble in a direction she didn’t want them to go.

“Pssh.” Georgie made a face. “Honestly, I think you and Eddie make perfect sense, and if I had a problem with it, well, then I’d be the world’s biggest hypocrite, wouldn’t I? I mean, you guys are only here because I’m about to marry *his* best friend, after all. Seriously, don’t worry about it.” She grabbed Teresa’s hand across the table and squeezed it before adding, “Just know that if you hurt him, I’ll kick your butt, and vice versa. That goes for him too. You two better be good to each other.”

“You’re acting like we’re going to be the next ones at the altar.” Tizzy rolled her eyes. “It’s not that serious. We’re just having some fun while we’re here at the Ranch. You know, when in Rome, and all that.”

It was plain as day on Georgie’s face that she didn’t believe a word Teresa was saying. “Surrreee,” she replied, drawing the word out and adding an exaggerated eye roll.

Before Teresa could defend her stance, Georgie leapt to her feet, and squealed a greeting to someone behind her.

“You’re here! Come, come, I want you to meet my best friend in the whole wide world, and if I get my way, which I always do, my soon-to-be sister-in-law! Ladies, this is Teresa!”

“Teresa, you met Wren, Sadie and Hayleigh yesterday, and this is Luna and Daisy.” Georgie introduced them one by one. “Luna works here as a service sub and is about as sweet as she can be. So if she cleans your room, make sure to give her a five-star rating,” Georgie teased.

“Or a huge tip,” Luna suggested, wagging her eyebrows and rubbing her hands together as if making it rain money.

Georgie snorted and pulled Daisy forward next. “Don’t let these blonde curls and big blue eyes fool you. Daisy isn’t as innocent as she looks, and she is never one to turn down a dare.”

“Oh my gosh! Hi!” the one called Daisy squealed. “We’ve heard so much about you!”

“Likewise,” Teresa answered politely.

“We’re all so glad you came to the Ranch!” Wren added with a broad smile. “What happened after you left the playground yesterday? Are you all settled in? Have you had the chance to explore anything at all?”

“Ha, not unless you count exploring the inside of a guest suite. She got in yesterday, promptly disappeared into the room with my brother, and no one saw hide or hair of them until this morning,” Georgie answered before Teresa could.

“With your *brother*?” Daisy squealed. “That’s new, right? I’m pretty sure that’s new. If you’d told me your best friend was with your brother, I’m sure I’d remember that!”

“It’s new,” Georgie confirmed, at the same time Teresa said, “It’s temporary.”

Teresa watched wearily as Georgie opened her mouth to argue. She did not want to get into this right now, and not with people she’d just met either.

“So,” she said brightly, changing the subject, “what wedding plans did you need help with? Isn’t that why we’re here? A wedding planning meeting?”

“Oh. No, it’s all done. Wedding planning is in my job description. Eli helped me and it’s been done for ages.”

“Then why the meeting?” Tizzy asked, confused, just as the waiter showed up to take their order.

They all ordered pancakes and hot cocoa, and as soon as he left, Georgie answered.

“Duh. It’s just an excuse to get together without the Daddies. I mean, I love Lucas, of course, but he can be such a fuddy-duddy sometimes. And besides, he knows me well enough to know the planning is done and this is just a cover. And he lets it happen because he’d rather do just about anything else than be dragged to wedding-planning festivities.”

“But he’s the groom. He has to be involved,” Teresa argued.

“He will be. He’ll be at the shower, and the rehearsal dinner, and the actual wedding, but he doesn’t need to be involved in every tiny detail and I don’t want him to be. We can have a lot more fun without the Daddies around.”

Her friends agreed with hearty cheers.

“What kind of fun?” Teresa asked cautiously. Georgie’s brand of fun tended to get her in trouble, and with hard-handed Eddie as her acting Daddy for the week, Teresa wasn’t sure her butt could afford the price of Georgie’s shenanigans.

“Oh relax, will you?” Georgie waved off the question. “I don’t have anything crazy planned yet. Just breakfast, and a dress fitting, and showing you around the Ranch.”

“Oh, okay.” Tizzy relaxed. A tour and a dress fitting sounded pretty innocent.

“Welll...” Wren said beside her, “speaking of crazy plans... it’s almost the turkey’s rescue-versary, and my

wedding anniversary *and* my favorite holiday, so I was kind of hoping you all would help me come up with a prank.”

“Ohhh, I’m in!” the other bridesmaids and Georgie responded immediately.

Teresa was still stuck on *turkey-rescue-versary*.

“Well, you know they are planning the Fall Fest with the hayrides and turkey trot and all that, so I was thinking we could have a little turkey trot of our own... dress up Ross, Monica, Phoebe, Rachel, Chandler and Joey, and maybe like do a parade through the main Ranch building, or something fun like that. Maybe make a little chant or song about how they were saved, and I don’t know”—Wren shrugged—“that’s as far as I’ve gotten.”

“Ross? Monica? Phoebe? Chandler? Rachel? Joey?” Teresa repeated, utterly confused. “What do *Friends* characters have to do with turkeys?”

“The turkeys are named after the *Friends* characters. They were supposed to be Thanksgiving turkeys a couple years back, the year Wren moved here, but...”

“But I named them and made friends with them and organized a protest. We dressed up and handcuffed ourselves to the fence and chanted ‘Friends not Food’. Chef Connor was not amused. I still don’t think he likes me very much,” Wren confided, “but, oh well.” She shrugged. “I saved the turkeys from being eaten and Daddy and Master Derek gave them to me as pets and now they get to roam around all day and be free. And Chef Connor cooks frozen turkeys now. I don’t think he’s quite forgiven me for that either.”

Hayleigh reach over to pat Wren’s arm. “Daddy’s bark is worse than his bite. Just give him a little more time—”

“Like maybe fifty years or so,” Luna piped in.

Teresa blinked, unable to think of anything to say as she tried to picture Littles securing themselves to fences with fuzzy handcuffs, protesting to save a bunch of turkeys from being made into Thanksgiving dinner. “Life at the Ranch sounds very... interesting,” she finally said.

Their pancakes arrived and the chatter died down as they all dug into their breakfast. The pancakes were the fluffiest Teresa had ever had and the cocoa was so warm and rich beneath a mountain of whipped cream with rainbow-colored sprinkles that Georgie insisted she add that there was no way Teresa would ever be able to finish it.

Georgie and her friends were finally quiet, leaving Teresa alone with her thoughts. The Ranch seemed like a really fun place, and Georgie’s friends were very nice, but she couldn’t actually imagine living here full-time with nothing more to occupy her days than pranks and spankings. Even if the spankings were kind of nice... especially with what came after. Teresa wondered what Eddie was doing with her gone. Probably hanging with Lucas and enjoying himself immensely wondering what he’d gotten himself into. That’s what she was doing. She and Eddie were just having fun, exploring something new and living out some fantasies, and doing as the Romans do, but Georgie seemed to think it was more. Which meant Teresa was going to let her down, because out in the real world, there was no way a smart, successful, organized, put together, dream of a man like Eddie Mayer would be interested in her for real, and she had to remember that, or Georgie wouldn’t be the only one getting hurt when the wedding was over and their trip ended.

“Speaking of fun,” Georgie called out, bringing Teresa out of her musings as plates were pushed to the center of the table.

Teresa looked down at her now empty plate. She didn’t even remember eating it all, but apparently she’d worked up an appetite with all her and Eddie’s activities the night before.

“We have an hour before the dress fitting, so I figured we could do a little exploring.”

“Exploring sounds good,” Teresa responded, taking a deep breath and trying to center herself before her thoughts started to spiral. The Ranch, and Georgie’s new life... and being immersed in it herself, even temporarily... it was a lot, and all she really wanted was to run back to the room, and into Eddie’s arms. She had a Daddy, and she wanted to make the most of it for as long as it was going to last.

“Let’s start with the gift shop! It’s massive and has just well... everything!” Georgie announced, linking one of her arms through Teresa’s and the other through Daisy’s.

“To the gift shop,” Teresa repeated with a forced smile.

EDDIE

“EVERYONE’S BUSY EITHER GETTING READY FOR THE WEDDING or doing Thanksgiving prep, so there won’t be any classes until after lunch today if you were interested in those,” Lucas offered over a hearty breakfast of eggs, bacon and pancakes in the cafeteria.

Eddie shrugged. He'd spent twenty-four years in school and had enough education to last him a lifetime. He wasn't in a hurry to spend his vacation sitting in a classroom. Besides, he was more of a hands-on learner, and he would hate to be stuck listening to some lecture when he could have his hands on Tizzy.

"Do you think the girls will be done with their planning by then?" he asked, hopefully.

Lucas chuckled. "Oh, my guess is the planning is long finished. The bridesmaids' breakfast is just an excuse for them to get away for a while and get out from under our watchful eyes."

"Should we be worried?"

"Worried? No." Lucas shook his head. "But I'm sure they'll find mischief to get into, so we should be prepared."

"Prepared? Prepared how?" Eddie sipped his coffee and held his friend under a scrutinous gaze. As much as he'd initially been rather shocked about his sister and his best friend hooking up, he had to admit that it seemed to be the best thing for both of them. Georgie was happier than he'd ever seen her, truly thriving in her new home, obviously loving her new job, and Lucas... Lucas was like a whole different person. Every once in a while, Eddie would catch a glimpse of the workaholic, brooding, anti-social loner he knew and loved, but for the most part, Lucas seemed like a person Eddie barely recognized. The new Lucas had a work-life balance, had friends, smiled often, and cracked jokes easily. He was not only an expert in his role as the Ranch's groundskeeper but was thriving as Georgie's Daddy and that was easy to see.

"Well, have you discovered the armoire full of supplies in your room?" Lucas asked with a smirk.

“I did, indeed,” Eddie answered, remembering how Tizzy had trembled and squealed as he paddled her bottom.

Lucas nodded. “The rooms are well-supplied, but there’s an even better selection in the gift shop, along with, well, just about everything else you can think of. If you’re serious about Teresa, it might be a good idea to get some supplies.”

“Welp, I’m definitely serious about her, so lead the way to the gift shop, please!” Eddie announced, draining the last of the coffee from his mug and picking up his now-empty plate.

Teresa

THE GIFT SHOP WAS PRACTICALLY A DEPARTMENT STORE, Teresa thought ten minutes later as she stood in the center of the room, her eyes pulling her in all different directions. There was a huge stock of spanking implements, butt plugs, and other toys that could be used to pleasure and punish, a Little section complete with a large selection of Little clothing, plus toys, blankets, stuffies, pacifiers and other supplies, along with western wear and various Rawhide souvenirs and novelties.

“Wow.” She turned in a circle as she wondered where to go first.

“You need a new dress!” Georgie cried, grabbing her hand and dragging her toward a rack of Little clothing.

Tizzy barely had time to drop Georgie’s hand before her friend was piling her arms full of frilly, short, Lolita-style dresses. They were cute and fun, but they weren’t really Teresa’s style. She was putting them back on the rack just as fast as Georgie was taking them off. Until she reached the purple one with a sweetheart bodice and a tulle skirt, embroidered with tiny stars. That one stayed in her hands. As

Georgie continued to gather dresses to throw at her, Luna grabbed her hand and dragged her away with a finger to her lips.

Teresa had been hoping to ogle the stuffed animals with soft fur and sparkly eyes, and the large plush blankets, but Luna dragged her to a display of brightly colored implements instead.

“They engrave these upon request, you know,” she offered with a wink. “They make great wedding presents.”

“Oooh.” Teresa and Eddie had actually picked out some wedding gifts and brought the bride and groom Disneyland hats with them, but it was good to know that if Georgie got to be too terribly Georgie, Teresa had a new option to exact a very specific revenge. “Thanks for the tip!” she said as Luna ran back to the Little section at Georgie’s call.

Teresa eyeballed a thick maple paddle, with the wood tinted pink, and made a plan to come back and place an order when Georgie wasn’t with her. Maybe Eddie would want to go in on it with her that as well. He’d probably get a kick out of that. Her gaze shifted away from the wooden paddles to the gorgeous array of leather paddles and straps. She glanced around to find herself still alone and took the opportunity to walk toward a display that had her instantly thinking of the mug she’d borrowed during her crime spree at Eddie’s apartment.

She trailed her fingertips over the braided handle of a crop that looked identical to the one embossed on the mug. Her heart rate quickened and the flesh of her bottom crawled as she felt the flat piece of leather at the end of the crop. She instantly pictured Eddie holding the crop in his hand, mercilessly applying its wicked leather tip to her bottom. Her breath

caught in her throat and she swore she felt her pussy clench in need even as her mind screamed that bringing him here wouldn't be such a good idea after all. It would be better if he had no idea this place existed.

“See something you like, little one?”

Teresa shrieked and performed a never-before-seen maneuver, jumping about two feet off the ground while twisting a hundred and eighty degrees in mid-air. When she fell back to earth, it was to find herself face-to-face with her new Daddy.

“Turtle!”

A look of confusion replaced Eddie's smile. “Did you say turtle?”

Had she? Why on earth would she say that?

She'd seen the smirk he'd had when she'd practically given herself whiplash turning around. Had he seen her looking at the straps? Heck, forget looking, she'd been fondling a crop. What must he be thinking? She'd actually been caught with her hand in the proverbial cookie jar.

Taking a deep breath to steady herself, the unmistakable scent of leather instantly provided clarity.

“Stuffies!” She released the crop she been stroking and pointed across the store. “Doesn't every Little need a stuffie? I think I saw a turtle and it reminded me of when you were strip... um, when I was... when you said I was turtling.”

Turtling? Jiminy Cricket... could I sound any more Tizzy?

Eddie's gaze followed her finger which was still pointing. His smile returned and he nodded. “Littles definitely need a stuffy or two,” he agreed, reaching past her.

Her head naturally turned to follow his arm and she felt heat flooding her face as he bent down to pick up the crop her acrobatics had pulled from its hook.

“I believe there’s a store policy that if you take it, you have to buy it,” he teased, straightening and running the crop over his palm.

“Umm... that’s if you *break* it,” Teresa corrected.

“I don’t know, leather is quite difficult to break.” Eddie slid his hand through the loop on the shaft and with a flick of his wrist, snapped the crop against his thigh, causing Teresa to squeal and jump again.

“I-I meant, you have to break it to, you know, to have to —”

“Buy it?” Eddie cut in. “As a responsible Daddy, I believe it is not only my duty to buy my little Tizzy the stuffy of her dreams, but to have the proper tool on hand in case she needs to hug that stuffy for comfort.” He reached out to use a fingertip beneath her chin to return her mouth to its proper closed position, before brushing his lips across hers. After he stole what little breath she had, Tizzy was a bit light-headed by the time he released her. With his forehead pressed against hers, he asked, “Ready?”

“Is it going to really hurt?” she whispered, her eyes dropping to his hand that still held the crop.

“To pick out a stuffy?”

Teresa pulled back and shook her head at his teasing.

“Don’t you fret, little Tizzy, your Daddy is here to make sure to kiss away any owies the day may bring.”

“Let me guess. By ‘day’ you mean ‘Daddy’.”

Eddie grinned and those dimples nearly had her swooning.

“Remember, if you don’t want to have your naughty bottom heated, all you have to do is be my very good Little Tizzy. Then again, if you want to experience the kiss of leather against your skin, you can simply ask me to give you a funishment spanking.”

Funishment.

He had yet to convince her such a thing truly existed. She had a sneaky suspicion it was just a word Daddies and caretakers used to coax their Little ones to get naked and do the naughty-girl dance.

She decided to just ignore the fact he didn’t replace the crop on its hook. Instead simply took the hand he offered and let him lead her across the store to a far safer location. She also tried to pretend Georgie and the other girls weren’t huddled together smiling ear to ear as they caught their first glimpse of the new couple. It wasn’t easy to do but the moment Eddie wagged a huge tortoise in front of her, she wrapped both arms around it, hugged it to her chest and buried her face in its soft fur.

Funishment might be a fantasy but you could take what she’d heard about stuffies to the bank. With the stuffy in her arms and her Daddy smiling at her like he thought she was just too cute, she felt safe and loved.

“What are you going to name her?” Eddie asked.

“Shelly.” She responded with the first thing that popped into her head.

“Nice to meet you, Shelly.” Eddie solemnly gave the turtle’s webbed foot a shake. “You are a very lucky turtle. My

Tizzy is a very special, very sweet, and very loving Little. You two are going to have such fun together.”

Teresa giggled. He could be such a goofball and yet he was her goofball... at least for a few more days.

“How was your breakfast with the bride-to-be? Anything exciting being planned?”

An image of six turkeys strutting their stuff flashed into her head, but there was no way she was going to inform him of a possible prank. She was pretty sure there had to be some sort of “Littles Code” against squealing, no matter how unlikely she found the plan to be.

“Breakfast was good and we have an appointment to get fitted for our dresses,” she answered instead. “What are you going to do today?”

“I’m open to just about anything. What would you like to do?” His smile had her imagining all sorts of activities.

“Wren told me there are horses here we could ride—”

“Sorry, lovebirds, but we’re gonna be late,” Georgie cut in as she unceremoniously plucked Shelly from Teresa’s hold and shoved the turtle at her brother.

“Oh, I hope you’re not planning on using that on one of the Ranch’s ponies,” Wren exclaimed as Eddie reached to accept the stuffy with the same hand holding the crop.

“He wouldn’t!” Teresa said indignantly.

“Of course not, silly,” Georgie replied with a knowing smirk. “I’m sure he has far more nefarious plans in mind.”

Teresa instantly thought of the words written on the coffee mug: *Don’t torture yourself... that’s my job*. Her eyes flew to Eddie’s to find him smiling down at her, his dimples

prominent as if the thought of being nefarious appealed to him. The dichotomy of the stuffed turtle and the leather crop had Teresa's insides churning and her blood heating.

"I'll see you later, little Tizzy," Eddie whispered, reaching with his free hand to pull her close.

As his lips found hers, Teresa didn't even care when her new Little friends started chanting the age-old rhyme about her and Eddie, spelling out *k i s s i n g*. All she concentrated on was how incredible it felt to be hugged to the solid broad chest of her Daddy and to kiss him back.

When he finally released her, making sure not to drop his arm from around her waist until she was steady on her feet, he lifted both the turtle and the crop, and winked. "Have fun at your fitting. We'll all be waiting for you."

All she could do was nod and allow herself to be pulled from the store.

"Your Daddy is H O T!" Luna exclaimed, waving her hand in front of her face as if to cool it.

"He's not..." About to remind them he wasn't her Daddy, Teresa simply couldn't do it. No matter how temporary this was, for today, Eddie *was* her Daddy. Instead, she gave the store one last look before gazing over at the service sub. "He's not hot, he's *smoking* hot!"

The girls all giggled and Teresa found herself hoping the dress fitting would be quick because she really, really wanted to see exactly how nefarious her Daddy could be.

Eddie

POUNING THE LAST NAIL, EDDIE STRAIGHTENED AND STEPPED back in order to better admire their handiwork.

“What do you think?” Lucas asked.

“I think my baby sister is one hell of a lucky girl,” Eddie answered. “I can’t believe she is actually getting married, but I couldn’t ask for a better husband for her.”

“I’m the lucky one.” Lucas’ gaze went soft as if he were picturing his bride-to-be. “She stormed in here like a hurricane and turned my entire world upside down. I swear to you, Eddie, I’m going to do everything within my power to make sure Georgie is never sorry she’s my wife.”

All kidding aside, Eddie gave his friend a smile. “I never doubted she’d be anything other than happy. This is just going to be the cherry on top of her happy sundae.”

The men stood looking over the archway that Lucas had designed. They’d built it beneath the canopy of a huge maple tree whose leaves were a brilliant bright red. “All we have to

do is add the flowers, and it will be done. I think she's going to like it."

"She's gonna love it," Eddie assured him. "Just think, in a few more days, you're going to be my brother-in-law."

"That's pretty awesome," Lucas agreed. "And, if my eyes aren't deceiving me, I have a feeling you'll be joining me in the not-too-distant future."

Eddie didn't bother to deny it. He'd given up trying to ignore his attraction to another type of storm. Teresa was his personal Texas tornado. She had been on his radar for years and now that they were both grown and obviously attracted to each other, he was going to give it his all. His grin was contagious as Lucas joined him, both men obviously considering all the possibilities they had to look forward to.

"Speaking of forces of nature, what do you say we head on back and find our girls? Surely they have to be finished trying on dresses by now." Eddie enjoyed the time he was spending with Lucas of course, but he couldn't wait to have Teresa back in his arms.

The two men packed the building supplies into the four-wheel Gator and rode back to the main gardening shed.

"Daddy!"

Both men turned from unloading to find Georgie and Teresa running hand in hand toward them. Eddie didn't know which one had called "Daddy" but found he really wanted to believe it had been Teresa. When Georgie dropped her friend's hand to throw herself at Lucas, Eddie didn't wait for Teresa to do the same. Instead, he stepped forward and scooped her off her feet to spin her in a circle. The sound of her gasp of surprise followed by her giggle, made him smile.

“There’s my little tornado.” He stopped the spin but didn’t yet set her down.

“Tornado?” she asked, tilting her head to study him. “Why did you call me that? I’m not the one spinning around.”

Eddie chuckled. “Because you blew into my life and swept my feet out from under me, babygirl.”

Her eyes lit up and she smiled. Taking advantage of having her in his arms, Eddie planted a quick kiss on her lips and loved the blush that colored her cheeks. “I’ve missed you.”

“You have?” she asked, as if the very thought was impossible to believe.

“Every minute,” Eddie assured her, giving her another kiss on the tip of her nose before setting her on her feet. “Did you miss me?”

“I did,” Teresa answered with a smile. “I can’t wait for you to see the dress Georgie picked out for me. It’s so pretty.”

“You’d make a burlap sack look beautiful.” Eddie slipped his arm around her waist. “Are you done with wedding duties for the day?”

“I don’t know.” Teresa frowned, scrunching her brows together as she motioned to where the couple was still rather “engaged” in kissing each other as if they’d been separated for a year instead of a couple of hours.

“Hey, you two, save some for the wedding,” Eddie teased.

Lucas didn’t release his bride for another few moments but when Georgie started to giggle, he chuckled and finally stepped back.

“Sorry, not sorry,” Georgie quipped. “Now, if you’ll excuse us, we have some... um... some—”

“Things to do,” Lucas supplied. “We’ll see you later.”

The couple didn’t wait for a response, simply turned away and started walking across the thick green lawn heading toward a set of buildings that housed some of the Ranch’s employees.

“Well, that answers that question,” Eddie quipped as he looked down at Teresa. “And leaves us free to—”

“Ride!” Teresa interjected.

“A Daddy has to love an eager Little who loves to ride him,” Eddie teased, wagging his eyebrows.

“Oh, um... I-I didn’t... um, mean ride you,” Teresa stuttered, her cheeks going a darker pink. “I meant Wren invited us to ride the horses, but, if you don’t want to, that’s okay.”

“I suppose we should.”

“No, really, I don’t mind,” Teresa said quickly.

“I mind. You’ve been wanting to visit the stables from the moment you heard about them. With Georgie occupied, this might be the only chance you’ll get and it’s actually perfect timing.”

“Oh, right, because of Thanksgiving and then the wedding and we’ll be going home... I mean back to Texas...”

Eddie caught the look of wistfulness in her eyes and gave her hand a squeeze. “We are here now, soooooo, I say we ride!”

Her expression brightened as she looked up at him. “Thank you, Ed... Daddy.”

He considered the address as almost a caress and it felt damn good. “You’re welcome, little Tizzy. We’ll grab some lunch, then change and go find these famous ponies. How does that sound?”

“Perfect!”

She was pretty perfect herself, Eddie thought, as she skipped along beside him headed toward the lodge. He couldn’t wait to see her reaction to the surprises he had in store for her. He’d give her the world just to see the smile on her face and the golden glints in her eyes brighten.

TERESA

“This is too much.” Teresa gestured at the items laid out on the bed once they’d finished lunch and returned to their room.

“Don’t be silly.” Eddie ignored her protest. “You can’t ride in thin leggings or a dress. If your bottom is going to be sore, it’s because your Daddy reddened it, and not from bouncing about in a saddle wearing the wrong clothing.” When her mouth opened, he placed his finger across her lips and shook his head.

“I’m serious, little girl. If you want to test me, then keep arguing and you can ride on a sore bottom. Is that what you want?” At the vigorous shaking of her head, he dropped his finger.

“No, Sir, I-I... thank you,” she said, not about to issue another word about how he was spoiling her. Instead, she lifted up on her tiptoes and kissed his lips before dropping

down and grabbing the new clothes. “I’ll just go change and —”

“Whoa, Daddy will help you dress.” Eddie grabbed her and hauled her back to stand in front of him. “You aren’t thinking of denying me the pleasure of watching my Little girl turn into my Little cowgirl, are you?”

She had been but decided that wasn’t the hill she wished to die on. Especially not when her tummy flipped and her nipples hardened at the thought of being undressed by him. “No, Daddy,” she said sincerely, dropping the clothes back on the bed and lifting her arms over her head.

Eddie chuckled and bent to drop a kiss on top of her head before pulling her t-shirt over it. The blush flooding her face when he briefly flicked his thumbs over her nipples, wasn’t one of embarrassment, but one of pure unadulterated lust. Images of the evening before when he’d suckled at her breasts while thrusting into her body played in her mind. She held her breath as he sank to his knees and untied her sneakers and lifted her feet one by one to remove them as well as her socks. When he hooked his fingers in the waistband of her leggings, he looked up at her, the grin she so loved on his lips as he slowly began to pull them down.

“You know what they say, Daddy?”

“What’s that, sweetie?”

She steadied herself by bracing her hands on his shoulders as she lifted each foot again to pull them free from the leggings. “Save a horse and ride a cowboy?”

Eddie’s bark of laughter surprised her but also made her smile.

“Babygirl, you are just too cute. However, as much as I agree with that, I’m afraid you can’t.”

“Oh.” Heat flooded her face again... this time definitely due to the fact he most likely found her far too wanton in making such a suggestion.

“Hey.” He stood to lift her chin and tilt her head back so she was forced to look at him. “I just meant I’ll not qualify until after I actually sit on a horse. Then, babygirl, this cowboy is all yours to ride as long and as hard as you desire.”

“Oh!” she repeated though in a much happier tone.

“Of course, you might change your mind,” he said as he began to help her into the jeans he’d bought her at the store.

“I won’t,” she promised, shaking her head as she pushed her arm into the sleeve of the orange cowgirl shirt he’d purchased. “I promise!”

“Now, don’t go making promises you might not keep,” Eddie warned but continued to smile as he started to snap closed each of the pearl snap buttons on the front of the shirt. Finishing the last one, he tucked the shirt into the waistband of the jeans before buttoning them as well.

“Why wouldn’t I?” she asked as he set her on the bed in order to pull up a pair of thick socks and then work a foot into the new boots she couldn’t believe he’d found. They were purple just like the new belt he’d threaded into the belt loops.

“You’ll see.” He tugged on her second boot.

What did he mean by “you’ll see”? Before she could pester him to tell her, he stood her in front of him facing away in order to brush out her long hair.

“Oh, that feels so nice,” she practically purred before another question occurred to her. “Where did you get that brush? That’s not mine.”

Eddie paused to flip the wooden brush in his hands. “Another gift from Aladdin’s cave.”

“You could have used mine, it’s in the bathroom.”

“Ahh, but yours doesn’t have magical powers,” he said, drawing the bristles through her curls again.

“Dare I ask what powers this one supposedly has?” Instead of his voice answering, it was hers yelping when going up on her tiptoes as the back of the brush smacked against the back of her jeans. “Hey! What was that for?”

“Actions provide a much better lesson than mere words,” Eddie said, holding out the brush to allow her a nice long look. “One side is used to bring forth the contented little mewls of a good girl’s pleasure having her Daddy brush her hair”—he flipped the brush again—“and the other is to hear far lustier sounds when applied to a naughty girl’s bottom.”

She had absolutely no words even as her mind replayed scenes from many books she’d read about the dual purposes of a sturdy, old-fashioned hairbrush.

When he’d finished brushing and braiding her hair into two long pigtails, Teresa instantly pointed to the purple ribbons when he offered her a choice of color. He tied the end of the ribbons into a perfectly matched set of bows. “Wow, you’re pretty good at this hair stuff. Did you use to do Georgie’s when she was a kid?”

“A few times, but that was mostly Mom’s job. I honed my bow skills as an intern tying about a million sutures.” He

popped a western hat on her head. “Ta-da, my Tizzy girl, you make a very cute cowgirl.”

My Tizzy girl.

She loved the sound of that and any protests over the brush’s other purpose were forgotten as she watched her Daddy transform into the most handsome cowboy she’d ever laid her eyes on.

“You’re pretty cute yourself, cowboy,” she said, surprised at the fact she could tease him without feeling silly.

“Why, thank you, ma’am,” he drawled as she reached down to grab the Stetson sitting on top of the pillows and placed it on his head. “Let’s go find us some ponies, what do you say?”

“I say yes!” she said enthusiastically. Whatever he’d meant earlier could wait. Right now she was going to enjoy visiting the stables and riding alongside Mr. Cowboy Daddy.

Eddie

AND HERE HE'D THOUGHT THAT ONLY LITTLES ON THE RANCH had sore behinds. Eddie could hear his Little girl giggling as he rubbed his hands against his ass.

“Think it’s funny, huh?” he mock-growled as he dropped his hands to advance on her.

“No, Daddy!” she shrieked, her laugh negating her claim as she took off running.

He grinned, as the braids he’d put her hair into streamed behind her as she ran across the field.

“Thank you for bringing Teresa to ride, Master Eddie, I think she really had fun.” Wren’s smile was bright as she stood next to her Daddy and husband, Travis.

“She’s a natural rider,” Travis said.

“She did far better than I did,” Eddie confirmed with a grin of pride. Though he lived in a state known for riding and rodeos, he’d never sat on a horse before today. “Thanks for making it special for her,” he added as he took off his hat and

ran his fingers through his hair before placing it firmly on his head. “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’ve got a cowgirl to catch.”

Travis laughed and Wren giggled as Eddie took off after his Little girl. He’d suffered in that hard saddle for the past two hours while bouncing hadn’t seemed to affect Teresa in the slightest. She owed him a ride now and he was determined she’d enjoy it even more than riding up and down trails on the mountains that encircled the Ranch. His longer strides soon drew him within sight of his girl. Putting on additional speed, he yelled, “Giddy-up!”

She looked over her shoulder to see him within snagging distance and shrieked again, not in fear, but in anticipation. Peals of laughter made his grin grow bigger as he allowed her to stay just a few steps ahead until he saw the soft grass about to turn into the gravel of the road. Reaching out, he wrapped his hands around her waist and lifted her into the air.

“Daddy!” she cried, her booted feet still churning.

“What was that about riding a cowboy?” he asked as he settled her on his hip and her legs and arms wrapped around him.

“Giddy-up, Cowboy Daddy.” She threw his words back at him and he had her giggling again when he whinnied, used his boot to paw at the gravel they’d reached and then began to run down the road.

Once back in their room, Eddie finally set his prize down, ready to begin undressing her when she surprised him by reaching up to grab each side of his new shirt and pulling. Snaps popped as they came undone to leave his chest bare.

“In a hurry?” he teased.

“Uh-huh.” Pushing the shirt off his shoulders, she let it fall to hang down his back. “Oh, it’s stuck.” She pulled at the fabric until it came free of his jeans to drop to the floor.

She surprised him again when she reached for the buckle of his belt and worked it free before unbuttoning his jeans. Deciding to let her have her way, he stood still as she tugged the denim down his legs, grunting a bit with the effort. When the jeans were at his ankles, she realized he still wore his boots. She looked up and he chuckled. “Need some help?”

“Yes, please.”

Eddie took a seat on the couch. “Come here,” he directed, pointing to the spot between his knees. He had to bite his tongue to keep from chuckling at the look of distrust she shot him before begrudgingly taking a few steps to stand before him. “If looks could kill,” he teased as he guided her to straddle his leg with her back to him. “I push and you pull,” he explained, as she gripped the heel of his boot.

“Oh, I saw Kim Darby pull off John Wayne’s boots in *True Grit*,” she exclaimed. When he planted his other booted foot on her behind, she turned her head to see him grinning.

“What? This is how it’s done. If you don’t believe me, just ask John.”

“Why? Did he have a butt fetish too?”

Eddie chuckled. “Babygirl, next movie night, we will watch *McLintock* and you can see for yourself.”

As a lover of western movies, it didn’t take her but a second to catch his meaning and recall the scene she’d seen time and time again. “Well, at least he let Maureen O’Hara keep her drawers on when he spanked her.”

Eddie laughed again. “I’m betting it was the censors who made that call. As for me, I love your cute little ass whether covered or bare.”

Having no comeback for that, she attempted to keep the smile off her face by turning away and taking a firmer hold of his boot, fully aware of the pressure of her Daddy’s foot on her backside. She squeaked in surprise when the boot came free and she turned back to look at him. “It really works!”

Once the second boot joined its mate, she turned again to look at him in victory. “Oh, you need to stand up, Daddy.”

“I do?”

“Yes! You’re not naked yet.”

“Speaking of naked,” he said, stepping out of his jeans before pulling her closer. “It’s my turn, little Tizzy.”

It didn’t take long before she was fully nude, standing in all her beautiful cowgirl glory, her arousal evident by her stiff little nipples and the intoxicating aroma that was forever imprinted on his soul.

Guiding her back a step, he rose from the couch and picked her up only to toss her onto the bed.

“Don’t forget,” she said between bounces. “You need to take off your panties.”

That had him stopping in his tracks as she broke into a giggle fest. Shaking his head, he reached out to wrap his hands around her ankles and tugged her toward him.

Her giggles continued until he changed his hold, wrapping one hand around both her ankles and then lifting her hips off the bed. Her laughter changed to a squeal when his free hand made contact with her right buttock.

“What was that for?” She squealed louder when his palm connected to her left ass cheek.

“What? This?” He demonstrated by giving her another pair of quick swats. “It’s only fair, don’t you think?”

“What’s fair?”

“Well, we are both playing cowboy and cowgirl, correct?”

“Ye-yesss,” she mewled, arching up as he ran his fingernails over the tenderized skin.

“And since this cowboy already has a sore ass, it only stands to reason that his precious Little cowgirl should have hers a bit tender as well. Don’t you agree?”

“Oh, yes, Daddy.” Her protest ended, her face coloring a beautiful pink as he began to pepper the entirety of her ass with quick little pops that brought the blood to the surface and caused her nipples to furl tightly.

“Then turn onto your tummy and present your little bottom to Daddy,” he instructed, dropping her legs to the bed and taking a step back to give her room to do so.

Her eyes were huge, the golden glints shining within their depths as she nodded, rolled onto her tummy and then pulled her knees up. After snagging Shelly, she lowered her chest to the bed and lifted her bottom.

“Like this, Daddy?”

“Exactly like that.” With his cock sticking out ramrod straight and hard as steel, Eddie lifted his hand and brought it down against the pale canvas of her ass. Her moan was all he needed to hear for him to continue. Each stroke filled the air with moans and little cries. The proof of her need was evident with the glistening of her pussy lips, her cream sliding down to

coat her inner thighs. After placing a dozen smacks on her ass, he climbed onto the bed and pulled her to straddle his lap.

Her face was beautifully flushed, her pupils dilated with lust and her entire body trembled a bit as her hand wrapped around his cock.

“Mine,” she declared needlessly as she lifted herself enough to place him at her entrance. “All mine, Cowboy Daddy,” she repeated and threw her head back, her braids sweeping across his thighs as she moaned in such pleasure he had to fight against coming like an untried teenager.

“All yours, Teresa,” he agreed, reaching up to flick and play with her nipples as she did exactly as she’d suggested and rode the luckiest cowboy on the planet.

Teresa

“ARE YOU SAD ABOUT NOT BEING WITH YOUR FAMILY FOR THE holiday?” Eddie asked, as they dressed for Thanksgiving dinner after a late-morning romp in the proverbial hay.

Teresa shrugged as he ran the brush through her curls, before running his fingers through them. “Not really. I’m twenty-five and a nurse, so it’s not like I’ve never missed a holiday before. Honestly, even if I were home, there would be no guarantee of me spending the holiday with them anyway. Thanksgiving is a busy day in the ER, you know that.”

“I do,” Eddie agreed, sweeping her hair out of the way to drop a soft, sensual kiss on the curve of her neck.

Rolling her eyes, she batted him away. “Stop that!”

“I can’t help it that you turn me on.”

“Well, try. We have places to be. And besides, you literally just got some.” She shook her head as he went in for a second neck kiss. “You’re insatiable.”

“Only with you.”

Dodging him, she stepped to the side and began pulling things out of her makeup bag, leaning toward the mirror so she could fix her face. If he kept it up, she would eventually give in, and then they'd miss dinner, and be bad guests. Really, he should know better.

"They are pretty upset about not being invited to Georgie's wedding," she offered, bringing the conversation back around to the holiday and her parents. "They've always seen Georgie as a second daughter, you know that."

"Indeed I do." His eyes twinkled with mirth. "Did you happen to explain to them *why* they weren't invited?"

"Umm... nope!" Her lips smacked together on the ending of the second word, making a popping sound. "Sorry Mom and Dad, Georgie doesn't want you at her wedding, because it's being held at a kink ranch in the middle of nowhere, and all her friends are Littles, and her fiancé is her Daddy, and oh by the way, I'm a Little too." She gave a half-giggle, half-smirk at the thought of trying to explain to her parents why Georgie was having her wedding at a kink ranch, or what a Little was and shook her head again. "My parents are cool, but they aren't *that* cool. It's not that I think they'd judge, but they wouldn't get it, and if they came here... they'd be totally out of their element. I can just imagine."

"I get it," Eddie agreed. "Our parents are coming for the wedding of course, but my mom wanted to come for Thanksgiving, and Georgie put the kibosh on that. They'll be here tomorrow, but she booked them in a B&B in Porter's Corner and insisted on having the rehearsal dinner off-Ranch as well. I think she's trying to limit the time they spend here as much as she possibly can. She's hoping the less time they are

actually on the Ranch, the less questions they'll have, which is ridiculous, because... have you met my mother?"

"I have." Teresa smiled, picturing Mrs. Mayer's reaction to all the happenings around the Ranch. She was a kind and even outrageous woman, but she would have *all* the questions. "I didn't realize the rehearsal dinner wasn't here," Teresa mused with a frown. "I don't think Georgie mentioned it."

"It was in the schedule of events she gave us. You know that packet of papers telling us where to be and when and how to dress and what to bring and anything important we might need to know?"

"Oh." Teresa shrugged, leaning closer to the mirror as she applied a layer of mascara to her lashes. "I didn't look at that. You said you were going to help me by being my Daddy and making sure I didn't miss anything important, so I didn't need to. You tell me what I need to know."

Eddie just raised his eyebrows. "Well, it's not here. It's in Porter's Corner and everyone is going to be carpooling over in limos, meeting down in the foyer about thirty minutes ahead of time, so you better not make us late," Eddie teased. Glancing at his watch, he added, "You better not make us late to dinner either. You asked Daddy for help staying organized and on time, and I'm sure you won't enjoy dinner half as much if you know you have a punishment spanking afterward."

She squirmed, so slightly he almost missed it, and if he'd blinked, he would have. Then, turning from the mirror, she squared her shoulders, gave her hair a flip over one shoulder, and stepped toward him, with her eyes flaring in challenge. "I'm ready," she announced. "You're the one still standing there half dressed, so if anyone is gonna make us late, it's gonna be you."

Half-dressed in this case meant he was missing his hat, belt and boots, a problem he quickly rectified, but not before Teresa got in one more sassy jab.

“If you make us late, does that mean you get the spanking?” she questioned with her voice in a high innocent-sounding falsetto, blinking her long made-up lashes at him.

“Nope. Still you,” he declared with a wink, bending at the waist to scoop her over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes. “And as fun as that would be for me, little girl, I’m starving, so you better get a move on!”

“You’re carrying me!” she protested, kicking her legs. “You get a move on!”

EDDIE

WHEN THEY ARRIVED AT DEREK AND SADIE’S, OR THE BIG House, as the Littles called it, at one minute before the time they’d been told, Eddie found himself almost disappointed that they’d managed to make it on time. Even though she’d asked him for help with being on time and responsible this week, she’d done perfectly for every event, usually without so much as a reminder from him. If they’d been late, she’d have been right that it was his fault, and it would have given him a good excuse to introduce her to her first funishment spanking. She still refused to believe that such a thing existed.

He should have walked slower. As he stood on the front porch, wallowing in his regret, he actually considered grabbing her back up and making a run for it, dragging her to

the dungeon and proving that funishment actually was a thing, once and for all. Dinner and holidays be damned.

That thought only lasted until the door swung open to reveal Sadie in a fancy dress, with Georgie on her heels, and the delicious smells of a holiday feast wafting through the air hit his nostrils. Then he remembered how hungry he was.

“You look amazing! That dress is so pretty!” Georgie squealed at Tizzy.

“You too! Oh my gosh! Sadie, I love your hair!” Tizzy returned the compliment and the three of them did some bouncy-squealy thing in the doorway, blocking the entrance.

Eddie stood there with his stomach growling until Lucas came up behind the girls, gently grabbed Georgie’s shoulder, moved her out of the way, and pulled him over the threshold.

Once he was inside, Lucas handed him a beer with the top popped off.

“Thanks,” Eddie grunted, taking a swig as his eyes danced around the hallway that was lined with beautifully framed photos that appeared to be very old.

“Those are historical Ranch pictures,” Lucas offered when Eddie paused before one depicting two men who were obvious twins wearing clothes from a bygone era. “Derek’s ancestors started the Ranch in the 1800s. It’s grown a lot since then, but the purpose has always been to provide a safe haven for women.”

“That’s impressive,” Eddie said, looking at each photo until they reached the end of the hall and entered a massive room that was already filled with people. From what he’d heard of the guest list, it looked like they were the last to arrive.

He'd barely made it two steps in before Master Derek himself appeared in front of him, flanked by his lawyer, Jared Stark and another man Eddie had not yet met. "Eddie," Master Derek boomed, shaking his hand and clapping him on the shoulder at the same time, "so glad you could make it. Welcome to my home."

Before Eddie could say what a lovely home it was, or respond in any way, Derek continued, "You remember Jared, and this is Colt Reed, a master craftsman. You ever need a custom-piece of furniture, this is your man."

"Or an implement," Jared added with a grin.

"Pleased to meet you. I believe I've already used a paddle you crafted. It was most effective." Eddie shook the other man's hand.

Colt grinned. "I'm glad you found it to your liking. Happy Thanksgiving."

"I'd offer you a drink," Derek said, "but it looks like you already got one."

"I hooked him up," Lucas offered.

"And thank god he did." Eddie grinned as he took a swig. "The girls started going crazy before we even made it in the door."

Derek nodded wearily. "I'm pretty sure they have a secret sugar stash somewhere," he grumbled. "I should probably try to find it, but"—he gestured around the full room—"I'm busy entertaining. I'll figure it out after dinner, and make the culprits pay the piper, and by culprits, I mean Sadie, because I have no doubt she's the one behind this."

The two men beside him agreed with wry smiles, and he nodded at Eddie, welcoming him once more before being

called from somewhere across the room, Jared and Colt moseying off as well.

Then it was just he and Lucas as the girls were off in the corner, giggling and no doubt conspiring with a bunch of Littles, some he recognized, and several he did not. He finally understood the moniker “Big House” used for the Ranch owner’s residence. Massive would have described it even better. Wooden beams ran across the ceiling. Large, leather furniture was scattered about the room, several chairs situated around a coffee table made from the slab of a tree, its multitude of rings and huge size easily marking it as being at least a hundred years old.

“Dinner’s on!” Chef Connor called from a doorway across the room.

Quickly, Teresa appeared at Eddie’s side, and Georgie at Lucas’, when the band of Littles scattered, each of them joining their own Daddies as the guests moved into the next room. Eddie had never seen a dining table as large as the one that stretched almost the entire distance of the large room. Autumn flowers filled several vases and gave off a subtle fragrance to the space while leaves in all shades provided even more colors down the center of the table.

Before anyone could sit, Georgie cleared her throat, and stepped in front of the crowd. “There’s place cards so you know where to sit,” she announced, “and before we eat we’re gonna go around the table and everyone’s gonna say what they are thankful for. There’s a lot of people here, so start thinking about what you’re gonna say now, else we’ll never get to eat, and if we never eat dinner, we don’t get no dessert.”

Eddie’s heart swelled with pride as he realized she was acting in her official capacity as the Ranch event organizer.

However, her proclamation was met with a chorus of groans.

“Sorry,” Georgie called out, wrinkling her nose. “My Daddy and Master Derek and Chef Connor says ‘dems da rules!’”

“You don’t want to miss dinner anyway,” a curvy brunette Eddie recognized as Hayleigh chimed out as she moved to stand by Georgie. “My Daddy cooks the bestest Thanksgiving feast ever in the whole history of Thanksgivingses!”

“Even if I have to do it with frozen turkeys,” Chef Connor agreed, coming out of what Eddie believed to be the kitchen to take his seat at the table. Hayleigh sat next to him, and Derek sat at the head of the table with Sadie beside him. Once Derek was seated, everyone started scrambling to find their seats.

“Daddy, we’re over here!” Tizzy called from a spot in the center of the massive table. Tizzy gasped. “We’re right by Georgie and Lucas!”

As if his baby sister hadn’t orchestrated the whole seating chart. He just smiled indulgently and joined her where she stood. Her seat was next to Georgie, with he and Lucas on either side. As they sat, Eddie looked around the table at the faces, some he recognized some he didn’t, all seated around the massive table. He figured there were about fifty people in attendance for something that had been described to him as a “small family dinner”. If this was a small family dinner, what did a big one look like?

Eddie

AS SOON AS EVERYONE WAS SEATED, TWO YOUNG WOMEN, dressed in the Ranch's service sub attire began to bring out the food. Eddie clamped his mouth shut to keep from drooling as the table was filled with delicious dishes. Both mashed and sweet potatoes, stuffing, macaroni and cheese, glazed Brussels sprouts, a large garden salad with red onions and mandarin oranges, green bean casserole, cornbread, fresh rolls, and of course the turkeys.

"Let's give thanks," Derek said when all the food was laid out in front of them. Eddie bowed his head and squeezed Tizzy's hand beside him, urging her to do the same as their host gave a short prayer.

"Let's eat!" Sadie exclaimed right after they all chorused "amen."

"Wait"—Derek gave her with a stern look—"while we pass the food and everyone dishes up, we'll go around the table and everyone can take turns saying what they are thankful for."

“Oh, that’s right, Daddy,” Sadie acknowledged with a sage nod. “I almost forgot, but it’s tradition.”

“That it is, angel. And I will go first to kick things off.” He cleared his throat and looked around the table and Eddie could have sworn the older man’s eyes were filled with tears. “I am thankful for all of you,” he said simply. “Each year I look around this table and see even more friendly faces than the year before. You all are friends who have become family and I will never stop being thankful for you.”

“Hear hear!” someone cried. They were too far away for Eddie to see who it was, but it started a litany of agreements, cheers and glasses clinking together.

“Oh oops,” Master Derek said, “I think that’s why I usually go last.”

“Is it my turn, Daddy?” Sadie asked, quieting the room.

“Go ahead, angel.” The room that had been full of noise only moments before was now eerily silent as Sadie folded her hands in her lap and smiled primly. “I’m thankful for my Daddy... and for candy!”

Her declaration gave her away as the hider of the secret sugar stash, and Eddie saw her cheeks pinken when Master Derek leaned over and whispered in her ear, no doubt giving her an inkling of what was to come later, once all their guests were gone.

Hayleigh and Chef Connor went next and then it went around the table rather quickly, with the Littles in attendance making things interesting. They were thankful first, foremost and always, for their Daddies and Mommies, but from there the items got rather interesting. Friends, Care Bears, stuffed animals, glitter, rubber duckies, porch swings, playgrounds

and the like. Lucas was thankful of course for Georgie, for having Eddie there to be his best man, and plants. Typical Lucas. Georgie gave thanks for Star Wars Day, little black books, and baby Yoda, as well as her husband-to-be.

Then it was Tizzy's turn and Eddie found that he was holding his breath, wondering what she'd say. She looked nervous, like she was about to be graded on the answer she gave. With a giant gulp, she glanced around the room, and stared down at her plate. "Um, I'm thankful for my best friend Georgie, her amazing Daddy Lucas, the fact that I got to come all the way to Montana to this amazing place to be their maid of honor, and"—a beautiful blush rose further up her cheeks—"I'm really, really thankful for apples, and roller skates, and coffee mugs and nail art and diners. And that's it, I'm done."

Eddie exhaled. To everyone else, it would seem like a very random list of things, but to him, it was practically their love story.

He was so busy staring at her that he forgot he was up next until she elbowed him in the ribs. "Oh right. Me next. I'm thankful for housekeepers who go on vacation, supermarkets between home and work, tornados, and apple-cinnamon crumble muffins."

He could feel everyone staring at the two of them in confusion.

"Right, well, um, I guess I'm up then," Wren, who was also in the wedding, piped up from beside him.

"I'm thankful for my Daddy, and for horses, and for Ross, Joey, Chandler, Monica, Phoebe and Rachel."

Eddie blinked in confusion as she named of the characters from a popular older TV show, but everyone else chuckled,

and the task of naming what you were thankful for moved on to the next person.

It must have taken twenty minutes to go around the table, but when they finished, everyone had a full plate and the mood in the room was jovial.

Eddie took the liberty of cutting Teresa's turkey into bites and adding a scoop of the Brussel sprouts that she'd conveniently forgotten to dish up.

Teresa wrinkled her nose. "Dadddyyy, no! I don't like 'em."

He shook his head, dismissing her protests. "You're a nurse, you know how important a balanced meal is, and all I see on your plate is starch and protein. You have to have some veggies."

"Ugh. Fine." She sighed in resignation and dutifully took a bite, holding her nose while she chewed. Of course, that set off a chain reaction, and soon all the Littles were giggling while holding their noses and making exaggerated gagging noises while forcing down vegetables and salad.

The Daddies in the room rolled their eyes and shrugged their shoulders as if to say, "at least they're eating their veggies". Derek let the theatrics continue for several minutes, before raising his eyebrows and clearing his throat. "Remember little ones, Chef Connor worked hard on this meal for several days. Far too hard and long for you to be gagging while you eat it."

Eddie noticed he'd waited to voice his protest until most of the vegetables had been cleared off their plates. As soon as he'd spoken, two dozen Littles had swallowed hard, set down

their forks, let go of their noses and chorused, “Sorry, Chef Connor! Thank you for dinner.”

The rest of the meal passed without incident, allowing Eddie to savor each and every delectable bite. It seemed the tales he’d heard about the chef’s famous mac and cheese were true as those bowls quickly emptied onto Littles’ plates. The mashed potatoes were the best he’d ever had, and the stuffing was to die for. He wondered if Chef Connor would give him the recipe to pass on to Jeannie.

As plates began to clear and Chef Connor began to tease about dessert, he noticed a change in the mood of the room. Well, a change in the mood of the Littles, anyway.

“Don’t forget to leave room for dessert, people!” Chef Connor called. “We’ve got pies! Lots and lots of pies! Pumpkin and pecan, sweet potato and apple, cherry and chocolate silk. Though oddly enough one of my chocolate pies did mysteriously disappear overnight...”

He trailed off and never asked the question directly as Eddie would have, but Eddie noticed the shift. Several Littles became suddenly fascinated in their surroundings, commenting innocently on the centerpieces, the china pattern, and each other’s dress clothes. They were also anxiously glancing toward the front door every few minutes.

Giving Tizzy the side-eye, he was pleased to observe she seemed to have no part in whatever was going on, though the same could not be said for his sister. If the other Bigs in the room noticed, they were pretending they didn’t as no one commented on the odd and telling behavior.

The service subs came out and cleared the table, refilling glasses of sparkling juice, champagne and coffee, and

eventually, the Littles began to act normal. That should have been the first warning.

He leaned back in his chair, relaxing as the conversation turned to things like the football game, the evening's turkey trot contest, in which Bigs carried their Littles on their back and raced across the finish line and the hayride with hot cocoa and popcorn, which the Littles were looking forward to the most. Lucas and Georgie's wedding was also a main topic of conversation as it was only two days away.

After everyone had a chance for their food to settle and the conversation had died down to idle chatter, just as the pies were being served, the front door burst open, and the blast of a trumpet, of all things, filled the air, followed quickly by a harmonica. Fifty plus heads swung in the direction the noise had come from. Eddie's jaw dropped open at the sight that greeted him.

A Little boy marched over the threshold, dressed in an outfit made up of Swiss Lederhosen, bright knee socks, and well-loved tennis shoes. His wispy hair fell in his eyes, and his cheeks were tinged pink from the cold because who wore shorts in Montana in late November?

"Billy!" Derek exclaimed, jumping up from the table. "What is the meaning of this?"

Billy ignored Derek's questioning, and marched forward. That was when the scene became even more absurd. Billy reached in his pocket, pulled out his phone, and pushed a button. The chorus of "Free Bird" by Lynyrd Skynyrd filled the room as a gaggle of turkeys entered behind Billy. As the chorus played, Billy and the turkeys marched around the table, giving the guests their own version of a Thanksgiving parade.

As if that wasn't completely ridiculous in and of itself, the turkeys were dressed up. Each of them wore a sign around their neck, with the names of characters from the popular TV show "Friends," and suddenly Wren's thankful list had a bit more context. But the brightly colored name signs were outshone by the fact the turkeys were dressed in Lycra fetish gear. They were all wearing black spandex tank tops that looked to have been homemade, complete with well-placed tears and random safety pins. Ross and Phoebe had elastic bands around their heads, tiny little ball gags on top of their beaks. He thought that fitting because in his opinion, those two had always been the most annoying characters. Phoebe also wore a studded collar around her neck, and so did Monica and Rachel. Joey was wearing a mesh blindfold around his eyes, and Chandler, looking seriously pissed off, was tied up with silk ribbons, that bound his wings to his body, giving a whole new meaning to the phrase "trussed up like a thanksgiving turkey".

As the room stared in shock at the scene before them, Wren jumped out of her chair and ran to Chandler, quickly undoing the ties. "Billy! What the crap? I told you not to do anything that might hurt them!"

The song ended, Billy explained the ties were loose, and Wren clapped her hand over her mouth as if realizing she had just outed herself as the orchestrator of this shenanigan, not that there was any doubt. As Eddie had learned just from listening to the whispers around the table while the parade had been in progress, they *were* her pet turkeys. However, Eddie doubted she and Billy had acted alone in the planning of this prank, and from the stern looks, and pointed questions being aimed at various Littles in the room from their Daddies and Mommies, he wasn't alone in that consensus.

“I want my pie!” Billy demanded as the parade came to a close. Sadie jumped up and ran upstairs, returning several minutes later with the missing chocolate pie, bringing that mystery to a close and thickening the plot. Sadie presented the pie to Billy, who barely had it in his hands before Derek’s voice boomed over the noise of his guests and the turkeys.

“I’ll see you in my office tomorrow morning promptly at eight, young man!”

Eddie watched the Little shoot his co-conspirators a look as he nodded. “Yes, Master Derek,” he replied before he practically ran from the room, leaving the turkeys behind.

“It’s been fun, but it looks like I have some turkeys to get home and a naughty Little to deal with,” Travis, Wren’s Daddy, said as he rose from his chair, marched across the room to where Wren stood next to Chandler and grabbed her by the ear.

“Ouch! Ouch, ouch! Owie, Daddy, nooo!” Wren cried, even as she allowed herself to be led out the door.

“I’ll be back in a second for the turkeys,” Travis called over his shoulder. “Just gotta get her in the truck first!”

He was back in a flash and Colt helped him round up the turkeys and get them into his truck. As the door closed behind him, Master Derek also stood and walked up to Sadie with his hands on his hips. “Stealing treats from the kitchen again, huh? I thought you’d learned that particular lesson already. More than once.”

“It was for a good cause! Dinner should have entertainment! We were just providing a service, Daddy, and the pie was compensation for a job well done!”

“Uh-huh. I’ll tell you what. I’m gonna do a good job spanking your cute little behind, and when I’m done, I’ll expect my compensation for a job well done,” Master Derek informed her with a wink that had a blush rising on Sadie’s cheeks.

Before she could respond, he continued, “Apologize to Chef Connor, march your naughty little butt upstairs, take off your clothes and wait for me in the corner.”

Sadie sighed dramatically, but she didn’t look all that unhappy with the turn of events.

“I’m really sorry, Chef Connor,” she apologized sweetly.

He gave her a mock glare with his lips pursed into a frown and waved his hand to dismiss her, even as he said, “I accept your apology.”

Sadie ran from the room and up the massive staircase, and Derek shook his head at the room at large. “Well, folks, I’m afraid I’m going to have to cut the festivities short. I think several of us have bottoms to spank and punishments to dole out. But thank you all for a fantastic afternoon. I really am so thankful for each of you, and Happy Thanksgiving. Everyone, grab a plate and take some pie to go please. I’ll see you all at tonight’s events.”

Eddie took him up on that offer, grabbing a piece of apple pie for himself and a piece of chocolate for Tizzy while several Bigs marched their Littles out, holding them by their elbows while popping them on the butt as they went.

“I’d say we should get together later,” Lucas said as he led them toward the door, keeping a tight hold on Georgie whose expression suggested she was beginning to question her life choices, “but I think I’m gonna be busy.”

“No problem,” Eddie answered. He was hoping to be very busy as well.

As he and Tizzy made their way back to the main Ranch building, he stopped and looked at her sternly. “Did you have any part in today’s shenanigans?” She hadn’t looked guilty, like some of the others had, but she hadn’t looked shocked either, so he had to ask, just to be sure.

“No, Daddy, I promise I didn’t. I knew something was gonna maybe happen with the turkeys, but I didn’t know what and I didn’t have any part of planning it. I was too busy riding horsies... and cowboys.”

The reminder of how they’d been spending any and all of their free time had his cock going rock-hard beneath his slacks.

“How badly do you want to go to this thing tonight?” he questioned. “How many of the Littles do you think will even show up after that stunt today?”

Tizzy made a face. “Probably not too many. And I don’t really care if we go or not. I’m not much for races, or competitions of any kind really, I’ve been on a thousand and one hayrides, and I definitely don’t want to stick my face in a pie and end up with a stomachache.”

“Same. Although I did think the turkey trot race sounded fun.” Eddie grinned. “I’ve got an idea.” He knelt on the ground, with his back to her, carefully balancing the plate of pie in one hand. “Climb on.”

“What?” Tizzy laughed and made no move to do what he said.

“Climb on, little girl.” His voice came out in a lusty growl, and Tizzy tentatively attached herself to his back, wrapping

her arms around his neck and her legs around his waist, all the while crying, “Daddy! Eddie! What are we doing?”

He stood and began to jog/gallop/run toward the main resort. “What are we doing?” he asked, with a false incredulity in his voice. “We are turkey trotting back to the room, where I’m going to strip you naked and feed you pie, and we are not gonna come out until the sun rises. So enjoy the ride ‘cuz it’s the only turkey trotting we are gonna do.”

Tizzy gave a shocked, stuttered laugh. “That... sounds like the best Thanksgiving I’ve ever had.”

Teresa

A SUDDEN BRIGHTNESS PIERCED HER CONSCIOUSNESS, CAUSING Teresa to moan and scrunch her eyes tightly closed.

“Upsie daisy, lazy bones.”

“I’m sleeping!” she protested, dragging the blanket over her head.

An amused laugh accompanied the ripping of her covering from the bed, leaving her exposed.

“Daddy, give that back!”

“No can do,” Eddie said. “And unless you want my little sister knocking on the door demanding an explanation as to why her maid of honor is failing in her duties, I suggest you get your cute little ass up and into the shower.”

At the mention of the bride-to-be, Teresa’s eyes snapped open and she scrambled to climb off the end of the bed, practically stumbling over her own feet as she made her way to the bathroom. A glance at the time had her tune changing. “Why didn’t you wake me? I can’t be late!”

Her Daddy's answer was to swat her bare bottom as he passed her in order to turn the taps on in the shower. "I've been up for hours—"

"Please, don't even mention how 'up' you've been. Why do you think I'm so exhausted?" she snarked, unable to keep the smile off her lips. Tired or not, she cherished the feeling, still amazed at how much he wanted her.

Eddie chuckled. "Guilty as charged," he admitted as he began to shed his clothes. "How about I make it up to you by washing your back?"

Teresa rolled her eyes. "Like that's been shown to be a time-saver?" Still, she allowed him to take her hand and lead her into the large shower. She practically purred as the hot water doused her and her Daddy's sudsy hands began to roam. "Daddy?"

"Hmmm?" he murmured against her neck.

"Are you sure you're a doctor?"

"Last time I checked, I was, why do you ask?"

"Because when I took anatomy, I learned where a human's spine was and I guarantee, that is not it!" she said, then moaned as a slippery finger slid into her core, her head tilting back to lean against his chest.

"Maybe you can give me a refresher course?" he teased, adding a second finger. "I think we've got enough time to shower before the shower."

It took her a moment but then she squealed and not because of his play between her legs. "Jiminy Cricket! The shower! What time is it?" She was halfway out of the stall when he wrapped his arm around her to drag her back.

“Settle down, we’ve got time.”

Teresa snorted and turned to plant her palms on her chest. Though it took every ounce of her will power, she shook her head. “I know you, Mr. Sexy Man. You are definitely not known for any quickies.” When he chuckled and reached for her again, she pushed him back. “Nope. I am not going to have your sister banging at our door letting the entire Ranch know what is keeping us. Now, either actually wash my back or take a hike.”

Eddie grinned and reached for the loofa on the shelf. “If you tell anyone I’ll deny I said it, but you, little Tizzy, are quite sexy when you’re bossy.”

“I’m not a boss; I just have a survivor instinct when it comes to your sister,” Teresa said as she turned and allowed him to run the loofa over her back and shoulders. When it dipped to brush across buttocks that were still a bit tender from their play the night before, she considered telling him a *little* play would be okay, only to remember another detail. Reaching back, she grabbed his wrist and pulled it away from its target. When he grunted in protest, she turned to face him and found him very “up” again.

“Poor Daddy,” she said, dropping her hand to wrap around his erection. “I suppose we can just tell your mom and dad that their precious baby boy was suffering... shall we say from a severe case of priapism that kept him from picking them up on time?”

“We are *not* lying to my folks. Besides, this”—he wrapped his hand around hers still holding his cock—“is all your fault.”

“My fault!”

“Exactly, if just looking at you didn’t always give me a hard-on, we wouldn’t have this problem.”

Teresa felt warmth that had nothing to do with hot water run through her. It was incredibly satisfying to be told how much she turned the man of her dreams on. “So, what do you suggest we do?” she asked and then squealed when he spun her around.

“I suggest you brace yourself,” he barked and the moment her palms hit the tiles in front of her, he sank into her and she moaned.

“Okay, Nurse Tizzy,” he said pumping hard and fast. “Let’s see how fast you can cure my condition by coming all over my cock.”

She rather doubted she had the strength to do so but should have known better. Her Daddy might be insatiable, but he was also a fantastic lover. Each thrust into her core hit her g-spot until she felt her toes curling as the wonderful tingling began. By the time his hands moved to cup her breasts, fingertips pulling on her nipples, she was screaming his name and obeying like his good Little girl.

Eddie roared his own release a moment later and by the time another two minutes had passed, they were both squeaky clean and drying off.

Wide awake and pleasantly sore, any sleepiness was only a memory as they threw on clothes and hit the door running. Teresa giggled thinking how Nanny J would be shaking her head as they ran down the hallway, across the lobby and out the door. Lucas had arranged a car for Eddie to use and they were soon waving at Lawson who was manning the gates.

“Perfect timing,” Eddie bragged as they walked into the terminal at the same moment his parents stepped into view from the jet bridge.

“I swear, you were born under a lucky star,” Teresa said, lifting her hand to wave at the couple.

“Don’t knock it, Tizzy girl. Remember, it was a pretty sparkly star that finally brought us together,” Eddie teased, lifting her hand to brush his lips over her fingertips.

Before she could react, he was pulling his mother into his arms and his father was hugging Teresa. She’d grown up considering them as a second set of parents and it was with sincerity she hugged him back.

“Welcome to Montana, Mr. Mayer,” she said.

“Thanks, sweetheart. You are looking quite perky for someone who had to be up at the crack of dawn to come greet us,” David said, kissing her cheek.

Teresa didn’t dare look at Eddie, knowing she’d lose it if he make a single snarky quip. “It was a beautiful drive,” she said, then turned to hug Clara. “Georgie is going to be so excited to see you.”

“Not as excited as I am to see all of you,” Clara declared. “It has been far too long since my children have been together. And now, Lucas will actually *be* one of us. Isn’t that marvelous?”

“Ah, Mom, don’t cry,” Eddie said, dropping his arm around his mother’s shoulders.

David chuckled as they began to follow the signs to baggage claim. “Good luck with that. She’s been weepy since getting the news.”

Clara smacked his arm. “You can’t fool me. I bet you’ll be shedding your own tears when you walk our baby down the aisle.” She turned to address Teresa. “There is going to be an aisle, right? Georgie hasn’t really said much about the venue.”

Teresa felt a moment of panic and was saved when Eddie answered for her. “It’s going to be great, Mom. You know Lucas. He wants it to be a surprise and since Georgie isn’t known for her ability to keep a secret, he hasn’t shared the details with her either.”

Clara laughed and took her husband’s arm. “It doesn’t matter. Georgie could wed in the middle of a cow pasture and we’d be thrilled as long as they are happy.”

Teresa had to bite back a giggle as she and Eddie locked gazes. His quirked brow and smile told her he was most likely thinking the same as she was about how very close Clara was to the truth.

“Well, that’s tomorrow’s surprise. Today, we still have the shower, the luncheon, and then the rehearsal dinner,” Teresa said, mentally going over the list of duties for today. “But first, we’re going to take you to the B&B in Porter’s Corner. Georgie arranged for you to have their nicest suite. It is such a beautiful old home. You’re going to love it!”

Eddie bent to brush a kiss on Teresa’s cheek. “How about you take Mom and grab a cup of coffee. Dad and I will get the luggage,” he said before he and David walked toward a carousel.

When Clara looked between her son and Teresa, her smile widened while Teresa felt like she imagined a deer standing in the middle of a busy highway would. Evidently sensing the younger woman’s panic, Clara just patted her arm. “David is

right. You are practically glowing, Teresa. It seems Montana agrees with you.”

“It’s a very nice state,” she said, thinking how lame that actually sounded, but it wasn’t as if she could blurt out the truth. She honestly had given no thoughts to what she was supposed to do or say. She’d been so focused on making sure she did her duties well, she had forgotten that Eddie’s parents were going to be at every event from now until the wedding was over. She and Eddie had not spent a single moment discussing how they were going to handle this parental visit.

She could feel her face heating as memories of what she and their precious baby boy had been doing ever since stepping foot on Montana’s soil. It was going to take all she had to get through today and the wedding without pulling a Tizzy, and this time, she wouldn’t have her Daddy... no! She had to remember to call him Eddie from now on. And face the fact she was now on her own. She plastered a smile on her face. As much as she’d loved being Eddie’s Little girl, she was a grown-ass woman. It was time to pull up her Big-girl panties and remember this wasn’t about her, it was about Georgie and she’d rather die than ruin her best friend’s wedding.

“Oh, there’s Starbucks,” she said, motioning toward the familiar logo. “I’m dying for a latte. How about you?”

By the time the men rejoined them, Teresa had deflected any attention off her by discussing how Georgie had taken to her new job and how well she was settling in with new friends.

“I’ve honestly never seen her happier,” Teresa said as they finally climbed into the car and headed away from Butte.

Clara clasped her hand and gave it a squeeze “That’s so wonderful. I admit her father had doubts when she up and ran

off halfway across the country. But, I'm glad she did. She just sounds like she's walking on air when we talk."

Teresa squeezed the older woman's hand as well. "She is, Lucas and Georgie were just made for each other. You'll see."

Clara laughed and reached out to pat Teresa's cheek. "Sweetheart, I've always known that. It just took a bit of distance to bring the two lovebirds together." Her eyes shifted to the front seat where her son sat. "I believe all mothers are a bit psychic when it comes to knowing who's the right match for their children."

When the kind, older woman didn't follow that up by mentioning her name, Teresa felt her heart begin to crack. But it was probably for the best. This trip had been wonderful, but she'd always known it couldn't last. Fantasy never did.

Pasting a bright smile on her face, she said, "You know what they say, 'Mom knows best'. I'm just glad Georgie proved you right."

Eddie

INTRODUCING HIS PARENTS TO EDWARD AND MAUDE PRESTON, the owners of the B&B, Eddie knew Georgie had made the right decision in booking the beautiful Victorian home for their folks. Clara became instant friends with Maude over their shared love of antiques. All it took for his father to feel at home was seeing a cabinet displaying autographed paraphernalia and learning Edward was also a baseball fan. After dropping their luggage in their assigned room, Eddie, Teresa, and his mom and dad climbed back into the car for the drive to the only diner in Porter's Corner.

Eli, the Ranch's famed wedding planner, had given his services as his wedding gift to the couple. He and Georgie had collaborated on many a party since her arrival at the Ranch, but he'd arranged for the day's festivities and due to the holiday and time crunch, he'd combined three events into one huge party dubbed as a "Bride and Groom Triple Play".

Eddie watched his parents smile in honest pleasure when they'd hugged the man they'd known since he was a little boy. Lucas would never have to worry about how his in-laws felt

about him They'd been his second family for years and now, as their future son-in-law, it was a perfect fit for all involved.

Georgie was beyond happy. She was the epitome of the perfect bride-to-be. Her eyes shone and she was bubbly like he'd never witnessed before. Lunch was a lovely buffet with Roxanne, the town's favorite waitress, greeting almost everyone by their name and expertly refilling glasses and plates as their guests mingled before the shower began.

The engaged couple charmed everyone as they opened gifts during that part of the event. Eddie chuckled as he watched the groom when he opened a box one of his and Georgie's aunts had sent along with their parents. Lucas pulled out a matching set of plaid flannel pjs meant to keep the newlyweds warm on cold Montana nights. When their eyes met, Lucas grinned and Eddie winked, friends silently acknowledging how they'd prefer to keep their Littles warm.

The majority of the guests left after the shower, allowing the bridal party to regroup and rest before returning to the town that evening for the rehearsal dinner that Eli had also arranged. The smaller guest list allowed for a more intimate meal in the dining room of the B&B, the Clarks the perfect host and hostess.

It started after they'd rehearsed the steps for the wedding, using the large backyard of the B&B instead of the actual site as Lucas was keeping that a surprise for his bride. Eddie watched Teresa who was acting as if every direction and every word spoken was a matter of life or death. Despite his attempts to keep her relaxed, he could tell she was beginning to stress. She barely ate any of her meal at the rehearsal dinner, too busy worrying her bottom lip with her teeth to actually eat.

His questioning of if she was feeling all right was met with quick bobs of her head and one-syllable answers he found hard to believe. It came to a head when the servers began to clear the table where we were seated.

Georgie reached over and grabbed Teresa's arm. "Don't forget, we're going to get ready in your extra room tomorrow and not our apartment."

"We got it the first nine times," Eddie said, though she might have reminded them more often than that.

"I don't mean *you*, just Teresa," Georgie said. "You'll change in our apartment with Lucas. My party will change in the unneeded-room-slash-bridal-suite." Her grin as she said it belied just how happy she was that Tizzy happened to have an unused room, and how she felt about the reason it was unused. Not to mention the fact that it had all worked out when Eli and Georgie realized that with all their detailed planning, they'd forgotten to save a space for the bride and her attendants to get ready in. By the time they had remembered, all the rooms at the resort had been booked up because of the holiday weekend.

"Relax, sis, we've got this, and we won't let you or Lucas down."

Georgie still looked a bit dubious and was most likely about to remind Teresa again but was forced to sit back in her chair as a dessert plate was slid in front of her.

"Yum! Eli is a doll. This has to be one of Angel's chocolate creations," she said, her smile huge at the sight of the slab of chocolate cake with three different types of curled chocolate shavings.

Teresa pushed hers away as if it held a slice of spinach quiche instead of cake. And when a bowl of sorbet was placed next to the dessert plate, her look of horror was the same one Eddie had seen when he'd plopped a spoon of Brussel sprouts on her dinner plate the day before.

"What's the matter?" he asked, leaning toward her.

Instead of answering, she just shook her head.

Eddie put a bite of the cake in his mouth and practically moaned in pleasure. "Whoever this Angel is, he's a true artist." He lowered his fork to cut off another piece. Instead of putting the bite to his lips, he held it out to her. "You've got to try this, sweetie."

"I can't eat that!" she exclaimed adamantly, though the look of longing she gave said she very much wanted to dig in.

"Why not? It's not like you're allergic. You ate chocolate pie and drank hot cocoa last night."

"I know!" she wailed, drawing the attention of Georgie as well as the other bridesmaids sitting around the head table.

"Hey, it's all right," Eddie said, setting down his fork and reaching for her hand only to have her bat his away.

"How can you say that? It's not all right! What if I gained weight? What if I can't fit into my dress? I couldn't be the maid of honor and I'd ruin Georgie's wedding and then she and your parents would hate me, and Lucas would be mad and ___"

"Whoa, you need to calm down," Eddie said, pushing his chair back only far enough to make room for her as he reached over, scooped her out of her chair and settled her on his lap. When she attempted to push off, he tightened his hold. "Settle down. Just breathe... breathe with me," he instructed, cupping

her chin in his fingers and turning her face up to his. “Inhale”—he took a deep breath—“hold it”—he demonstrated by holding his breath for several seconds before exhaling slowly. “Now, exhale.” Eddie repeated the cycle twice more before she began to breathe with him, the panic in her eyes and tenseness in her body beginning to soften, but not nearly enough even after two full minutes of deep breathing.

Making his decision, Eddie bent to drop a kiss on her forehead and then looked up to see every eye at their table staring at them, Georgie’s the widest, while Lucas just gave him a single nod of his head. But it was when his gaze saw his parents’ exchanging looks of puzzlement and concern that Eddie finally had an inkling of what was going on. He could kick himself for not taking the time to sit down and discuss this very thing with Teresa, but he couldn’t go back in time and fix that faux pas. What he could do was be the Daddy she needed right now.

“We’ll see you both tomorrow.” Eddie didn’t add assurances that they’d also show up in the right place at the correct time. He knew Lucas would make sure his bride’s nerves were settled. As for the two of them, it was time for him to teach his own Little girl the difference between punishment and funishment and Eddie knew the perfect place to do so.

“Put me down, your parents are here!” Teresa hissed as he stood and began to walk across the dining room.

“Not going to happen,” he said firmly, carrying her bridal style in deference to the dress she wore as she’d likely be uncomfortable straddling his waist or wrapping her legs around his body if carried on his hip.

“We can’t take this!” Teresa argued as he settled her in the backseat of one of the limos that had ferried guests from the Ranch to the party.

“We can.” Eddie closed her door and walked around the car to speak to the driver. With a single nod, the man slid behind the wheel, pressed the button to raise the divider between his seat and theirs, and pulled out of the lot.

“What if someone needs a ride?”

“It’s only a few minutes back to the Ranch. I’m sure the party will go on for another couple of hours,” Eddie assured her.

Teresa huffed her discontent but then remained silent until they reached the Ranch and he once more had her in his arms and was headed in the opposite direction than their room.

“Where are we going?”

“You’ll see,” he said, striding across the large lobby.

“Yo-you didn’t finish your dinner,” she said.

“And you didn’t even bother to begin yours,” he countered as they reached the elevator that would take them down to the lowest level of the Ranch resort building. Eddie pushed the button and when the doors opened, carried his Little girl inside.

“Am... am I in trouble?”

“Why would you think that?” he asked.

“Because I ruined Georgie’s rehearsal,” she said her tone filled with such sadness that he pulled her closer to his body and pressed his lips to her forehead.

Eddie knew Teresa was hyper-sensitive in that she often chose to accept blame when none was due. This wasn't about her being naughty by not eating her dinner. This was about getting her in the correct mindset to have fun and enjoy her best friend's wedding and knowing she was the best damn maid of honor in the history of nuptials.

"Babygirl, you did not ruin anything. You just need to remember that the world does not lay on your shoulders and even if it did, you aren't alone. Georgie and Lucas love you, your new Little friends love you, and most of all, your Daddy loves you."

"I'm just so scared I'm going to fuck things up."

"Don't curse, little girl!" he reprimanded just as the elevator doors opened. "And that is why we are here. To relax you and let you know you're doing exactly what you're supposed to be doing."

She had the grace to look ashamed of saying the f-word, two spots of pink highlighting her cheekbones far better than any cosmetic could do. "We're going to the playground?" she asked, catching sight of an area he knew mirrored the one outdoors she and her friends had used during their visit to the Ranch.

Eddie chuckled and shook his head. "I'm afraid the equipment on the playground isn't the type Daddy needs tonight."

"What kind do you ne..." She broke off when he paused to check in with Drake, the security guard, sitting at the podium next to the door of their destination. "You-you... we-we... I-I can't go... in there!" she mock whispered as her head swiveled to look between the guard, the double doors and then back to

Eddie. “Tha-that’s the dungeon.” The last word was whispered against his shirt where she’d buried her face in his shoulder.

“I know,” he said, returning Drake’s grin. Knowing he wasn’t going to leave the Ranch without introducing his Little girl to its possibilities, Eddie had arranged everything earlier in the week after speaking with Lucas who had introduced him to the heavily tattooed man. Eddie was pretty sure Teresa would be fascinated with the fact the large, imposing-looking guard was addicted to romance novels. That was if she ever got over her shock at having Drake not only open the doors to the dungeon for them, but say, “I hope you enjoy your visit, Teresa.”

It was only when the door closed behind them that she turned her head enough to say, “He... he knows my name! He’s gonna tell Master Derek and you’re gonna get in so much trouble.”

The force of his laugh had her bouncing a bit against his body. She was just too adorable. “How about you let Daddy worry about that? As for you, all you need to do is relax and know that by the time we leave, you’re going to feel so much better.”

Her eyes were huge as she looked at him as if he’d grown two heads. And granted, he wasn’t a freak of nature, but he did have two heads, one of which had begun to stir the moment he pulled her into his lap at dinner. She stopped fretting to look around the dungeon, her face flushing but her breathing quickening and her eyes shining as the reality of where she was truly began to sink in.

Eddie didn’t bother pausing on the upper level where there were several tables and various seating areas where one could sit and enjoy a drink from the bar and watch some of the

activities happening on the play level below. When a woman dressed in nothing but a sheer teddy and red stilettos passed them, he heard Teresa inhale deeply. With a tug on his shirt, she urged him to bend his head down so she could whisper in his ear.

“She’s... she is, um... I-I don’t think I’m, um... dressed for this.”

“Don’t you worry, little Tizzy, I’ll take care of everything.” When she looked as if he’d told her the room was full of dancing purple elephants, he chuckled again. “Do you trust me, babygirl?”

“Always,” she said without a second’s hesitation.

“Then that’s all we need right now.”

Carrying her down the short half-flight of stairs that led to the lower level, he walked across the play floor where there were a few scenes being conducted. He felt Teresa flinch a bit at the sound of a sharp cry given after the crack of a paddle. He looked over to the black leather spanking bench where a woman was bound, her bottom already sporting red blotches, letting him know that hadn’t been the first swat she’d received. As the paddle landed again, the submissive’s moan was one of far more bliss than pain. A glance at Teresa had him grinning as she stared raptly at the couple. Eddie could practically hear the gears turning in her head as she considered what exactly he had planned. Another tug on his shirt, had him bending his head again.

“I’m not in trouble, right?” she asked again.

“Not unless you have something you need to confess,” Eddie said, quirked his eyebrow in a way he’d learned often had his Little girl blurting out even the smallest little misdeeds

that weren't really misdeeds at all. When she simply shook her head, not a muscle in her body tensing with guilt, he kissed her forehead. "That's my good girl."

"Then why are we here?" she asked, no longer as shy as she looked around the room while he continued to walk across the stone floor toward their destination.

"I'm going to give you a nice, very thorough exam to ascertain why my Little girl is so stressed that she is going to make herself ill," he informed her as he made the turn into the hallway that housed the rooms guests could reserve to play out more private scenes.

Teresa remained silent as if considering his explanation and it wasn't until they'd entered the room he'd reserved and she saw the set-up that she began to shake her head. "I-I don't need... you can't... you-you're not a doctor!"

Eddie chuckled and set her on the paper-covered raised exam table. Even as she tried to climb up his body like a spider monkey, he said, "What's up with these claims I'm not a doctor? I most certainly am and have all the licenses to prove it." Prying her hands from around his neck, he held them in his and bent down to look her in the eyes. "Doctor Mayer at your service, Miss Teresa."

"I meant you're not *that* kind of doctor," she insisted, "You do heads, not... not bodies!"

"Babygirl, I assure you I've had all the training required to examine you from the top of your pretty little head to the tips of your cute little toes," Eddie promised, kissing the top of her head, then her forehead, the tip of her nose, the two pink spots on her cheekbones and finally whispered a breath away from her lips, "Just relax, Daddy's got you."

Teresa stared up at him and it was fascinating watching her brain battle with her body as her nipples poked against the bodice of her dress and her pupils dilated as he began to unfasten the buttons down her back.

“Arms up,” he instructed and was pleased when she obeyed. “Lift up a bit,” he added, needing her bottom raised in order to release the dress and pull it over her head. Her arms immediately moved to cross over her chest which had Eddie grinning.

“No need to be modest, multiple official medical licenses, remember?” he reminded as he unhooked her bra and patiently waited for her to drop her arms so he could remove it.

“Wait, shouldn’t I have a gown? I can change into it myself, Doctor Daddy.”

Doctor Daddy.

Eddie definitely liked that title and hearing it caused him to realize it was the first time she’d addressed him as Daddy since they’d left their room that morning. That fact told him even more about her state of mind. Though the Ranch Littles who’d attended both the luncheon and the shower had exchanged their favored clothing of short, poufy dresses or glittery t-shirts over colorful leggings for dresses more befitting their actual ages, he’d still heard many a “Daddy” said throughout the day. He hadn’t seen anyone, including his parents, so much as look surprised. But no one mattered right now except the woman before him.

Smiling down at her, he shook his head. “No need, that’s Doctor Daddy’s job. Now put your arms down and let’s get this bra off, shall we?”

“Do I have a choice?” she asked in a tone that told them both the question was rhetorical.

He grinned and answered anyway, “Not even a ghost of one. It’s my intense pleasure to prepare you for your exam. All you have to do is relax and enjoy the process.”

“Fat chance,” she murmured, but dropped her arms and allowed him to proceed.

She didn’t protest over much as he relieved her of her shoes and stockings and then patted her thigh until she lifted up enough so he could pull her panties over her hips and down her legs, catching the aroma of her scent that had his cock protesting its confinement in his trousers.

Ignoring his libido, Eddie concentrated on his patient. Nipples the color of the raspberry sorbet they’d been served at dinner called to him. Taking them between his thumbs and index fingers, he gave them each a little squeeze. Her moan as they pebbled into harder little points while thousands of goosebumps broke out over the rest of her body let him know his patient wasn’t quite as averse to her exam as she pretended.

“I believe these need further examination. Lie back,” Eddie instructed, releasing her nipples and helping her to shift her position so she could recline. Once she was on her back, her nipples still tightly furled, he cupped her breasts, splaying his fingers to cover each plump mound, her nipples now poking against the palms of his hands. He squeezed and palpated the flesh, occasionally tweaking or tugging on her nipples until she was breathing harder and her hips were shifting a bit on the table. “How does that feel?” Eddie asked, stroking his thumbnails across the very tip of her sensitive buds.

“Uh-um... fine?”

Fine wasn't the answer he was looking for. Frowning a bit, he cocked his head to the side. “Just fine? Hmmm... perhaps we need more stimulation?”

Teresa didn't respond verbally, but her eyelids fluttered shut and her legs parted a bit as Eddie bent and took her left nipple between his lips. When a hand lifted to run through his hair, he tugged against the flesh in his mouth. “No distracting the doctor. Hands down at your sides, please.” Though the words were a bit distorted as he continued to pull on her nipple with his lips, she got the message and dropped her hand. “Good girl,” he said before giving all his attention to his exam.

Eddie suckled, laved, pulled and finally nipped each nipple until she was squirming, moans of need filling the room. Lifting his head, he saw her eyes open and her hand lift as if to press his head back to her breast again.

“I do believe these are the most magnificent and perfect little titties I've ever had the pleasure of examining,” he said, loving watching the instant rush of pink bloom on those very breasts before running up her neck to settle in her cheeks. Locking his gaze with hers, Eddie bent down and placed a kiss on her mouth. “Absolutely divine.”

She managed to give him the slightest hint of a smile a moment before he ran his hand down the flat plane of her tummy and tapped his fingertips against the mound of her sex. “Hmmm, I'm afraid these adorable curls are going to prohibit my giving you the most thorough exam required,” he said, giving an auburn curl a gentle tug. “But no worries, I believe my nurse prepared a tray for us. Now, where is it?”

As he'd intended, her head immediately turned to scan the room, instantly locating the rolling tray that her profession

would be very familiar with. About to praise her observation, she shocked him by pointing, “It’s over there Dadd... I mean Doctor Daddy.”

“Ah, it is, thank you, little Tizzy.” Walking to the tray, he rolled it to the table’s side. From the corner of his eye, he watched her bottom lip disappear between her teeth as he lifted the cloth he’d laid on top of the tray. Instead of the surgical equipment she worked with in the operating room, this special tray held only those items a Doctor Daddy would use on his very own, very special Little patient. Wanting to expose each tool only when needed, he replaced the covering after retrieving three items.

He ran a cloth under the hot water tap to get it warm, wrung it out and then approached his patient. “Hmmm, look at all those goosies,” he teased, running a finger over her tummy which only raised more goosebumps. “Seems my patient might be a bit chilled. Perhaps this will warm you up. Legs well apart, if you please.”

Her eyes were locked on him but her legs shifted apart an additional inch and when he cocked an eyebrow, she bit down on her lip and opened them wider.

“What a good girl,” Eddie praised as he laid the warmed cloth over her pubic hair and her sex that was now glistening quite nicely with her arousal. As the cloth softened the skin for what was coming, he smiled at her and gently pulled her lip free from her teeth. “No need to worry, little one. Do you remember your safeword?”

Her nod wasn’t good enough.

“What is it?”

“Apple,” she said softly.

“Good. If you need, do not hesitate to say it. It will not be naughty, and you won’t fail as this is not a test, nor a punishment.”

“Okay, Doctor Daddy,” she said, her smile lasting a bit longer as if the reassurance was something she needed reminding of.

“And if you need to slow down?”

“I say yellow,” she answered and then giggled for the first time since they’d entered the dungeon. “But I think I’m pretty green now.”

“You’re sure?” he asked, picking the shaving gel off the tray as well as the razor, lifting both so she’d not miss either the items or misunderstand his intention.

“I’m sure,” she said, nodding again.

With her assurance, he removed the warm towel and spent the next several minutes applying a thick coat of the shaving gel over her mound. The application would go much faster in the future, but for this first time, he enjoyed teasing his girl a bit. His slick fingers circled her clit which was growing plumper with each rotation. Her moans grew deeper with every slide of his finger through the lips of her sex, separating the outer ones to play with the inner pink beauties. Her slit was slicker than his gel-coated fingers, her cream slipping from her as he continued his preparation.

“Please...” she begged, lifting her hips in an attempt to capture the finger he was using to toy at her entrance.

“Thank you, my dear,” he teased, removing his finger and setting the can of gel aside. “It wouldn’t do for the doctor to slack off on his duties, now, would it?”

The cutest little huff and her scowl almost made him chuckle, but he managed to control himself. It was far better for her to concentrate on her arousal than it was on worrying about the razor as he drew it across her mound and over the most sensitive parts of her body. After several minutes, he reapplied the towel and cleaned her of every drop of the gel, though she remained very slick indeed which thrilled him to no end.

“There we go, nice and smooth,” Eddie praised, bending down to give her newly bared mound a kiss of approval. Her hips lifted again and the huff turned into a mewl of need as he gave her clit the barest of flicks of his tongue. Straightening, he replaced the shaving items and made a show of pulling on a pair of gloves, snapping the latex at his wrists. Her attention instantly zeroed in on her Daddy’s hands.

“Wh-what are you go-going to do?” she asked.

“Give you a quite thorough exam as I promised,” he said, moving to her side again.

“Dow-down there?” she asked, which had him hiding another grin. She was a nurse and well educated on exactly what “down there” was called, but he couldn’t fault her. He was pretty sure this would be the first time her very own “down there” was going to undergo the type of exam he had planned.

“Yes, but I’m afraid we’re going to need to adjust you a bit,” he said, reaching down to scoop her up.

Her surprise was evident in her gasp even as she wrapped her legs around his waist and her arms around his neck.

“I seemed to have truly destroyed the paper when shaving you,” Eddie said, drawing her attention to the table where a

huge wet spot was evident.

“Oh!” she said, burying her face in his neck.

“Now, don’t you fret,” he said, patting her bare ass a few times. “It’s simple enough to fix.” Eddie ripped the wet paper free, tossed it in the trash, and pulled another length down to cover the table again. “There, all fixed. Down you go.”

She gave a reluctant mewl as he set her down on the table again, only this time, he made sure her bottom rested at the very edge of the table. Her whimper and shaking of her head was pretty universal for women everywhere when they knew what was coming. But Eddie was not only her “Doctor,” he was her Daddy. He cupped her face between his gloved hands and pressed his forehead to hers.

“Color?” he asked.

“Um... greenish-yellow,” she said.

Eddie grinned and kissed her nose. “Let’s see if we can make that a very vibrant green, okay?”

Tizzy

THOUGH PART OF HER SCREAMED THIS NEEDED TO END, SHE simply couldn't bring herself to do so. She'd wanted nothing more than to bury herself in her Daddy's embrace as she had that very morning. Instead, she was attempting to distance herself, concentrate on her duties, be the best friend to Georgie and keep it together until this wedding was over. But with every look, every touch, every smile and every word Eddie spoke, she fell into the fantasy of having all she'd ever desired once again.

Even with him gently guiding her to lie back before he pulled the stirrups up into position, she was torn between bolting and staying. She couldn't help but stare, eyes wide as she took her lip between her teeth again. It took all Teresa had to allow him to place her feet into the stirrups after he'd kissed each sole, causing her to gasp and her toes to flex in response.

Eddie pushed the stirrups apart which effectively spread her quite nicely for his viewing pleasure. She felt her entire body respond at the pleasure she saw in his eyes. She could only imagine what he was seeing. She had no doubt her clit

was at attention, poking up from its protective hood. Her very position would ensure her outer lips were splayed open and she felt yet another trickle of her cream seeping from her pussy to slicken her inner thighs. From the curl of his lips and the sight of his dimples deepening, she felt as if he was seeing her as a buffet he couldn't wait to sample. If that was his goal, she certainly wasn't going to attempt to stop him.

“Hmmm,” her Daddy said, cupping her knees in his hands as he let his eyes travel from her sex, up her abdomen which was quivering slightly, over her breasts where her nipples remained hard and pebbled into sharp points like little diamonds, and finally lifting to meet her gaze. “Seems like someone is rather enjoying her exam.”

She felt heat flood her face and began to shake her head only to freeze when he quirked his brow. “No?” he asked. “Your tight little nipples and your dripping pussy say otherwise, now, don't they?”

“Ummm... I-I guess?”

“You guess?” he tsked and shook his head, dropping his hand between her splayed thighs. Ever so slowly, keeping his eyes on hers, he trailed his middle and index finger up the split of her sex. His grin told of his enjoyment of hearing the quick inhale she was unable to suppress any more than she could stop the trembling of her legs which caused the stirrups to shake a bit. With his journey completed, he lifted his finger to show her how they shone with her cream. “I *guess* you're correct,” Eddie said then opened his lips and slid his fingers into his mouth.

“Ohhhh,” she moaned, her eyes locked to his lips as he suckled. When he removed them only to lick the length of his

fingers, wrapping his tongue around them as if not wishing to miss a single drop, she whimpered.

“Eddie,” she whispered, the word said in an almost breathless tone.

“Doctor Daddy,” he corrected, tsking again. “What type of patient soaks her pussy before my exam is even begun?”

The question took her by surprise and though she knew her entire body was flushed with a combination of embarrassment and lust, she gave the only answer she could. “I-I don’t know?”

“Then let me enlighten you,” her Daddy said, dropping his hand to her belly, his fingers stroking across her pebbled flesh. “A very naughty patient, that’s who. And do you know what happens to such patients?”

“Noooo?” she said, her response far more a question than an answer though she had a very good idea of what answer he was looking for.

“One of two things,” he said, trailing a fingertip into the hollow of her navel and circling the sensitive skin, her breathing rate increasing. She was surprised that with every pass of his fingers, he continued to ramp up her need without touching any spot she’d normally find erotic.

“As a doctor, it is my responsibility to make sure you have everything you need to keep you healthy and happy. As your Daddy, it is my duty to make sure you understand what your body needs to keep you fulfilled. So, which shall it be? Shall I continue with my exam or shall I simply help you up, get you dressed and—”

“No!” Her face turned red with the realization she’d practically shouted the word. “I-I mean, you’re both,

remember? You're Doctor Daddy, and I-I want—"

"What? What do you want, my sweet little Tizzy?" he asked when she seemed incapable of continuing.

"Everything," she said softly, not able to lie to this man. Not about this.

"Is that so?" he asked, trailing his fingers up between her breasts, smiling as she arched into the touch, every inch of her telegraphing she wanted so much more. "What is everything?"

"Anything you want to give me, Daddy. I-I want it all."

"I'm not convinced," he said, shaking his head. "I believe I need proof."

"What proof? Do you want me to beg?" she asked, her voice growing huskier as her desire increased.

"And if I do?"

She locked onto his gorgeous blue eyes, her naked body thrumming with desire. Without a word spoken, she nodded and then dropped her feet from the stirrups only to roll onto her tummy and push up on her knees while laying her head and breasts to the paper.

"Spank me. Turn my bottom hot and red and then, please, I'm begging you, fuck me until I scream."

"What a good girl," he said softly. "I couldn't be prouder as, for the first time, you are voicing what you want without a single stutter or hesitation. Now, spread those knees wider to present yourself to Daddy's view. I want to watch your cream drip to form an even larger wet spot than before."

She could see the bulge of his cock pressing against the zipper of his trousers and though she knew she was being quite wanton, she felt a bit proud knowing it was protesting because

it wanted to be set free. He was as aroused as she. When he picked up another item off the tray, she inhaled sharply. Instead of dropping her position, she lifted her ass higher.

“What a good girl,” he said as he chose another item. “Before I redden your naughty little bottom, I think a nice little plug will serve as a reminder to be my good little girl, don’t you?”

“Yes, Sir, Doctor Daddy,” she said clearly.

“Reach back and spread those naughty cheeks for me. I want to see your little rosebud.”

Not expecting such an explicit instruction, she hesitated, knowing that doing so would expose the last secret part of her. When he said nothing, simply waited for her obedience, she reached back with trembling hands and pulled her buttocks apart.

“Such a pretty little asshole,” he praised, having learned she both loved and fought against the naughtiness of the dirty talk. “Now don’t you be ashamed,” he said as he uncapped the tube and squirted a drizzle of lubricant down the crease of her ass. “It’s necessary for doctors to see and examine every part of their patient, right?”

“Ye-yes, Sir.”

“That’s right. Now a bit wider please.”

She shut her eyes but pulled her cheeks further apart.

Her Daddy Doctor took his sweet time, spreading the lubricant all along the length of her cleft and circling his slick fingers around the puckered rim of her dark rosebud.

“Color?” he asked as he set the tube aside.

“Green,” she whispered.

“Good girl,” Eddie said as he used a fingertip to tap at her opening. “Have you ever been examined here before?”

“No!”

She heard him give a brief chuckle at her adamant answer but didn't cease his questioning. “Have you never had anything placed into your sweet little bottom?”

When she didn't answer, instead of skipping over the question, he clarified it as if that would help.

“Not a thermometer, a finger? A little butt plug? A knob of ginger root? Or perhaps a cock?”

“Ginger?” she asked, and he chuckled again.

“Really? Out of all the possibilities I listed, you focused on that one?”

“You-you surprised me. But does that... that really happen?” she asked, her eyes now open as she looked back at him.

“Yes, babygirl, but I don't believe you require that tonight. We'll save that for a punishment.”

“Daddy?” she asked, stopping his finger that was just barely touched her opening.

“Yes?”

“You really meant it didn't you? I-I'm not in trouble, am I?”

“No, sweet girl. You are about as far from being in trouble as you could be.”

“So this is what you meant by funishment?”

He smiled and bent to speak close to her lips. “Babygirl, this is just the very beginning of how wonderful funishment

can be. Shall I continue?”

“Oh, yes, please. I believe I need a very thorough exam, Doctor.”

He kissed her, his mouth mastering hers so that when he slipped his tongue between her lips, he also slid his finger into her ass. Swallowing the moan the action drew from her, he began to finger fuck her bottom as he ravished her mouth. Only the need to draw in oxygen had him pulling back. She panted, attempting to steady her breathing and was quite surprised when the withdrawal of his finger caused her to mewl in protest.

“No need to fret, little one. I’m not done.”

Even though she was a nurse, knowing the parts of a body and feeling nerve endings firing when he pushed not one but two fingers into her bottom were two totally different things. She could only moan as the erogenous sensations consumed her.

It didn’t take but a few more thrusts before her hips began rocking back and forth as she started to fuck herself on his fingers. She couldn’t imagine how she must look to her Daddy but had no desire to stop her lewd moves. When he withdrew a second time, her cry wasn’t one of pain, but of a need she didn’t understand. She was empty for only a brief moment before she felt the tip of the lubed bright orange butt plug against her dark hole.

“Ohhhh, it’s big,” she moaned as her sphincter fought against the invader.

“It’s far smaller than your Daddy’s cock,” he said and grinned when her eyes widened and her mouth formed a perfect little “O” when understanding dawned.

“You’ll never fit, Daddy,” she said with a hint of regret.

“Don’t you worry, little Tizzy, Daddy will fit just fine.” With a final push and a sharp yip of surprise, the plug slid home, its flange feeling a bit strange between her little cheeks.

Without a word, her Daddy picked up the final item on the tray and slid the length over his palm.

She stared at it as if it were a viper preparing to strike and she supposed it was. “Wh-what are you go-going to use th-that for?” she managed, her eyes glued to the crop in his hand.

“What every Doctor Daddy does before taking their Little girls bottom,” he explained, reaching out to run the tip of the crop over the globes of her ass.

“So it’s true,” she murmured, well aware of the goosebumps popping up with every pass of the leather against her flesh.

“What’s that?” he asked as he bent down to speak against her lips.

“The mug.”

He looked puzzled but when she added, “The one with the purple star,” understanding cleared the furrows on his brow.

“My favorite one,” he said with a grin that had her pussy clenching. “I find it very telling that of all the glasses in my cupboards, you choose to drink from that one. Don’t you?”

If her very life depended on it, she still didn’t think she could have done more than the shake of her head she managed.

He chuckled in that sexy way he had and stroked her hair back from her forehead. Bending down once more, he said, “And yes, my little Tizzy, the words are most definitely true,”

before dropping a kiss to her forehead, her cheek not pressed to the table and then the tip of her nose. “It is definitely my job to do the torturing.” At her gasp, he grinned. “What the mug didn’t say was that not all *torture* is bad. Your Daddy is going to teach you the difference. Still green?” he teased, finally kissing her lips.

Sliding the tip of her tongue over her bottom lip savoring the taste of his, she discovered that she was truly ready to learn how pleasurable a bit of torture could be. Nodding, she said, “I’m emerald, Daddy.”

He started slowly, tapping the leather tip against her bottom in a random pattern, gently warming the skin and drawing the blood to the surface. She was soon panting, her pussy dripping like a faucet, her bottom clenching and unclenching around the plug she held inside. Lifting his arm, he slapped the crop down, and she arched, not away, but into the stroke. Who knew a bit of pain made the pleasure all the sweeter?

Her Daddy continued to strike her all over the surface of her ass, not crossing any prior stroke as he moved from the top of her cleft down over the full globes until he reached that very sensitive spot where her bottom met her thighs.

When he struck a bit more forcefully there, her cry was a mixture of surprise and pain.

“What a pretty red stripe,” he said, helping her visualize what he was seeing as he continued to add another to the underside of her other buttock. “You make the sweetest little sounds under Daddy’s crop. Your bottom wears each stripe so beautifully, Teresa,” he praised.

She didn’t speak, letting the curving of her lips as she met his gaze say it all. He continued, working his way down the

backs of her thighs, these strokes earning more cries but none that seemed to concern him nor did she feel a need to say her safeword. She was a bit shocked to feel her pussy actually contract and understood she was only a hairsbreadth away from coming.

“I see some little kitty is ready for more intense play,” he said. “I believe this is the perfect opportunity to see if my little Tizzy can actually climax with her ass not only red but striped and plugged and without a single touch to that fat little clit I see peeking out of its hood.” Evidently his curiosity demanded he prove his hypothesis as he increased the strength of his strokes, reversing back up her thighs and when he laid a stroke across her sit spot again, she arched up.

“Daddy!” Her body convulsed with her climax.

“Fuck, that was the most incredible thing I’ve ever witnessed.”

It wasn’t until she said, “Will you fuck me now, please, Sir,” that he seemed to realize he’d spoken the thought out loud.

“Tits to table,” he instructed, giving her a final swat with the crop before returning it to the tray.

As he began to remove his shirt, she dropped back to press her torso to the paper, her hands clutching the edges of the table, her pussy leaking cream as she quivered between one orgasm and the next. The sound of his zipper being dragged down had her core contracting again as she waited with bated breath for her Daddy to fill her.

Grabbing the butt plug, he began to withdraw it and then reseal it until she was mewling and begging to be fucked. He was so intent on fucking her ass that it was his turn to shout as

her small hand wrapped itself around his erection and began to pump it as he continued to play with the plug.

“Oh, god, you are such a naughty little minx,” he growled, not a trace of anger in his tone as she worked his cock, precum spilling out of the slit to provide lubrication for her fingers. He shifted his position to stand at the side of the table and then reached with his free arm to pull her toward him until she was angled correctly.

“Time to examine your mouth and throat,” Doctor Daddy announced.

“And here I thought lollipops came after the exam was complete,” she said.

“Ahhh, but I’m a very generous Doctor Daddy, little Tizzy. I’ll give you a lolly anytime you wish.”

Teresa giggled and rolled her eyes before parting her lips and sliding them over the head of his cock.

“God, that’s good.” His body trembled just a bit as she licked the length of his shaft, used her tongue to draw along the slit to taste his cream and then began to suck, her cheeks hollowing with every draw.

“That’s right, suck Daddy’s cock,” he encouraged as he continued to prepare her bottom for her next exam. “The wetter you make it, the easier it will slide into your tight little ass.”

His words caused her ministrations to hitch but only for a brief moment before she began again. She swept her tongue over the thick vein on the underside of his dick before she concentrated on the head, thoroughly preparing the part that would first penetrate her virgin ass.

“It appears your mouth and throat are just fine. Let me go, sweet girl. I have another goal in mind to bathe with my cum.”

When she parted her lips, he pulled the plug from her ass and his cock from her mouth.

He stepped to the end of the table, tugged her down to the edge and barked at her to spread her naughty cheeks. She instantly obeyed, whimpering in need as she pulled her buttocks apart for him. Her Daddy didn't hesitate to accept her invitation. Placing the head of his cock at her opening, she braced herself for the pain of having her ass fucked.

Ever so slowly, he began to push into her. “There aren't many sights more beautiful than watching the tight hole of your ass surrendering to my cock for the first time.” His words again painting her a picture of what he was seeing.

“Oh, oh, Daddy,” she whimpered as he paused to allow her to adjust a moment before pushing forward again.

“You'll take every inch.”

His growled demand had her shudder with the need to submit to the most primal act she could imagine. “Yes, yes, Sir,” she said, pushing her hips back toward his belly, helping to impale herself on his dick.

“Fuck! You're so damn tight.” With a deeper growl, he gave a final thrust and sank to the hilt. She felt his balls slapping against her soaking wet pussy lips. “What a good girl, swallowing all of Daddy's cock inside your sweet little ass.”

“I feel so... so full.” She was in awe that she'd actually accomplished what she'd considered impossible only a short time earlier.

“You're not full yet.” Eddie reached down to slide two fingers into her pussy. At her gasp of unadulterated pleasure,

he began to thrust into her ass and her pussy at the same time.

Nothing existed except the two of them in this moment of pure bliss. She forgot her fears, her thoughts of ruining anything evaporated as their bodies slapped together, the contraction of her bowel walls against the steel of his shaft and the sensation of her pussy clutching around his fingers, became her entire world.

“Come for me,” he demanded, rocking into her again. “I want to feel the velvet walls of your ass hugging my cock and your pussy squeezing my fingers as you come apart. Come for me, Tizzy.”

“Yes!” She reared up which had both his cock and his fingers driving deeper into the hot, slick recesses of her core. She threw her head back and screamed, “Daddy!” as she came apart, his free arm wrapped around her to keep her steady as he fucked her toward her third climax despite her cries that she couldn’t.

“Yes, you can. You will,” Eddie countered, using his thumb to press against her swollen clit that was pulsing with need. “Pull on your titties,” he demanded as his hands were too full to do so himself. “Pinch those nipples for me.”

Her face flushed with heat at the lewd demand and yet her hands lifted to her breasts, fingers plucking at her nipples as she writhed against him. “Daddy... Daddy... Daddy...” It was as if accepting so many different sensations reduced her ability to that of only being able to chant just the single word.

“Daddy has you. Daddy’s cock is up your ass, his fingers in your pussy, and he’s watching you pull on your titties. Can you come for me again, little girl?”

“Yes, Daddy,” she said, her body already tensing around his cock and fingers.

“Then come!” He drove hard and fast into her holes until she once again screamed as she imploded, this time, muscles clamping so tightly around his cock, he had no choice but to stop thrusting and she felt jet after jet of his semen filling her bowels with every pulse of her walls. When he was empty, he was breathing hard against her back, his legs shaking a bit with the force of his climax, his hand soaked with her own essence. Her head was thrown back against his chest and he bent to rest his forehead on top of her head.

“Did I pass?” she asked when their breathing had regulated a bit.

He chuckled and moved his lips to press a kiss to her head. “As your doctor, I declare you quite healthy, Miss Anderson,” he said before slipping his cock and fingers free.

Teresa couldn't help but give a slight hiss of discomfort as well as a final quiver of her body as she realized the exam she'd dreaded was concluded. She might not have him much longer, but she would cherish and replay the memories of these moments for as long as she lived.

Stepping back, Eddie lifted and turned her to face him, cupping her face in his hands as she knelt up on the table. “And as your Doctor Daddy, I declare you extremely reactive to the proper stimulation, be it ass, pussy, clit or titties. You are the very picture of beautiful debauchery, my little Tizzy girl.”

“Daddy!” she said in mock indignation, giving his chest a little slap of her hand.

“Do you disagree?” Eddie's lips curled up when she failed at keeping the look of satisfaction off her face.

She giggled and shook her head, auburn curls swaying down her back. “I choose not to answer because if I lie, my Daddy spans me for real.” She smiled and reached up to pull his head down until she could whisper against his lips. “And I believe I much prefer funishment over punishment any day.”

Her dream Daddy mashed his lips against hers, letting her know with their kiss that he totally agreed.

When he tucked her into bed and climbed in beside her, before he could pull her to spoon against him, she turned and snuggled as close to him as she could get. If this fantasy was going to end, she was going to make as many memories as she could before she walked away.

“Good night, Daddy,” she murmured, her ear pressed to his chest, the sound of his heartbeat imprinting on her very soul.

“Good night, little Tizzy girl,” Eddie said, stroking his fingers through curls still damp from their second shower of the day. “Sleep tight and don’t you worry about anything, your Daddy is here.”

He waited for a response, but when all he heard was a soft purr and felt puffs of her warm breath against his chest, he knew his Tizzy had already fallen victim to the sandman. Kissing the top of her head, he closed his eyes, smiling as he followed her into dreamland.

Teresa

“I’D TELL YOU NOT TO BE LATE, AND MAKE SOME THREAT about a hot bottom, but you don’t have anywhere to go,” Eddie said, kissing her neck as he wrapped his arms around her from behind.

Teresa just grunted. She was not a morning person. Not on vacation, anyway. But she needed to wake up. Georgie and the rest of the bridesmaids, plus Mrs. Mayer, would be arriving soon and Teresa had to play hostess. As the maid of honor, it was her job to make sure Georgie’s day was perfect from beginning to end. And that was what she was going to do, even if it killed her. And it just might. With every minute that ticked by on the clock, she felt her temporary happily-ever-after fading away. Their time at Rawhide was ending, and with it, the best relationship she’d ever been in.

Eddie squeezed her tighter and she felt like she was in a vise, or a small room where the walls closed in and got tighter and tighter around her. Tears pricked the corners of her eyelids, and she disentangled herself from Eddie.

“I may not have anywhere to be, but you do, and you can’t be late either. That would be setting a bad example. You don’t want to do that.” She faked a smile and turned to face him. “Go on, get. Lucas is waiting.”

“And he can wait. It won’t take us half as long to get ready as it will you ladies. Is there anything you need? I want Georgie’s day to be extra-special without adding stress to yours.”

Eddie had already done everything in his power to make it so. “You already ordered the room service champagne, the breakfast buffet, the fancy cookies. You made sure we had everything we could possibly need for whatever wedding day emergency might arise. We have a tide pen, wet naps, aspirin, eyedrops, mints, tissues...” She trailed off. Eddie had read some article about a wedding day emergency kit and made sure to buy everything on it in doubles, to make two kits because, as he said, it wasn’t only brides who had wedding-day emergencies. He’d even gone above and beyond by adding several pair of pantyhose to the bride’s kit. “Really, we’re good. Great even. I’ll see you at the wedding.” Teresa leaned forward, dropping a soft kiss on his dimpled cheek, hyper-aware that it would be one of the last chances she had to do so.

Thankfully, he was appeased, kissed her back, grabbed his emergency kit, and ran out the door before she started crying.

Once he was gone, she exhaled a deep breath and tried to center herself. Georgie would be here in less than an hour, and she desperately needed to grab a shower before the room filled with people, but there was something else she had to do first. She needed to pack up her stuff from the room she’d been sharing with Eddie and move it into the unused adjoining room they were going to be using as the bridal suite. She

didn't want Mrs. Mayer knowing she and Eddie had been rooming together, even though Eddie and Georgie both swore she'd be more happy than mad, but that wasn't her only reason. Tonight was their last night at the Ranch, and her last night with Eddie as her Daddy. Going back to her real life, her lonely, single, real life was going to break her, and she didn't think she could be more heartbroken than she already was, but if she didn't make the break now, she knew it would only be worse tomorrow.

With her mind made up, Teresa stood bleary-eyed, clutching her coffee cup, and stared at her suitcases in the closet beside Eddie's. The orange and black together reminded her of Halloween, her second favorite holiday, and always made her smile. It reminded her how easy it had been to be Eddie's girl, and how perfect of a Daddy he was, and how temporary it had been.

Scowling at her own stupidity for even putting herself in this situation, she yanked her suitcases out of the closet and threw them on the bed, yanking the zippers open with such force she thought she might rip them off their tracks.

"When in Rome," she grumbled. "Whoever heard of anything so stupid?" She pulled open drawers and forgoing her normal fastidious packing, started haphazardly throwing things into the open suitcases, now even madder, because as angry as she was that she'd decided to set herself up for heartbreak by "doing as the Romans do," she was just as furious that she hadn't.

She'd been in this magical Littles' Paradise with the Daddy of her dreams, and she should have taken every opportunity to take full advantage. Yet in so many ways, she hadn't. There were so many things she hadn't done, so many

experiences she hadn't had. In true Tizzy fashion, she'd been too afraid. Afraid to misstep and upset Eddie to the point where he'd want nothing to do with her. Afraid to upset Georgie by letting on that she'd fallen too hard for her brother. Afraid to let go and be Little and enjoy all the things the Ranch had to offer, and now, on her last day, she was filled with regret.

Regret, regret, regret. Regret that she hadn't let Eddie Daddy her enough; she'd been so paranoid about doing wrong and making him regret agreeing to this charade in the first place, she'd been angelic. She'd asked him for help making sure she got to everything on time, and then she'd been more conscientious about it than he had. She hadn't participated in any of the infamous Ranch shenanigans, even though she'd had several opportunities. She'd lied when she said she hadn't wanted to, she had. She wanted to very badly. She'd imagined Eddie's face when he found her out, imagined him turning her over his knee and scolding her as he turned her bottom bright red like he had on that first fateful day, imagined him shaking his head and telling her what a naughty Little girl she was, then holding her on his lap and telling her she was all forgiven. But she didn't do anything to deserve any of that because she'd been frozen with fear. What if he hadn't responded the way she imagined? What if reality hadn't lived up to the expectation?

She'd had an amazing time with him, perfect really, riding the horse and learning about funishment in the dungeon, but she couldn't help but feel bereft as if she'd missed out on something somehow. And that was just the Eddie stuff. On the flip side, she'd spent so much time with Eddie, just boinking their respective brains out, she hadn't experienced all the Ranch had to offer. She'd been here almost a week, and she

hadn't gone to a class, or checked out the Littles' Wing. She hadn't explored the indoor playground or any of the themed rooms or watched a movie in the theater. She hadn't eaten with all the other Littles in the cafeteria or seen one of the public punishments Georgie was always talking about, and she'd even skipped out on the hayride and the turkey trot. And while it had all seemed like the right thing at the time, looking back, it was all just so terribly Tizzy of her.

She should have opened up to Eddie. She should have told him how she felt, or the fact that her brain never stopped going. That she'd been an over-anxious mess the entire time. If he was her Daddy for real, she'd tell him tonight, and accept whatever punishment or scolding he wanted to give her for holding things in to her own detriment.

But he wasn't her Daddy for real and telling him all this tonight would make tomorrow harder, because knowing Eddie, he would do something about it, and he'd say all the right things, and hold her while she cried tears of regret and frustration. And tomorrow, when he wasn't her Daddy anymore, it would be so much worse.

Realizing that tears were running down her cheeks, she finished packing. Teresa unlocked the door to the adjoining room, hauled her suitcases, her stuffies and all the rest of her belongings into it, with just enough time to take a quick shower before Georgie arrived.

Once in the shower, with the hot water pelting her skin, she took a deep breath, and allowed herself a ten-minute pity party. She cried, and shrieked and stomped her feet, cursing her own stupidity all the while scrubbing herself clean like her life depended on it and the loofah could somehow magically wash away all her yucky feelings.

Surprisingly, and thankfully, it did actually help, and when she stepped out of the shower, her face was more dewy than tear-streaked, and the knots of tension in her neck and shoulders had dissipated.

There wasn't much for her to do to get ready since they'd all be doing hair and makeup together, but she spent a few minutes blow drying her hair until it was shining, brushed her teeth, put on deodorant, spritzed herself all over with her favorite apple-pear-vanilla body spray, and donned one of the Ranch's fluffy white robes over her favorite orange loungewear set. By the time Georgie knocked on the door, Tizzy felt almost human, and her regret-rant meltdown felt like a distant memory. For now, anyway.

“Knock, knock! Teresa, you better be up! You're the maid of honor and it's my wedding day. I'm literally marrying the man of my dreams today, and I'm freaking out! Open up!”

Rolling her eyes at the frantic tone of her best friend's voice, this time the smile Teresa plastered on was genuine as she rushed to the door, and pulled it open, drawing Georgie into her arms. “Happy Wedding Day!”

TERESA

SHE'D NEVER SEEN A MORE BEAUTIFUL BRIDE OR A GROOM who looked as if his wife-to-be was the most perfect creature ever to walk the planet.

There had, indeed, been an aisle running down the middle of two groupings of chairs, each covered with gold satin with

beautiful bows on the backs. The sun's rays shone through the canopy of the red-maple tree ready to spotlight the couple as they stood beneath the arch at the end of the aisle. Eddie had told her that Lucas designed the archway and asked Eddie to help him build it. The result was absolutely stunning. With every flower woven through the lattice, one felt the love the groom had for his bride. Large sunflowers, Gerbera daisies, calla lilies, and chrysanthemums were interspersed with ferns, baby's breath, and cattails and complemented the bridal bouquet perfectly.

Hayleigh, Sadie, Wren, Luna and Daisy all wore tea-length dresses, each in different fall colors. Hayleigh, Sadie and Wren were escorted down the aisle by their Daddies, who looked incredibly handsome in their black tuxes. Georgie had made Teresa cry when she'd first shown her the maid of honor gown she'd chosen for her. It was a gorgeous shade of deep plum and swished against her calves with every step she took. When Eddie bent down to whisper how beautiful she looked and how he couldn't wait to nibble on her after their duties were done, it had been all she could do not to burst into tears knowing that would never happen. She managed a small smile for the man escorting her down the aisle. He gave her hand a squeeze before they parted. Teresa watch the best man move to stand beside Lucas beneath the arch. The boys who had been friends since childhood had grown up to be incredibly handsome men who looked as if they'd stepped right off the cover of a GQ magazine.

Teresa tore her eyes away to watch Luna and Daisy who served as Georgie's flower girls. Wearing floral circlets on their heads and carrying matching baskets, they walked in perfect step with one another. Instead of traditional flowers, Luna pulled autumn leaves from her basket while Daisy's held

sparkling rhinestones and glitter. They fell to the golden silk runner to beautifully adorn the path the bride would take.

But it was the bride who rightfully stole the show. Georgie was absolutely radiant in her wedding gown. She looked like a fairy princess. The hairdresser had performed magic with her long blonde hair. It was styled in an elegant chignon with tresses curling around her face. The radiance in her eyes outshone the sparkle of the tiara she wore. Watching her glide down the aisle, her arm hooked around her father's had tears welling in Teresa's eyes. All of the fantasy weddings they'd orchestrated in their childhood didn't hold a candle to attending a real one.

Georgie and Lucas had eyes only for one another as Derek officiated, his voice ringing out when he clearly guided the couple through vows they'd written themselves. As Lucas promised to love and protect his bride for all of eternity, Teresa saw Mrs. Mayer accepting a handkerchief from her husband as tears of joy slid down her face.

With Derek's pronouncement declaring them man and wife, Georgie and Lucas shared their first kiss as a married couple. Georgie squealed when her husband gave her a wicked grin before dipping his wife back, his lips claiming hers with an intensity that had her bridesmaids giggling and the groomsmen grinning like fools. Teresa didn't know if her inability to breathe was due to the passionate kiss or the look in Eddie's eyes as he smiled at her, his dimples threatening to make her knees give out. When the newlyweds finally came up for breath, Derek's voice was full of jovial humor as he presented Mr. and Mrs. Lucas Morrow to their guests. Tears were replaced by cheers as the crowd erupted.

Slipping her arm through Eddie's for the recessional, Teresa could not help but wonder how it would feel to be in Georgie's place, standing before Eddie and vowing to love, honor, and obey him for as long as she lived. Even though her dream would only remain a fantasy, Teresa was so very happy for Georgie and Lucas and glad they'd broken into Eddie's house all those months ago as the crime had led to this perfect moment.

Eli performed his duties beautifully, skillfully guiding the wedding party through countless photos and then leading them all to where a gigantic dance floor had been erected. Each corner had a pillar covered from bottom to top with more autumn blooms. As the band began to play, Teresa watched Mr. Mayer twirl his daughter around the floor as Lucas followed with his new mother-in-law in his arms.

Though her heart rejoiced in the beauty of this perfect moment, a memory she'd cherish forever, it also ached for what was not to be. With a final swipe of her fingers, she brushed the tears off her cheeks. She might have messed up her life by stepping foot on Rawhide Ranch, but she would never regret coming to Montana. With Eddie's help and the constant support of her best friend, Teresa had been the best maid of honor she could be, and for that, she felt a sense of pride.

Eddie

WITH THE CEREMONY OVER, TOASTS GIVEN, HIS DUTIES MOSTLY complete, his sister, the radiant and gorgeous bride, married off to his very best friend, Eddie could finally breathe, and focus on the one he'd had his eye on all day. His sweet, beautiful Tizzy.

Even though she'd been the maid of honor to his best man, aside from escorting her down the aisle during the ceremony, he hadn't had more than a minute with her since this morning.

But she was Tizzying out. He could see it on her face. This morning he'd thought it to be just stress over the upcoming nuptials and the pressure she was putting on herself to be the perfect maid of honor, as if failing to do so would somehow end lifelong friendships, but the wedding was over, the day had gone perfectly, and the stress was still there. It had been there when they walked arm in arm down the aisle, when they'd given their toasts, and it was still there now. If anything, it was more evident than it had been this morning.

Cutting across the room to where Tizzy was dancing stiffly with Billy, the Little who'd orchestrated the turkey parade, he

approached them from the left, cleared his throat, and tapped Billy on the shoulder. “May I cut in?”

Billy, who was dressed to the nines, but still a Little, and seemingly very aware that Eddie was not, got wide-eyed, bobbing his head up and down, and dropped Tizzy’s hand. “Y-yes, Sir.”

Eddie almost felt guilty for making the Little boy so nervous, but there was nothing he could do about that. It certainly hadn’t been intentional, and at the moment, Tizzy was his only concern.

Picking up the hand Billy had dropped, he wrapped his other arm around Tizzy’s waist and pulled her close.

Swaying gently in time with the music, he asked, “Penny for your thoughts?” and pulled back just enough to get a good view of her face. It didn’t give anything away that he didn’t already know, and she shook her head, clamping her lips tightly shut.

He raised a brow and shot her a pointed stare.

“I’m fine,” she insisted. “Really. I’m happy for Georgie, and I’m just... tired.”

He wasn’t buying it. He’d seen Teresa tired, and this was not that. It was something else. “Don’t lie to Daddy, little girl.”

If he’d blinked, he’d have missed the flicker of light that entered her eyes when he’d given a warning, and the way her pupils had dilated when he’d called her little girl, but just as quickly as it had appeared, the light dimmed, and her expression shuttered. He waited for a different explanation, but she didn’t offer one.

Frowning, he tried a different approach. There was something he wanted to ask her about, and since it was Tizzy,

it was possible the two things were tied together somehow. “You know,” he began, “before the ceremony, I had to run up to the room to get the rings because I’d run out in such a hurry this morning, I left without them, and while I was there, I noticed something interesting.”

She startled, and visibly squirmed. A small gesture, so slight he almost missed it, but as a surgeon he was very in tune with the human body and very observant.

“What’s that?” she asked.

“Well, I noticed that your suitcases, your stuffies, and all your things were missing, and that they’d been moved into the other room.”

“Oh that.” Teresa managed to somehow not look guilty as she scrunched up her nose and shrugged. “I didn’t want your mom to know we’d been sharing a room. No biggie.”

Eddie studied her. That was some of it, but it definitely wasn’t all of it. “What did I just tell you about lying to Daddy, little one? We may be at a wedding, but it’s a Rawhide wedding. Nobody would even blink if I hiked your dress up and paddled your bottom cherry-red right here.”

Teresa gasped. “Your parents would!” she argued. And then just as quickly as she’d been surprised, she got angry. “Besides, I don’t consent. But since you insist on knowing, I moved out of the room because I wanted to. It was fun while it lasted, doing as the Romans do and all, but tomorrow we have to go back to our real lives, and it’s going to break my heart. I can’t do another night. As much as it kills me to say that, it’s only half as much pain as I’ll feel if I spend another perfect night with you, wake up in the morning and have to give it all up and go back to real life. I can’t do it, Eddie, I can’t. Moving out early may only alleviate a tiny bit of the pain I’m going to

feel, but it will have to do. So no, you can't spank me, yes, I do withdraw consent, and no, I'm not your Little girl anymore." She sighed and her face softened. "But please don't think I didn't love it. I did, I loved every second of it. That's why I can't do it anymore."

Tizzy hadn't been looking at his face while she'd been going off—she'd been looking everywhere but—and if she had, she'd have seen him getting more shocked and more confused with every word she spoke.

Dropping his hands from her waist, he quit dancing, and grabbed her other hand, stepping backward to hold her out in front of him.

"Teresa..." he started, then stopped because he wasn't quite sure *where* to start. "Teresa... you never looked at the return ticket I booked for you, did you?"

She frowned, her brows furrowing in confusion, then made a face of disgust. "No, why would I? I certainly didn't need to on the way here. You were texting to remind me incessantly, and on the way back, you'll be with me. If I'm late, you're late and we both know that's not going to happen."

Eddie growled. "If you'd bothered to open the email with your tickets, you'd know that our return flight isn't until Tuesday."

"I-what? No..." Tizzy shook her head, her eyes wide and frantic. "I can't do that. I only took the week off. I have to be back at work Monday."

"No, you don't," Eddie said calmly. "I had a feeling you wouldn't pay attention, so I took the liberty of calling the scheduling nurse and getting you a few extra days off. You don't need to be back at work until Wednesday."

“What?” Tizzy gasped. “Eddie! You can’t just do that! When did you even do that?” She didn’t wait for him to answer. “We weren’t even... you can’t... you weren’t my—”

“Your what? Your Daddy?” Eddie grinned, noting how she’d said weren’t not aren’t. “This, little girl, is a prime example of why you *need* a Daddy.”

Teresa shrugged, and still holding her hands, he pulled her closer, closing the space between them. “So yes, we’re staying until Tuesday, and no, you will not be moving back into the spare bedroom. Don’t argue with Daddy, little Tizzy, because quite frankly, I’m not in the mood.”

“Eddie...” Teresa’s voice was weary and warning, but Eddie wasn’t hearing it. He shushed her with a finger to her lips.

“Don’t. I’m not sure how long you’ve been in your head convincing yourself that this was a vacation fling, a temporary, ‘when in Rome’ type of deal, but this is the first I’m hearing of it, so let me be quite clear, before you have a chance to go all Tizzy on me. In a couple days, our vacation may be ending, but you and I, little one... we’re just beginning. You must not have been paying attention when I told you that not only do Georgie, Lucas and your new friends love you, but your Daddy loves you as well. So listen to me now. I’m your Daddy and I am head over heels in love with you, little Tizzy, and I do not intend to let you go. Do I make myself clear?”

Teresa opened and closed her mouth like a fish out of water, gasping for air.

Eddie continued, “Furthermore, little girl, when the reception is over and the happy couple has left for their honeymoon, and we go to turn in for the night, after you move all your things back into *our* room where they belong, you will

be going over my knee for a long, hard, bare-bottom spanking for holding all of this in, and not talking to Daddy about your worries. Got it?”

He saw it then. The light came back into her eyes, the Tizzy-ness faded, her shoulders relaxed and her whole body seemed to deflate with the weight of relief. “Yes, Daddy. I love you too. So much,” she finally said.

And then, when she’d let him back into the role he was certain he’d been destined for all along, Eddie couldn’t help himself, with a whoop more becoming of a college frat boy than a professional thirty-something doctor like himself, he grabbed her up by the waist, spun her around in a circle, kissed her smack on the lips and said, as he set her back on her feet, “Thank god for housekeepers on vacation, midtown grocery stores, Fuji apples and roller skates.”

“Amen,” Tizzy echoed.

The End

ABOUT MAGGIE RYAN

Maggie Ryan is a USA TODAY multi-published and Amazon Top 100 bestselling author. She loves *flirting with the forbidden* to bring you stories about strong, stern alpha males and sassy, capable women. Maggie believes life without a bit of fire and a dash of spice isn't worth living. She hopes you will curl up in your favorite chair and take the journey with her. Happy Reading!

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ABOUT RAYANNA JAMISON

Rayanna Jamison, USA TODAY Bestselling author of sexy, sassy, spanky romance, lives in sunny southern Utah in a house she affectionately refers to as “Grand Central Station,” with her mom, husband, their 2 teenage kids, 3 lizards, a boisterous kelpie named Cleo, and whatever “adopted” teenagers happen to be staying there at the time.

Rayanna loves her author friends, coffee, sushi, crazy knee socks, and her hot tub where she writes most of her books on her phone.

Sometimes known as “the mermaid author”, when she’s not writing in the hot tub or reading by the pool, Rayanna can be found bingeing Netflix on her kindle, while crocheting a blanket for someone she loves.

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