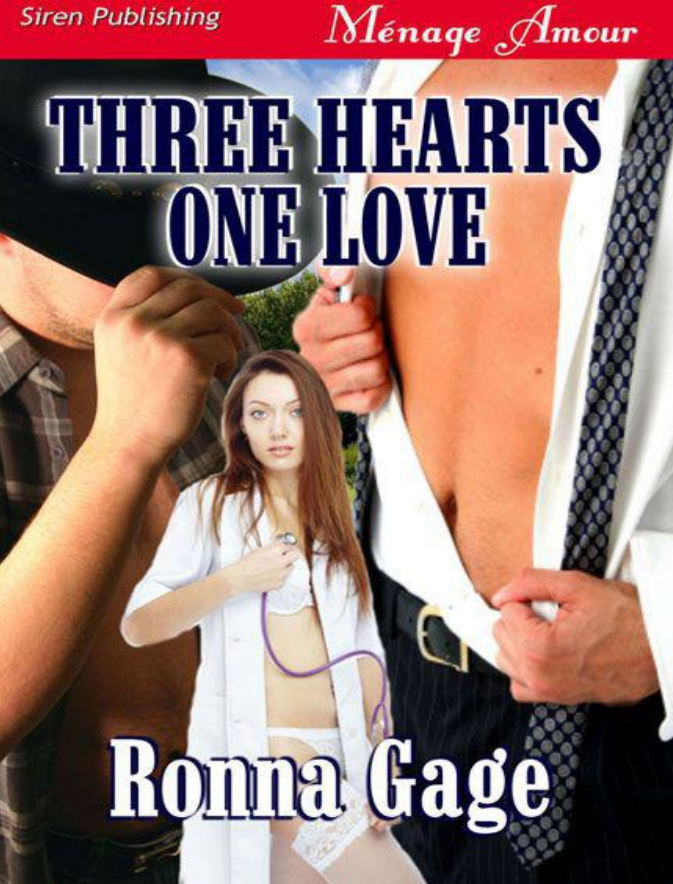


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Ménage Amour

THREE HEARTS ONE LOVE

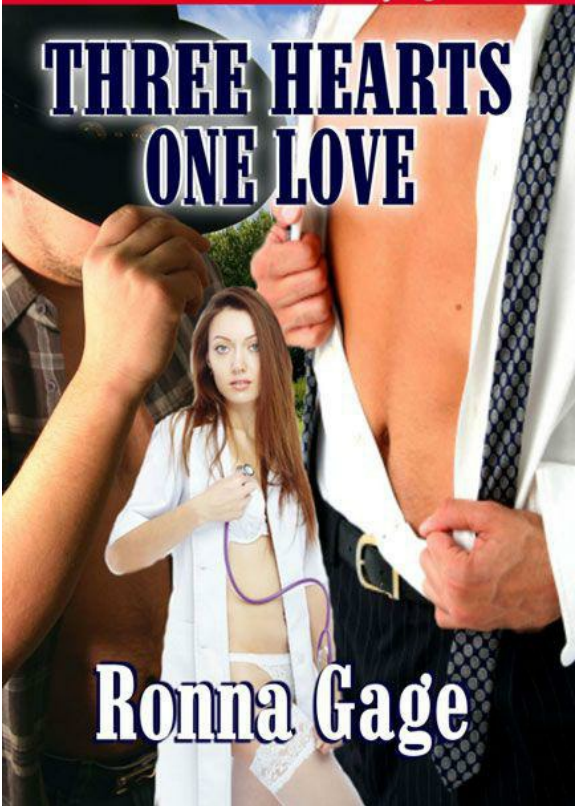


Ronna Gage

Siren Publishing

Ménage Amour

THREE HEARTS ONE LOVE



Ronna Gage

Three Hearts One Love

Dr. Karma Rodden has fallen completely and madly in love with Dylan McCoy, a professional rodeo star and rancher whose caring nature is the perfect match for her veterinarian skills.

On the other hand, she has fallen in love with Jaxon Hollister, a young hotshot lawyer about to make partner in his firm. His living-on-the-edge lifestyle lifts her adventurous side to the surface. Together they can conquer the world.

Who does she give up? Who should she keep—the one she loves the most or the one she uses for her pleasure? The confusion is enough to make a girl throw caution to the wind and keep them both...if

society allows it.

Genre: Contemporary, Ménage à Trois/Quatre, Western/Cowboys

Length: 21,638 words

THREE HEARTS ONE LOVE

Ronna Gage
MENAGE AMOUR



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DEDICATION

To my editors, Courtney and
Jenny.

THREE HEARTS ONE LOVE

RONNA GAGE

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Chapter One

"Ladies and Gentlemen, the next cowboy out of the chute is Dylan McCoy," the rodeo announcer's voice echoed off the walls of the arena and drifted to the veterinary stalls and clinic.

Karma stopped her eyeball examination of the injured mare from the previous bareback rider, craned her neck to hear the

announcer's confirmation, and then smiled. "Call me when you have her ready," she ordered to the staff assisting her. Walking to the door of the vet building, she stopped and watched the group of cowboys through the small slits of the metal rails of the pens. Dylan sat tall on the horse's back. His long hair lay under his black Stetson, which forced it down onto his neck. Small tendrils of curls wrapped around in tiny ringlets down to barely graze his shoulders. The intent look of determination sent a buzzing pride to hum in Karma's ears, blocking out the roaring crowd. He took in a

deep breath, his chest bowed out, and then a quick nod to the gatekeeper confirmed his ready.

The chute door flew open and the ride was on, as they say. Karma inhaled.

Eight concentrated seconds later, according to her mental count, the blaring horn sounded.

Cocky and victorious, Dylan jumped off the bucking horse and onto his feet. A smile as bright as his eyes covered his face. He sauntered back to the gate and took a few congratulatory slaps on the back before he disappeared in the darkened arena.

Karma's heart raced with joy. "One sexy cowboy!" she said under her breath.

"And he's all yours," her assistant, Lanie, teased her. "Ride him well."

She didn't hear Lanie's approach, her focus too involved with Dylan's ride. "I plan to do just that, but for more than seconds at a time." The two women laughed and walked back to the vet care pens. "Come on, we've got to check Ball Breaker's leg."

"I hate it when they call females something like that. It makes her sound grumpy, you know, bitchy,"

Lanie grumbled. She rubbed the horse's hip. "I'd be bitchy too if my leg suddenly cramped." She rubbed the horse's muzzle. "Huh, girl?" The horse nodded her large head excitedly. "See, she understands me, Karma."

Karma chuckled. "I can see that." The horse's right leg bulged with a large, bulbous mass at the hoof. She smoothed her hand up the leg and found the source of her patient's injury. "You ready, Lanie?"

Lanie picked up the pen and folder, wheeled the note cart to the stall, and posed for Karma's dictation. "Yes, go ahead."

"Okay, we have a tendon tear on the right rear foreleg." She used a small pen light to examine the horse's undercarriage. "I see no flank strap injuries but the typical abrasions from chafing." She stood up from her examination and patted the patient's side. "She looks good. The chaffing is typical, but the injury to her foot concerns me. I say this girl's rodeo days are over."

Lanie bowed her head. She made the final notation and then handed the folder to Karma. "Are you sure?"

Karma nodded and opened the file folder. "Yes. She has a two-centimeter ball at the top of her

hoof. Her tendon snapped in half and wadded there to rest."

"What treatment options are available to her?"

"I am going to give her an injection to help with pain for now. I need to see the owner before I do anything else."

"Like what? Put her down?"

"I will suggest surgery, therapy, and retirement. But, realistically this is an animal, and her job is to perform."

"So how's your patient?"

The two women turned to find Dylan walking in through the doors. The smile on his face lightened

Karma's professional diagnosis and duties for a brief moment. I can use a distraction. "The horse will be all right."

Dylan looked at the mare. "Good, I just bought her about an hour ago."

Lanie rushed to them. "Then you and I can discuss..."

"Lanie! I will need to brief Dylan on my diagnosis and prognosis. "Why don't you go ahead and give Ball Breaker the pain medication while I inform Mr. McCoy of his animal's options?"

"Uh-oh, that doesn't sound too good." Dylan gave a small smile.

Karma gazed into his eyes. Her heart seeped with sadness at the news she would have to give Dylan on his new horse. "It isn't really."

Dylan sighed on an exhale. "Tell me what's going on with her."

Karma took Dylan's hand and escorted him inside the pen. "She has suffered a torn tendon. It is balled up at her hoof. See?"

Dylan smoothed a hand down the horse's hip to its leg. "I see it. What do you recommend?"

Karma schooled her face to have no emotions. "I'm afraid she's through with the rodeo circuit. She needs surgery and then therapy. I

can't guarantee that she will be able to do more than walk again."

"Is that all?" Dylan asked with a poor smile.

"I can euthanize her if you feel it is necessary or you don't want to deal with her."

Dylan shook his head. "No, I have gentle plans for her anyway. Will she be able to breed?"

"I think so, but I can't give you a definite answer until after surgery and therapy."

"How long will it take?"

"At best a year, maybe more."

"Plenty of time. She will be three then and better able to withstand

childbirth on her leg."

Lanie stepped up to the two of them. "So you won't put her down?"

"No, I want to breed her."

"If it helps, Dylan, I'll come over every day and help with her therapy," Lanie offered.

"That's mighty kind of you, Lanie, but won't Caine be upset?"

"No, he understands my softheartedness where horses are concerned."

"Well, that will be all right then." He looked down at Karma. "Is that all right with you?"

Dumbfounded, Karma took a step back. If you knew my little

secret, you wouldn't ask me that question. "I think it is a great idea. She can go out in the afternoons to help with the care and therapy."

"Okay, Lanie, when Dr. Rodden releases my horse from her care, you will take over at the house. I should be there most days seeing as how the rodeo season is now over for me anyways."

"It's a deal. But can we consider changing her name?"

Dylan chuckled. "Don't push it. I like her name. Ball Breaker stands for something. She takes no mess from anyone."

Karma chuckled. She looked at

the horse that displayed so much attitude, it reminded her of a diva. "Let's hope she sees it that way."

Dylan pulled on her elbow. "Let's go for a walk."

Karma looked around. There's so much that needs to be done for Ball Breaker right now. A walk with Dylan sounded wonderful, but duty called.

He led her out of the pen. "Lanie, I'm sure you can hold down the fort until she gets back, can't you?"

"I can. I will not leave this horse until we get her to the hospital. I'll call for a transport now."

Dylan held up his hand in

protest. "No need. I will take her in myself."

"Then I will get her ready."

Karma looked at the two of them. "While you two decide what to do about the animal, you may need to consider asking her vet what to do."

Dylan looked down at her. Admiration and love showed with intensity. "Of course, I'm sorry. What do you have to add to this situation?"

"Can you drop her off in, say, thirty minutes?"

"Yes, I can. You wanna ride with me?"

"I can, but I can't leave for an hour. Why don't you and Lanie go ahead. I will meet you at the clinic in an hour and a half."

"I'm looking forward to it. Will you walk with me to the truck? I would like to talk to you."

Karma looked at Lanie. "Lanie, we'll be back with the trailer. Hang tight."

Lanie's smile brightened the pens to another degree. She slowly walked to the sedated animal in the stall. "No problem. We'll be here waiting for you."

In the shadows of the arena lights, Dylan and Karma walked in

silence past the dwindling number of cowboys in the livestock area. He took her hand, and the currents of desire swamped through her body and warmed her core. She gripped his hand tight to hold back the sudden urge to take him in her arms and kiss him in front of everyone. He gripped her hand back.

“Hold on, babe. I feel it, too.”

She moaned, too overwhelmed by the surrounding emotions building between them.

“What did you think of my ride?”

“I thought you were the sexiest cowboy there.”

He gave a soft chuckle and then turned his head from her. "Did I make you blush?" she teased.

"I didn't say a word," he defended, the blush still visible in the light.

She reached up to his cheek with her hand. "Aw, my tough bareback rider."

Dylan pulled her close. "What can I do for you?"

Her mind wondered about the comment Lanie said earlier. She swept a light kiss on his lips, "I want you to let me ride you like a cowgirl."

Dylan laughed out loud. He

picked her up and swung her around. "It would be my pleasure." He set her down on the ground but still kept her close. "But don't you think we need to take care of Baller first?"

"Yes, of course." She stopped, the name catching her off-guard. "Baller?"

"Yeah, I like it. It's mixing ball and breaker together. You get Baller," he explained.

"Oh, creative. By the way, I didn't say when I'd like to ride." She stepped forward to gain the lead, even for a step.

He pulled her back and turned

her to face him again. "How about tomorrow night?"

"Mr. McCoy, you have a date."

* * * *

After a long exhaustive night of surgery on Baller's leg and a hectic day at the clinic, Karma staggered into her condo on sore legs, locked the door, and walked to the sofa. She fell into the lush cushions and let a deep, winding breath out of her lungs, relaxing her composure. "Oh, God, I could fall asleep right here," she murmured. Her eyes closed on their own accord. Her mouth fell slightly open automatically, and each inhale of

air filled her lungs fully. On five exhailes, the stress of the long day ebbed out of her system and floated into the air. The ringtone of her cell phone alerted her to a call. Absent of any physical actions, she reached down and grasped the handles on her tote bag and pulled it up onto her lap. Inside the little pocket within the bag, she found the offensive instrument. One look at the LCD screen and her spirits lifted. Engaging the green phone button on the front panel, she stopped the incessant ringing. "Hello, there," she said. "How was your day?"

"Hello yourself," Dylan returned. "My day started out a little slower than I had hoped, but it's getting better."

Karma smiled. "How's that?"

"Bertha seems agitated these days."

"Well, she is about to calf in a few weeks. Help make her comfortable, and she'll deliver soon."

"Yeah, I know." His voice of assurance touched her. "Are you about ready?"

Her mind crashed to an abrupt halt. She had totally forgotten about the plans she and Dylan

made last night at the rodeo. Her body trembled slightly with the thought of going out. "Oh, Dylan, I am sorry, but I have to reschedule our date."

"Is everything okay?"

"Yes, but I had such a long day. It began last night with Baller's surgery. This is the first time I've seen my house all day."

After ten long, intense seconds, Dylan gave a soft chuckle. "I bet the last thing you want to do is to get dressed up to go out for the night." His voice sounded empathetic to her quandary.

"Yes, I'm sorry."

"Karma, don't worry about it. We don't have to go out. If you want, we can order pizza and stay in."

Karma's mood lifted with the new plan. Her heartbeat accelerated at the idea of a quiet night at home with Dylan. "I think that sounds wonderful...almost heavenly. Do you mind if we meet over here?"

"Not at all. I'll pick up some pasta and wings. Meet you at your house in, say, an hour?"

"I'll be here."

Dylan laughed. "I will see you soon. I'm leaving here in about twenty minutes. Well, make it

thirty."

In her exhausted state, her emotions surfaced. Tears blurred her vision. "Dylan, thank you."

"For what?" he asked, curiosity in his voice.

"For understanding..." She sniffled in her fight to keep the tears from giving her emotions voice. "For being you."

"Oh, honey," his voice softened. "Go take a bath, dress in something more comfortable, and I'll be there soon."

"Okay." She hiccupped. The emotions won out and broke the normal timbre of her voice to a sad

tone.

"On second thought, stay there on the couch and take a quick nap. You can shower when I get there."

She nodded but said nothing as tears of release streamed down her face. She hated feeling like a blubbering fool. It wasn't in her nature, but the long day and the loss of one patient due to a car accident set her on edge.

"Karma? Karma?"

"Huh?"

"Are you all right?"

"I lost a patient," she sobbed. "A cat was run over by a car."

"Oh, honey, I'm sorry. You did all

you could, I'm sure."

"Yes, but the little girl who owned her...Dylan, she cried and cried. Hell, the whole damn hospital cried with her."

"Of course you did. You are a caring and nurturing woman, and I love you for it, sweetie."

"I hate losing." Her sobbing became harder.

"I know you do. Now, lay down, I'll leave here right away."

She lay on the couch. "I love you. See you soon." She hung up the cell phone and quietly went to sleep, waiting for Dylan to arrive.

"Karma, honey, wake up."

She blinked out the sleep from her eyes and gazed into Dylan's worried eyes. She smiled. "Hi, how did you get in?"

He smirked. "I have my ways. Get up now."

"Why?"

"You have to let me in. I'm ringing the doorbell."

Karma jerked from her sleep and looked around the apartment. The bell chimes echoed in the living room. She quickly jumped up off the couch, ran to the door, and opened it to find Dylan's finger engaging the button for God only knew how many times.

"I almost gave up on you. I was about to call the super," Dylan informed her, a worried look covering his face. He came inside the apartment carrying a bag from the pizzeria down the street and a duffle bag. Setting the duffle on the floor by the hallway, he left it and walked to the dining table to unload the sack.

"I'm sorry. I slept more soundly than I intended."

He pulled her into a hug. "Poor baby, I bet you didn't eat all day either."

The soft murmur of his voice in her ear mellowed out the confusing

after-effects of her dream. The warm touch of his body against hers comforted her soul. She wrapped her arms around him. "I needed this," she whispered back.

His hands smoothed down her back to rest at her hips. "Needed what?" he prodded.

"You..." Her hands snaked up to his neck. "Your strength..." They curved down his solid biceps to his waist and then around to meet at the middle of his back again. "Your caring touch."

He breathed on her neck. Goose bumps broke out over the warm skin and down her spine. "I think

we should eat, take a shower, and then go to bed and watch TV. Doesn't that sound like a good idea?"

Feeling the strong currents of desire between them, her exhaustion subsided. She shrugged her shoulders. "I hope you have some intentions of taking care of my baser needs as well, Mr. McCoy," she challenged.

He pushed the Stetson off his forehead and gazed into her eyes. "Doctor Rodden, I have no intention of letting your..."—he looked down her body, and then back to her eyes—"baser needs go unattended. It

doesn't suit my purpose."

"Good. I say we eat first, and then we can follow through on your plans."

He led her to the table. "Come over here and we'll get started." He pulled out the take-out trays of pasta, breadsticks, and two salads.

"I'll get some plates," she offered. Within a matter of two minutes she set the table and sat down for the Italian dinner.

Stuffed almost to the point of discomfort, Karma sat back and watched Dylan. The hunger she didn't realize she had until that first bite full of pasta calmed her jittery

nerves. She sipped the wine for a minute in silence, waiting for him to finish his third plate. He's got a healthy appetite. Visions the two of them surrounded by young boys with the handsomeness of their father filled her mind. He gazed into her eyes with raw passion. Would he still look at me like that three—no five children later?

"What are you thinking about?" the older Dylan in her mind and the one present before her asked simultaneously. A simple grin of knowing welcomed her, as did a shrewd twinkle of desire in his eyes.

She set her wine glass down

while she stared at him—a seductive move she saw in an old film once and hoped it worked with Dylan. “Just curious what the future holds.”

The look in his eyes smoldered in desire. He stood up from his plate, walked to her, extended his hand, and she took it. “I’ve thought of the future, too.” He squatted down beside her chair. His thumb teased the flesh of her hand. “I delight in seeing where it leads, how long we last, but most of all...”—he kissed her knuckles—“I look forward to the moment. And the building of this future that awaits us.”

Karma's stomach quivered with pent-up need. Her breath caught in her throat when he helped her out of her seat and carried her toward the bedroom. Carefully, he set her down on the floor. She looked up at him. "What do you intend to do right now at this very moment?" she asked. Her breathless question filled the longing-laden room to intensity.

Dylan pulled the hem of her scrub top up and over her head until he held it balled up in his hands at his side. His eyebrow hitched a fraction of an inch. "Making the best of your fatigue,"

he answered with a grin. "But literally? I plan to shower with you, make love to you, tuck you into bed, and take a nap. When we wake up in two hours, I'll make love to you again and again until we both fall asleep with exhaustion."

Her heart beat faster with erotic visions of naked flesh rubbing in rhythm together to that point of release. "Let's not waste time then," she challenged.

Dylan brushed a soft kiss to her lips, pulled at the buttons on his shirt until they were released and then pulled his shirt off, all the while backing her toward the

bathroom. "Get undressed," he ordered reaching into the shower and turning on the faucet. By the time she got her clothes off, the water steamed and filled the room with a misty haze. Dylan pulled open the shower door. "Ladies first." His wolfish grin added an allure of charm to his nurturing and sweet personality.

She stepped inside and then stood under the showerhead, allowing the hot water to run a steady stream down her shoulders and spine. The simple spray released yet another layer of tension from her body.

Dylan stepped into the shower and settled up against her. "Better?" he asked, the seduction in his voice vibrating softly in her ear.

"Mmm. I do now." She almost purred in delight.

"Good, I hoped you would say that. I have great plans for us."

"Yeah, I heard all about it." She looked down at her erect nipples and then back to him. "Apparently, I agree with them."

Dylan looked down and smiled. "Well." He took the bottle of body wash from the caddy. "I'd hate to disappoint your plans and have any kind of disagreement with you." He

soaped her body from hair to waist and stopped. "I think this area needs a little more attention right now, don't you?" He knelt down in front of her. His fingers gently parted the lips of her pussy, and then his tongue lapped at the sensual spot that sizzled with want. She leaned against the wall and let his lapping ministrations and the hot water relax her to a knee-buckling release so intimate it expelled all tension and stresses in her life.

His arms wrapped around her. "Don't fall asleep on me, honey. I need to soap up really quick and

then we can go to bed." She barely nodded her okay before he moved one arm from her and kept her braced against the wall. Her mind envisioned each stroke of his hand on his chest, his arms, the arm around her, and then down his stomach to his thick shaft. Although she had a hard time keeping her eyes open, a burst of energy surged through her with the heat of his breath on her neck. "I think we can get out now," he said softly in her earlobe. The spray of water quit pelting at her shoulders. The cold air settled on her heated skin, and she shivered. Dylan helped her out

of the shower. He bent and retrieved two towels. One he wrapped one around his waist, the other he gave to her and watched her wrap it around her body. She gathered another towel and dried her wet hair. "I think a woman with wet hair is sexy."

She watched as the bulbous Adam's apple slowly descended and then ascended when he swallowed. "I find it sexy for a man to have wet hair, too," she said, reaching up to his wet wavy hair. The closeness of his body to hers drove another wave of bone-chilling excitement through her. The chill only fanned

the already hot embers of her arousal. Her forehead burst into small beads of sweat.

He stood behind her and guided her toward the door. "Let's go to bed."

Karma stepped into the bedroom. She walked past the mirror and caught an image of herself. Her hair clung to the damp skin of her shoulders; her pursed lips looked pouty; her face flushed with the steam of the shower; and her dark skin looked radiant against the white terry cloth towel. I look effing sexy.

Dylan faced her. His finger

skimmed over her bottom lip. "I love that little cleft in your lip. It reminds me of Angelina Jolie."

She narrowed her eyes. "You don't want her instead, do you?"

"Nope, I am very happy with what I have."

Her heart swelled with love. "I love you." She stepped closer to him. "I am so lucky to have you in my life."

"I feel the same way, babe." His lips touched hers. The feathery touch lingered with repeated teasing. Her insides melted with the heat of growing desire. "I'm tired of waiting." His devouring kiss

demanded her complete surrender as his tongue swept into her mouth and filled it. His fingers clawed at the tucked fabric of her towel until it loosened from its hold.

Naked and dizzy with her yearning for more of him, she leaned into his tall frame. "If you don't take me now, I'll fall asleep right here." Her warning held no truth, but it did as some say, put the fire under his ass.

He snickered. "You can't just say what you want, can you?"

She smiled. "Why? You're smart enough to figure it out, big boy." Her fingernail skimmed the flesh

under his chin.

“Momma didn’t raise a fool.” He bent and lifted her into his arms and carried her to the bed. “In fact, she taught me how to be proper with a lady.” He set her down and then pulled at the towel around his hips. “But Daddy gave me a few hints on how to handle a woman.” His voice held promise, his eyes reflected fact instead of brag, and his smile gave way to a sensual smirk, which heated her pussy in a second, and the stiffening cock at his legs seeped with anticipation. “I’ve honed some skills into a masterful art.”

Trembling, she swallowed hard. "Prove it," she challenged and then lay back. She dropped her knees and opened her legs. She saw the quick flash of determination in his eyes grow bright. His lips quivered before his tongue smoothed over them.

He knelt down onto the floor. His hands glided softly up her leg and then down her thigh. His long middle finger skirted around the entrance to the center of her canal. Brown eyes watched her while his finger delved inside her and then pulled out, repeating the rhythm until her breath hitched. Smoldering

heat filled his eyes and continued to gain her attention as his head drew closer to her hot cunt. She stifled a moan when his tongue skimmed over the top of her sensitive bud. Each stroke of his tongue pushed her closer to the edge of that magical discharge of earth-shattering, pent-up emotional bindings that held her most of the day. One lap, the room grew darker. Two licks, the wave almost overtook her as she erupted with the first wave of cum. The third lick drew out the last remnant of stress. Her body convulsed with the explosion which hid in the confines

of self-control and broke free soaking the lips of her pussy. Relaxed, weary, and exhausted, she blindly reached for him.

“I’m here,” he cooed.

Tears streamed down the side of her face into her hair, but she didn’t care. He was inside her now. Dylan would make her day all better. She clung to him with her arms and legs until he coaxed another release from her, and then his own. In the quiet of the bedroom, twenty minutes later, she settled close to his body heat. “I believe your parents taught you well.” She yawned to the sounds of his

laughter in her ear.

In the twilight of her sleep. Dylan's warm body enveloped her with security. Her final thoughts were her feelings or the revelation of them for Dylan. I've fallen in love with him. When did this happen?

Chapter Two

Karma walked out of the clinic, her mind occupied by thoughts of Dylan. Has it really been five days since I've last seen him? For two weeks they were together every day. Now she found she missed him terribly. How he kissed her when they made love, his warm roughened hands on her body, the dashing charm of a cowboy, the sex appeal of an outlaw. Her stomach quivered with longing at the memories imprinted on her psyche.

“Dr. Rodden!”

Karma looked over to the car in front of hers to the man sitting in a convertible. Jaxon? Her heart flitted with excitement. "Why, Mr. Hollister, it is a pleasure to see you."

He grinned. "I believe it is all mine," he corrected.

He's so charming. "What brings you to my neck of the woods?"

He shrugged. "In the neighborhood and thought I would stop by."

Karma's insides jittered with enthusiasm to have his attention. She swallowed. "I take it your case has been decided on then."

His already sexy grin became victorious. "Yes, the judge ruled in the favor of my client."

"Congratulations." She leaned against the fender of his vehicle.

"Thank you." He set his hand over hers. "I came by with the thought that we could celebrate."

Tingles of warmth shot through her. Mentally, she had to recount the days since she last saw Jaxon. Three weeks. "I'd love to."

"All right," he sighed audibly. "I feared you'd have been plucked up by someone else in my absence."

Karma felt the heat of her cheeks burn. Don't give away all your

secrets. "That's what you get for being gone so long."

"A long time?" he challenged.

"Three weeks is a long time, Mr. Hollister. But I'm always available to celebrate."

"How about I follow you home, you can change, and we can go out to eat?"

Her heart raced. "That sounds like a good idea."

"Good. His phone rang. He looked at the screen and rolled his eyes. "Can we meet at my house in say an hour?"

"Of course. I'll meet you there." She bent to brush a kiss to his lips.

His hand cupped her cheek, and he deepened the kiss. When he finally released her, she pulled back breathless. "I look forward to it,"

"Me, too."

Karma watched him drive off toward his house. Her heart felt a slight emptiness with his absence, but the knowledge that he waited for her at his house rejuvenated her soul. "Oh my, that man is gorgeous." She got into her Ford Edge, took a deep breath, and giggled with glee. Turning on the motor, the air conditioner blew hot and then cold air onto her. She touched her fingertips to her

cheeks. Hot. Looking into the mirror, crimson red patches covered her face. "I am playing with fire." The verbal confession intended to bring her to her senses settled into one of dread. Dylan's face formed in her mind. A ghostly touch on her pussy almost triggered the small orgasm building for another man. "How can I not play with fire? I need Jaxon, too." She set the vehicle in gear and drove in the direction of her home. "Tonight, we celebrate."

* * * *

Karma pulled into the gated community of Jaxon's condominium.

She parked in the space next to his car and turned off the engine. The mood of the night to come swayed her to push Dylan's face out of her mind. Her body craved his slow grooving motions, but tonight she needed Jaxon's adventurous nature. She rang the doorbell to his condo and waited almost a total of five seconds. He met her at the door in a gray silk blazer, black oxford shirt, and dark jeans.

"Hey there, gorgeous," he greeted with a smile. His perfectly white, straight teeth glimmered in the dusky night. With a cordial kiss against her lips he welcomed her.

"Hello yourself. I knew you would want to dress down tonight." She looked down at the empire-waist blouse and white capris. "Is this too casual?"

"No, ma'am. I'm keeping up appearances in case we are mobbed by reporters." He guided her to his Lexus. Looking around, he leaned in closer to her. "I have it on good authority that they want to interview the man that got close to a million-dollar settlement for his client."

Karma acted surprised by his news, but she wasn't. If there were ever a man ready to defend the

underdog client, it was Jaxon, and he did it very well. From the small man of a major corporation to the middle man in a world-wide conglomeration, Jaxon knew how to pluck the right nerve. "Well, my goodness. What did this company do to deserve your, uh, attention?"

Jaxon shrugged. "Sold an energy drink that had alcohol in it to a minor. Unfortunately, my client's daughter died because of that damn drink."

Karma's heart almost broke. "That poor man."

Jaxon chuckled. "Not anymore."

"Jaxon! How can you be so

blasé...so callous about this? A man just lost his daughter."

He stepped Karma into the passenger door of his car, leaned against her to block her path of escape, and with the softest voice, she heard him answer truthfully. "Yes, he did lose his daughter, and yes, it is tragic, but, honey, with that money he can ensure his other five children's futures. Three-quarters of a million dollars will go a long way in providing for them and his retirement."

Karma glared at him with shock and disapproval. "How can you justify a child's death with money?"

"I don't. He did, and the judge happened to agree. I am just a simple tool of the system." He cupped her cheek in his hand, his thumb grazing her jawbone. "I live on the edge of adventure every day. I seek the best possible action to take in that courtroom, and right now"—he kissed her lips—"I am eager to get dinner and come here to find the best possible action with you."

Any agitation she felt for him dissipated with his first touch and the seduction in his voice at the insinuation of an adventure to come for them. Her mind turned to mush.

Her body tingled for him from her nipples to her toes. She wanted him on her...in her. "I don't feel like eating out."

His grin turned lopsided. He cupped her pussy. "Oh, but I do."

Searing heat zipped through her and moistened her panties. "Well, let's not starve ourselves any longer."

Jaxon led her back to the door of his apartment. "We'll order Chinese."

"Sounds great."

Once inside from the prying eyes of God knew who, Jaxon literally pushed her to the wall. His huge

muscular body firmly held her in place while his hands roamed every part of her body. "Your pussy was so hot I almost took you outside in plain sight."

Karma pushed his blazer over his shoulders. "Thank you for thinking of my reputation at least."

He assisted her in getting his shirt out of the waist of his jeans. "You're welcome. My honor wouldn't let me." The shirt unbuttoned. He let it hang open to reveal fine blond hairs which covered a small patch of his chest. His blue eyes gazed over her body. "You have on too many clothes." He

undid the three buttons of her shirt, pulled it over her head, and tossed it toward the living room.

Karma's mind reeled with his quickness. "Shouldn't we do this in the bedroom?"

"Where's your sense of adventure?" His lips kissed the skin of her cleavage and teased her farther down. In a matter of seconds, she was down to her bare skin with no recollection of how her body or mind felt about his abrupt manner. One moment she had on her bra, bottoms, and panties, the next she stood naked before him. Her last recollection was that kiss!

"As you said before, three weeks is way too long. I refuse to wait one more minute." In one swoop, he picked her up and carried her to the bedroom. He sat her on the made-up bed, peeled his shirt off his shoulders—the most erotic thing Karma had seen in so long—and then in the fashion of a daytime actor's disrobing, his long seductive fingers unfastened his jeans. The strong, thick skin of his cock bulged forth.

"I love you. I need you and gotta have you," he confessed boldly.

She swallowed hard. "God in heaven, I love you." He leaned her

back onto the mattress.

"How much do you love me?"

"I will be happy to show you later. Right now, I need to take the edge off both of us."

Her bottom lip quivered at the statement. "Ho...how do you propose to take the edge off us?"

He placed his hands on either side of her face. His body hovered above hers. Her breath caught in her throat. "I will start by kissing every inch of your body for one." His lips trailed a line from her neck down to her pussy. "I will make you squirm until you can't hold back any longer"—his tongue wet the

delicate bud of her sex, and she bucked against him—"and you scream in the darkness."

The short pants of breath from her lips quickened until there was absolutely no sound coming from her at all. His tongue drew out the evidence of her need with each stroke while long fingers pumped in and out of her. The suckling noise filled the room, reverberating off the walls in repeated throes of passion. In a release so powerful, the room faded to black; her body shook; and true to his promise, she screamed his name in the dark.

"Told ya you'd scream my

name," he teased. He rolled over, taking her with him and lifting her off the mattress. She came to stop astride his groin, his cock thick and straight to gain entry into her. "Now that we've taken the edge off you, let's work on me." Strong hands guided her to the right position, and then he eased her upper body down to impale her onto his throbbing cock. In a gasp of surprise, she felt every ridge of his cock inside her canal. "You're hot and wet." The eagerness in his eyes set another wave of wetness to her channel. "You like it when I talk dirty, don't you?" She said

nothing, but the way he talked to her did have an effect on her. No one had ever talked to her that way.

“Let’s just say, there is no way in hell someone else could get away with it.” She eased herself up, feeling the swollen shaft from base to tip, the slight ridge of his penis’s head, and then she eased back down to feel it all the way down again. She sucked in a breath. Her sensitive flesh enjoyed the moment of friction between them. When her wetness coated him, her vigor grew in momentum, building to full throttle until the motion of their

bodies clapped skin to skin. His hands grabbed her hips...hers grabbed her nipples...the humid air between them surrounded her. Sweat beaded off her face and slipped down her cheek to gather at the fine cleft in her lips. She licked the salty moisture. Her hands kneaded her breasts...her thumb and forefinger pinched at her nipples, and then in a thrust so hard and unexpected, Jaxon's finger slid into her ass...and simultaneously, his cock hit that one spot inside her and broke the dam of orgasmic release. On a violent flood of arousal built by the two of them,

her cum mingled with his. The two held one another until the currents subsided and the cognitive sense of reasoning returned.

Jaxon heaved himself from the bed and turned on the soft light on the nightstand. "Are you still hungry?" he asked, looking down at her.

"Yes, but not for food," she purred, lifting her hands to him.

He came to her, kissed her deeply, and stroked her pussy with his hand. "I intend to reclaim this..." He gave slight pressure to her sensitive bud. "...later. Right now, I have to eat."

"What do you suggest?"

"I thought we could grab some sandwiches, burgers, anything fast."

"What about your interviews or the Chinese delivery?"

He kissed her on the forehead and once more left the bed. "I think you've worn me out, not that I'm complaining. Besides, if they truly want to interview me, they can call my office. As for the Chinese, I'm not really in the mood for it."

She smiled. "Okay, give me a moment to get dressed." She reached down to pick up her shirt. He grabbed it from her.

"No, you stay naked. I will go

down the street and pick up some burgers." He turned toward the closet and grabbed a pair of jeans off the door and then pulled them on. Looking back in the closet, he grabbed a T-shirt, slid it on over his head, and looked back at her. "We'll eat in the nude, and when we're done I'll have dessert." He opened her legs and licked her fold. "What do you think about that idea?"

Goose bumps invaded the underlying layer of her skin. Her breath caught at the touch of his lips on her swollen pussy and then at the removal of his heat. "Mr. Hollister, I have to admit that

sitting around here in the nude waiting for you to come back and feed me is turning me on."

He cupped her face. "And that is just the beginning. I'll be right back."

"Okay." Karma watched him leave the room. She listened for the sound of the door locking in the other room. She rolled over and sighed. "He can make me consider doing things that I never thought I'd do before in my life." Suddenly a dreadful thought popped into her head. "Oh God, I think I'm falling in love with him, too. How can I be in love with two men?"

Chapter Three

Karma plopped down at Roxette's dining room table, sighed in despair, and came close to tears.

"What's wrong with you?" she asked her concern evident at the display of near emotional breakdown.

Karma took a second before she answered, unsure of how to break the subject she felt desperate to talk over with someone. "I'm in trouble!" she announced.

Roxette looked at her wide-eyed. "You're pregnant?" Her shifting body position indicated her regret

for such an outburst.

She sat back a little in an involuntary attempt to shield herself from the harsh sting of the question and the hurt caused by Roxette's first impression and that it would go straight to that kind of problem. "No, I'm not pregnant." Karma rolled her eyes. "Give me some credit at least."

Roxette sighed with obvious relief as her body relaxed its pose. "Whew! That was scary. Can you imagine not only what your brother would say, but your parents? I don't even want to think about it."

"No shit!" Karma laughed in spite

of herself. "I need you to be serious for a second. That's why I came to you. I need your levelheaded insight and advice, not verbal lashings of a family member."

Roxette shrugged her shoulders. "Okay, go ahead. I'm all ears."

Karma narrowed her eyes at Roxette's choice of words. Long black hair pulled back from her face revealed the smallest ears she'd ever seen. In fact, she was almost jealous. "You know, I never really understood that phrase...in a physical sense that is," she added before Roxette got the chance to explain.

"You always do that," Roxette accused.

"Do what?" Karma defended.

"Make jokes and puns when you are worried or nervous. Just tell me what your problem is so we can resolve it and go on with the next issue."

"I'm nervous, for one."

"About what?" Roxette took a sip of her iced tea.

Karma got a sense of annoyance from Roxette's new tone of voice and uppity posture. "Well, in truth I didn't get a lot of sleep last night."

Roxette barely got the swallow of tea down. "Ewww! Do I really

want to hear this?" she asked.

"Oh, shut up! Last night Dylan spent the night with me."

Roxette's eyes narrowed. She put her hands up. Karma got the hint that her sister-in-law had a question. "Dylan? What happened to Jaxon?"

Karma rolled her eyes and sighed in utter impatience. "Nothing. He spent the night before last with me."

Roxette's blank look at Karma irritated her more. "What now?"

Karma asked.

"I'm confused."

Karma leveled her with a glare.

"Do you want to hear this or not?"

Roxette turned her head. "Oh, sorry. Go ahead."

"If you haven't figured it out yet. I'm seeing both of them."

Roxette sat quietly in the kitchen for half a second. She gazed at Karma with a tender voice she replied. "I'm going to say this in the most loving way possible," she warned. Karma nodded. "Slut!" She charged the word like a weapon of destruction.

Karma giggled. "Don't hate me because I'm—"

"Busy!" Roxette filled in for her.

Karma glared at her for a second

time. Didn't intend that one. "Don't look at me in that tone of voice," Roxette teased at Karma's heated stare. Both women burst out laughing.

Karma massaged her temples with her fingers. "Stop. Be serious!" she moaned.

"I'll try." Roxette giggled. "But this isn't a very serious mood right now, regardless of the subject of conversation."

Karma stopped laughing and gained her composure. "As I said before, I didn't get much sleep last night."

"Why? Were you up all night

having sex?" she asked, stressing the word with a distorted, ugly facial expression.

"No, we had an early night, if you must know. I was afraid."

"Of what?" Roxette leaned closer. "Afraid that the one-eyed monster would get you again?" she almost whispered.

Karma chuckled. "I never fear him."

"So what kept you up all night?"

"I was afraid I would talk in my sleep and call out Jaxon's name while Dylan lay sleeping next to me."

Roxette nodded. "Yep, that

would be tragic."

Karma brushed her hair out of her face with her hand. "I can't keep this up. I'm confused about what to do and need to make it right."

"Other than having two lovers that sleep over occasionally, what is the problem that has you so perplexed?"

"I think I love them both."

"Oh for God's sakes, Karma! How in the hell do you fall in love with two men?"

"I don't know. It just happened really."

Roxette leaned her chin into her

palm. "You can't keep them both."

"But, both are so good to me... and for me."

"So which one do you get rid of in order to keep the other?"

"The one I'm using, I guess." Karma's voice sounded with frustration and distress.

"Who is that?"

"The one I don't love so much," Karma's meek voice confessed.

"Dammit, Karma. You live up to your namesake, don't you? You always take a chance to be different when you find the chance."

Karma dropped her head on the table and knocked it several times

against the surface.

Roxette placed her hand between Karma's head and the table. "Now stop it before you wind up breaking my table. Chance will whip your ass." Karma raised her head and groaned. "Okay, let's start all over. Tell me about Dylan."

"Well, other than that he's a crazy-sexy cowboy, he owns his own ranch outside of town and is two years older than I am." And he makes me wet with each lopsided grin.

"Any kids?"

"Nope." Karma thought for a second. "Well, none that I saw

anyway."

Roxette shook her head. "I'm about to leave you to deal with this mess on your own."

Karma grabbed her best friend's hand at the threat. "No, you can't do that, Roxette. I need your help."

"Why? I didn't get you into this jumbled relationship."

"Please! Help me," Karma begged.

Roxette paused, took two deep breaths, and relaxed. "Is Dylan divorced?"

"No. He's never been married. Came close once, but it didn't work out. And with him being on the

rodeo circuit, he felt the timing was wrong."

"What do you feel about him?"

"I love him." Karma let her mind drift off to relive the wonderful moments of ecstasy she spent with Dylan. The warmth of his broad chest crushed against hers when he held her tight. The strong biceps that carried her to the bedroom at night, how he gently laid her on the bed and the soft placement of his lips on hers, the heat of his kiss when he paved his way to her dripping pussy, and his nurturing spirit while he attended her sex.

"Karma? Karma?" Roxette called

her name. "Hello!" she snapped her fingers in front of Karma's face.

"Oh, sorry. What were you saying?"

"I asked you about this Jaxon character."

"He is fantastic. I find that like Dylan, I can't wait to see him. He and Dylan are so different."

"How?"

"Well, Dylan does make good money owning his own ranch and on the rodeo circuit"—she chewed her bottom lip as she contemplated each—"but Jaxon is a responsible country boy with Southern gentleman values."

"Oh, someone like your brother," Roxette added.

Karma didn't see the connection between Jaxon and her brother. She looked at Roxette to argue the difference, but then she saw the look in her sister-in-law's eyes, the day-dreamy look of a woman in love. She sometimes found herself in that trance-like state when she thought of Jaxon and Dylan. "Maybe, but...I guess that is the way you'd see Chance."

"What else about Jaxon?"

"He likes to try new things for the adventure of it. Let's see. He looks for the positive in everything,

which is rare for a litigator. He's a new lawyer in a firm and....I could just go on and on."

"Very ambitious. And there is an old saying about Southern lawyers always being successful." Roxette turned the glass of tea in her hand and watched Karma closely.

"I suppose. I think both are successful in his own way."

"So if both men were standing on your porch, which one would you let in first?"

"I don't know," Karma mumbled. "Why do I have to choose one at all? Why can't they walk in together?"

"They aren't puppies or kittens someone dropped off at the clinic, Karma."

"I know that!"

"You can't adopt them and keep them all to yourself."

"I'm not stupid!" This talk wasn't taking the exact turn Karma hoped when she arrived. She needed guidance, resolution.

"I didn't say you were, but you are talking like you want to have them both."

"What's so wrong with that?"

Roxette slapped the table. "You can't have two loves in your life Why, hell, it isn't natural." She got

up from the table, stalked to the kitchen and refilled her tea glass.

"Who says?" Karma asked and followed her into the kitchen.

"Everybody says!" Roxette informed her. "It has been that way since Adam and Eve, Romeo and Juliet..."

"Romeo and Juliet are fabled characters. They don't count," Karma objected.

"Your parents wouldn't like it at all," Roxette interjected.

Karma whined, "I'm twenty-six years old. I haven't needed my parent's approval for a few years now."

"Maybe you should!"

Both women turned to find Chance standing in the doorway that separated the garage from the kitchen.

"Hi, honey," Roxette greeted her husband. "How was your morning?"

Chance walked the short distance to meet his wife. He looked down into her loving face. "It was all right. The client referral paid off. I now have two more golf courses to add to the list."

"Sounds like selling water and parts have become profitable for you guys. That's great!" Karma said, excited for their up-and-

coming irrigation company.

Chance crossed the small room to the sink. "Thank you, little sister." He turned on the faucet, pumped two shots of soap into his palm, and washed his hands. "Now, what is this business Mom and Dad wouldn't like your involvement in?"

"Oh, it's nothing really." She looked at Roxette. She would never put her in a position to lie on her behalf, especially to Chance. "Girl talk, mostly. Getting some ideas."

Chance maintained his stare on her, but she didn't buckle under the pressure. "Uh-huh. You know, if you need me I'm here. As your older

brother, I will state this once. You'd better not be doing anything illegal. I will come and kick your ass if you are."

Karma's mouth gaped open at the accusation. "How can you say that to me? Not only am I a respected veterinarian, but a business professional in this community. I would never consider doing anything to destroy what I worked so hard to acquire." She stepped forward, fuming with unspent irritation. "Plus, I've never given you or anyone else any reason to suspect."

"Stop!" He pointed a finger at

her face. "You're getting on my last nerve with your little soapbox speech. Take it however you like, but this is my only warning."

"Fine!" Karma crossed her arms over her chest, a defiant stand against Chance's threatening warning. "Can I talk to my best friend now?" Chance smiled. Karma hated that smile—like a fox in the henhouse.

"Yes, you can talk to my wife." Chance gave Karma a kiss on the forehead. She wiped it off. She hated when he kissed her as if she were some child going off to school. "Have a good day." He walked over

to kiss Roxette. "I'll see you tonight."

"Aren't you going to grab a sandwich or something?"

"No. I'll eat when I get back into town."

Roxette gave him a small kiss, but it lasted longer than Karma felt comfortable witnessing. She cleared her throat to remind them she still existed in their world. The two women watched Chance load up his truck with parts and irrigation pipe. Roxette turned to Karma. "That is what having one man, one love, will do for you."

Karma didn't give a particular

response, but inside she thought about the joy of having two men, two loves, and two lingering good-bye kisses.

Roxette leaned against the door frame. "You burn both ends of a candle, you get burned."

"Yeah I know, but what's a girl to do?"

Roxette wrapped her arm around Karma's shoulders. "Decide!"

Karma moaned in another fit of despair. "I was afraid you'd say that."

Chapter Four

Dylan looked over the herd of cattle on his small ranch from the horse stalls. "Just think, Joe, ole boy,"—the horse's ears angled back—"two years ago we had one bull and four cows. Now look at us, we have almost twelve in our herd, counting the one that will be delivered tonight." Joe's head bobbed as if he understood his master's conversation. Dylan looked down to the corner stall. He watched his new mother-to-be pacing the small area. Her vulva ligaments lost their tension early

this morning, a first sign that the calf would be born within twelve to twenty-four hours. Dylan paced the aisle of the barn, willing the time to pass by quickly. Frustrated with time's crawl, he stopped by Joe's pen again. "I bet Bertha is starving. She hasn't eaten since last night." Her absence from the morning feeding had riled his suspicions. He'd taken off looking for her and found the laboring heifer in the back acreage. Relieved to find her, he had gently coaxed her into the trailer. In minutes, the cow had been loaded for the short ride back to the barn where he set her up in

the maternity pen. He watched her closely waiting for signs of complications.

A tune played low in his pocket. He smiled at the familiar song he assigned as his father's ringtone. "Good afternoon, Daddy," he greeted when he answered.

"Good one for you, too, I hope," his father added.

"Yes, sir. Bertha is about to calf any time now."

"That's great, son. I hope I'm not catching you at a bad time with her about to deliver."

"No, sir. It's not a bad time. Not yet at least. This is her first calf,

and I like to stay close by."

"Why's that? Is she not of age?"

"Oh yes, and healthy, too. She's in the labor and birthing pen now. I want to be here when the new one arrives. Oh, not to change the subject, but what can I do for you?"

"I have some papers I need you to sign. I'm sending Grayson's boy to you. He says he can be there this evening if you're free."

Bertha bellowed, the loud painful cry alerted Dylan to her stall. "She is presenting her water bag, Daddy."

"It's not going to be long now, is it, son?"

"No, sir." Warm feelings of giddiness filled Dylan. The arrival of a newborn calf gave his feet wings with pride. "I feel like this is my own child about to be birthed."

"In a way, it is," his father said.

"I wonder if I will feel this way when I become a father."

"Not even close. You'll think this is a slight hiccup of emotions compared to your own flesh and blood being born."

Dylan smiled at the forming image—he and Karma having a child together. His throat constricted with the desire it brought to his heart.

“Should I tell Grayson to hold off on the papers?”

His father’s question derailed his chain of thought. “No, sir, he can come over this evening. I’m not going anywhere.”

“Okay, son. Keep me informed.”

“I will, Daddy.”

Dylan shut off the power to the phone. He looked back at the heifer’s pen. He let his mind wander and soon thoughts of Karma filled it. The soft touch of her hands on his skin—the same ones which tendered to an animal in her veterinary clinic—gave him the most pleasure. The strong strength

of her fingers kneading into his flesh during sex; the heat of her breath on his neck when she came; and then his tongue almost tasted her sweet and salty nectar when she was aroused—just before they made love. His cock grew firm with a semi-erection. He exhaled a strong breath to clear his mind and gain control. He rested his hands on the pipe of the pen. Stamping down a nonexistent mound of dirt, his heart clenched and ached with thoughts of a future with her. "Karma, what do you feel for me? Are you playing the games of a free spirit, or are you real in your

feelings when you say you love me?" Bertha's soulful bellow recaptured his attention. "I know, girl. I feel the same way, too."

He pulled out his phone, hit the number for Karma's cell phone, and waited. He hated to break their date, but he saw no other choice.

* * * *

Deep in thought, Karma almost missed the phone call coming in on her cell. She picked it up and smiled at Dylan's picture displayed across the LCD screen. She pushed the green button. "Hello, you crazy-sexy man." She purred into the receiver.

"Hello yourself, you smooth talker."

Karma liked the occasional role switches. "What are you doing tonight?"

"I have to break our date."

"Another woman?"

Dylan chuckled. "Sort of. Bertha is about to calf, and I think I should be around."

"Good idea. Why don't I grab some Chinese takeout, some DVDs, and meet you at your place. I can be there in case you need me for a difficult birth." She waited for his protest, his debating the issue, even his downright refusal, but the

silence that followed unsettled her. "Hello, you there?" she questioned, hoping he hadn't been cut off with a dropped call.

"Yeah, I'm here, but I've got some personal business to take care of this evening."

"Someone I know?" Karma joked, but her guilt suddenly took hold of her.

Another unsettling silence nagged at her gut before he spoke.

"No, my father is sending a friend over to sign some papers. He will be stopping by this evening."

Friend? Papers? What is going on?

"Ah heck, if you want to come by, that's fine. I can use the help with the birthing."

"I will go home, change into clean scrubs, pack some gloves into my medical bag, grab a movie or two, some dinner, and meet you in...let's say, an hour and a half?"

"That will be about six thirty. Sounds good."

"See you then!" Karma pressed the red button and ended the call.

She pulled into the parking lot of her condominium and parked in the private garage. She sat in the car and focused on Dylan's qualities—thick, dark hair, amber-colored

eyes, the physique of a manual laborer with the mind of a scholar. His caring personality encouraged her to follow her dreams, to be all she could be in whatever she did. A giving lover through all their encounters, she found herself thinking of him most times. "He's almost perfect!" she sighed. Her heart palpitated rapidly. "Is he the one I love with all my heart, or is he just the one filling my mind?" And vagina.

The question warranted a thoughtful answer. She considered all the things she found most appealing about Jaxon Hollister.

She didn't have to concentrate too hard to picture him in her mind. A devastatingly handsome man with blond hair appeared immediately. The bluest eyes in the world locked in her vision and took her breath away. His gaze penetrated her soul. She recollected the last time he made love to her. Large hands cuddled and massaged her after a long day. The sultry way his whispered comments floated from his lips to her ears. The heat of his breath on her neck, breasts...Karma gasped at the building desire for him. She turned her attention to his sense of humor. His adventurous

nature readily introduced a new position or idea in the bedroom. The latest was her breasts and cunt covered in whipped cream, as well as other parts of her body, his tongue lapping it off inch by sweet tortuous inch. When he finally reached her lips, his kiss tasted of the sweet, rich cream. Shaken by the image, she looked down to find herself gripping the steering wheel and panting. From the first time she met Jaxon, he sent her world soaring in laughter, delightful adventures, and gentlemanly manners all wrapped up in one man. "He sounds perfect, too."

Her heart sank. "Do I choose Dylan or Jaxon?" Unable to choose, she pushed the task aside. Right now, she had to meet Dylan at the ranch. Besides, it was no use in guessing. This wasn't an easy decision for her to make, but she knew the longer it took, the more hurtful the outcome.

"Why do I have to choose? What right does society have to tell me how to live my life? I love them both. I can't see my life without either of them. God, if only someone would make this decision for me. With some kind of workable happy ending."

Chapter Five

"Mr. Hollister."

Jaxon looked up at his assistant.

"Yes, Mrs. Palmer?"

"I cleared your schedule for this evening as you requested," she informed him when she entered the office.

He smiled at her efficiency.

"Thank you. I appreciate you doing that for me."

"No problem, sir. Is there anything else I can do for you?"

Jaxon looked at the stacks of papers piled neatly on his desk. He picked one up and handed it to her.

"I need this copied and filed."

She took the proffered papers.

"I'll get right on it."

"No, it can wait until in the morning."

"Are you sure?"

The shocked look on his assistant's face almost made him chuckle. "Yes, call it a day. I will finish up here and close up the office."

"This is a treat! Paul will be pleased."

The excitement in Gloria Palmer's voice warmed Jaxon's heart. She worked so hard for him every day without complaint. If he

could give her a short workday now and then, he was glad to do so. "Enjoy. I hope the two of you have a wonderful time."

"Thank you, Mr. Hollister."

Jaxon gave her a wink. "My pleasure."

She turned to leave but did an about-face. "By the way, Dr. Rodden called. Unfortunately, she has a potential emergency and will not be available this evening."

Jaxon nodded. "I see. Thank you, Mrs. Palmer. I will call her back later this evening."

Gloria smiled. "Have a good afternoon. See you bright and early

tomorrow," she said and then all but ran out of the office with her stack of papers.

Jaxon sat back in his chair, piled his hands on top of the other, and laid his head into his cupped palms. He thought about the last-minute change of plans that transpired—Karma wasn't available this evening. Her image toiled through his head. The way her long blonde hair fell over his chest. Her soft body fit his form perfectly. Firm, perky breasts filling his hands, the sweat of her body covering his while they made love. He inhaled a quick breath with the nagging but

mild discomfort of an erection he sported as evidence of his imagery. "God, what am I going to do about her? I think of her when I'm not with her. I dread leaving her when I am."

His phone rang. Absently, he answered. "Hello?" His best friend's voice returned the greeting. "I'm sitting around thinking about life, love, happiness..." Jaxon chuckled. "That's a stereotypical comment. Sometimes, lawyers do think about such things!" He leaned forward and scanned the file on top of his desk. "I can do that this evening for you. I have a few more details to

add to that idea we had last week...I think we should talk it out before we present it to the third party...Great, see you then."

Feeling tired and weary, he stood up and stretched. Looking at his watch, he noted the time. I have some time on my hands before dinner, might as well get in a few laps at the pool. He grabbed the papers he needed to take home, locked the desk drawers, and then made his way to the outer door, turning off the switches and buttons as he passed them. Leaving one small lamp on, he closed and locked the door.

Karma and the advancing relationship weighed on his heart. What did he really feel for her? Was it love? If so, why not talk to her or see for three weeks? "I should have kept in touch." He hit the unlock button on his car. His best friend's voice echoed in his head. Other than Karma, there was no one else he could discuss this delicate subject with. "This is a good night to talk with friends, about love, and other life changing interests." Jaxson settled in his car. "This could be the beginning of the rest of our lives, Karma. I hope you want me."

Chapter Six

Karma pulled her small pickup into the private drive leading to Dylan's ranch. She looked at the clock on the dashboard. Precisely six thirty. One good thing she could say about herself, I am punctual. Grabbing the bags of food, her tote bag, and medical bag left her with one option to closing the door. She bumped her hip against the door, and on the first try, it shut. She looked around the pastures. Cattle grazed not too far from the main house. She walked up to the door and noticed it opened. Through the

screen, she saw Dylan on the phone. He looked up and came toward her. He opened the door, held up a finger to his lips, and then kissed her on the cheek.

"Yes, I have a heifer about to deliver, but that isn't a problem. Any time is good for me."

Karma dropped her tote bag and medical bag by the door. She smiled at the pride she heard in Dylan's voice. Setting the take-out bags down on the counter, she sat down and waited for him to finish his call.

"Hey, I gotta go." He looked over his shoulder at her. "The vet is

here, and I need to fill her in on the progress so far." Karma tried not to eavesdrop, but he didn't actually keep it on a low key either. She busied herself with unpacking the take out. "Yes, that's right...I will... Oh, now who's starting sh—stuff?" Dylan laughed, and Karma's heart raced. To see his smile lit up her world. The sexy and cocky lopsided grin set off the motion of longing inside her. "Okay, see you later. Bye." He hung up the phone and turned to Karma. "Sorry about that. An old friend who needed to talk about a personal issue."

"Not a problem, How is our

patient?" she asked, handing him a foam tray.

"The birth sack has presented. Her bellows are calmer now, and she is circling her stall." Dylan updated her and then took a large bite of the sweet-and-sour chicken. "This is the best food. I haven't eaten all day."

Karma lifted one eyebrow. "You better eat up. Bertha may need your help in a little while."

Dylan smiled. "Oh, before I forget, my friend is coming by this evening. I have to sign some papers for my dad."

Karma felt an uneasy feeling and

shifted positions slightly. Who is coming over? Is it someone I know? Is the friend a woman, man?

"Are you all right?" Dylan asked.

"Yes. Why do you ask?"

"You seem...uncomfortable."

She shrugged her shoulders in attempt to ease both their minds. "No, just the usual case of nerves before a delivery. I get them all the time."

"Why are you so nervous? You aren't delivering."

Karma laughed. "No, but I'm hoping Bertha will deliver on her own. The natural process will be better for all of us."

Dylan's eyes turned serious. "And if she can't?" he almost whispered.

She rested her hand on his forearm. "Then we will make that decision when we come to it. For now, finish eating, and then we can check in on her."

* * * *

Thirty minutes later, dinner take-out cleared and with refilled cups of tea, Karma followed Dylan to the pens. In the corner stall, Bertha looked back at the two of them wide-eyed and frightened.

Karma, quiet and slow as not to disturb the animal, opened the pen door. "Stay here for a second," she

requested in a low voice. "I need to calm her." Dylan closed the gate. Karma eased her way in. "Shhh, it's all right, girl. I'm here to help," she soothed the laboring cow. She placed her hands on the protruding belly of her patient. "I think you may have a bull in there, girl," she cooed. She looked over her shoulder at Dylan. "It's a large calf."

Dylan eased his way inside the maternity pen. "Will she be able to deliver on her own?"

"Not sure yet." Karma eased her way to Bertha's behind. "The water bag is still intact. It could be a few more hours. I need to make a

physical examination."

"Should we break the water bag?" Dylan's calm demeanor slipped a notch.

Karma shook her head. "It's best we don't." She eased her way to the medical bag outside the gate and pulled it into the stall. Grabbing her stethoscope, she wrapped it around her neck, and then she reached in and grabbed two pairs of latex gloves and handed the larger size to Dylan. "I'll check her uterus and the presentation of the calf." Expert hands lubricated the vulva, and then she inserted her arm to the elbow inside. "The calf is in a

good position. His feet are a little turned in. Let me try and stretch them out for an easier delivery."

"Okay."

"Hold her halter. This may be a little painful when I do the repositioning."

Dylan eased his way to Bertha's head. "Easy, ole girl. Karma is going to make it better." He looked at Karma. "I got her."

Karma grabbed the calf's feet and gave a small tug. Bertha's small shudder relieved Karma. "That should make things a lot better now, huh, girl?" Using her stethoscope, Karma listened to

Bertha's heart rate and respirations. "Good and strong." She looked at Dylan, took off her glove and tossed it to the gate. "That should ease her pain, and it will definitely help deliver."

Dylan's eyes sparkled with excitement and let up tension. "Would she have delivered without the repositioning?"

"Yes, but it would have torn her vulva, and she would've needed medical care to sew the damage."

"Do you have sutures and needles in your bag?"

Karma winked. "This isn't my first rodeo. I am a registered DVM. I

think I've got it covered." She strutted up to him. "The only thing I need from you...are chains."

"Chains! You said..."

"Hold on there, cowboy. This isn't your first time at this either. You know this may go bad in a second. I like to be prepared to intervene in the delivery."

Dylan relaxed again. "Sorry, I'm just a little keyed up, that's all."

"Can I help?"

Dylan looked around. "Not yet, but there are the chains you asked for." He pointed to the two sets on the wall. Karma followed his direction with her gaze. Satisfied,

she nodded. "How much longer do you think?"

"I feel if we don't deliver her by nine o'clock, we may need to intervene at the clinic."

"Cesarean?" Dylan's voice lowered, his eyes darted back and forth between her and Bertha.

Karma loved how his voice altered in the grips of strong emotional bonds—passion, arousal, and like this moment, nervousness. She looked at Bertha. "Yes, but for now, our plan is to tug and pull. She's too weak to push for too long on her own." Karma reached out to cup Dylan's face. He leaned into it.

His hand covered hers.

"I'm glad you're here. I can use a professional, neutral person right now. God knows I'm not."

Karma's heart swelled with love. "I'm not either. In fact, I'm scared shitless, but I'm in my comfort zone and will do what it takes to deliver this calf safely and quickly." She reached up and gave him a soft kiss. He deepened the kiss.

He stopped the kiss and stared into her eyes. "What do you have to be scared shitless for, Dr. Rodden?"

She lowered her gaze to his heart, and then her eyes retreated to his, she glimpsed the pulse point

of his throat. Strong beats tested the membranes of his neck. His eyes flickered with desired challenge. "Losing," she whispered. The soft confession toiled through her heart and rested in her eyes, misting them and blurring her view of his handsome face. "It sucks to lose."

Dylan's eyebrows crinkled. He nodded, but the weight of his stare conveyed his understanding. She turned to walk away. Her hands lingered on his waist, roamed over his stomach to his side until she stepped out of touch with his body. She walked to the gate to put away

her stethoscope.

"She's down!" Dylan announced.

Karma grabbed her bag and brought it closer to the patient. "Good girl."

Bertha lay in the straw, her respirations quick and deep, and then she grunted. The bag of water burst open.

"It's not long now, daddy!" Karma announced over Bertha's belly. Her excitement bubbled inside.

Dylan smiled, but the seriousness returned in his gaze. "Do you need the chains?"

"Hold on. Let me have a look."

She grabbed another long glove from her bag and checked the heifer's progress. "Looks good, but we may still need them."

After thirty minutes of grunting and pushing, Bertha grew tired.

Karma checked the little one's progress. The kicking hooves had no room to move. "Dylan." She looked over at him. "Get the chains."

Without hesitating, debating, or rethinking the decision, Dylan trotted to the wall and grabbed a set. "What do I do?"

"Give me an end of one of them." Karma held out her hand, grabbed

the end he gave her, reached into her bag, and grasped the tube of lube. She doused up Bertha's uterus. "Hold this for just a bit. I am going to pull the leg out." She reached inside, grabbed the first hoofed foot, and pulled it out.

"Holy shit, this calf is huge!" Dylan said when he spotted the hoof.

"I told you." She wrapped the chain's end around the hoof and secured it. "Hold this, Dylan," she ordered, handing him the tensed chain. "Give it some tension as she pushes. For the love of God, don't let that leg back inside."

"Got it!" Dylan maintained the tension on the chained leg.

Karma eased the other leg out and chained it like the first. "Now, when she pushes, we pull. When she rests, we will keep the tension."

Dylan nodded. "Why?"

"We don't want the little one to slip back in, for one, and this steadies the pressure on the cervix and speeds dilation."

"Got it."

Bertha grunted, deep and low. "Okay, here we go. Pull! Steady, not hard. Easy!" Bertha's respirations grew quick again. "And stop! Keep the tension."

"How do you know when to stop pulling?" he whispered.

Leave it to Dylan to set a quiet atmosphere for the delivery. I swear he can read my mind. "When her breaths are quick like this, she's no longer pushing. When you hear her grunt, she's pushing," Karma whispered back.

Dylan shrugged his shoulders. "Easy."

Karma looked at him. "What are you, new?"

"No, I've never had a difficult delivery before. I usually wake up and have a calf added to the herd."

"Oh, I see." Karma monitored

Bertha's breathing, the calf's feet, and the tensions on the chains.

"Do we have to pull the calf completely out with these chains?"

Karma shook her head. "No, once we pull the last rib out, it's usually easy for the mother from that point on. He's pretty much out of the birth canal."

"Why not pull more?"

"The placenta needs to transfer blood to the calf before the umbilical cord ruptures."

"I see. And it allows fluid to drain from the little guy's nose."

She gave him a wink. "Exactly. Now you're getting it."

He looked back at Bertha. "I think we need to pull again."

The heifer's breaths fell deep. A small grunt came from her diaphragm. "Yes, and pull hard this time. She's growing tired." They put the tension on the chains. "Pull! Easy...steady...keep it coming." Bertha tried to stand. "No! dammit! I can't have her getting up now." Karma tossed Dylan the chain. She crawled to Bertha's head. "We need another set of hands. She can't get up."

"Can I help?"

Karma looked up and gazed into Jaxon's eyes. Her heart soared and

then plummeted a split second later. "Wh...?"

"Great, Jax, help me keep tension here!" Dylan ordered, lifting the chain Karma had let go of a second ago.

What the hell is he doing here? How do he and Dylan know each other? She watched him jump the gate and take up the position she just vacated. Her mouth watered at the relaxed fit of his jeans, the tight fit of his T-shirt, the smell of his cologne.

Focus!

"What the hell do you think I am?" Jaxon asked, sitting next to

him.

"Right now you are a vet tech," Dylan answered. "Listen to Karma's instructions."

Jaxon looked at her. "Nice to see you again, Karma."

"Same here." She shifted her attention back to the laboring cow. "Now, let's focus on the job at hand." Karma lay across Bertha's neck. "Here we go. Pull! Remember, don't pull after we get the last rib out."

"I see the last two ribs," Dylan announced.

Karma leaned over to investigate. She reached down with

both hands and rotated the calf's hips. "Rotating the hips helps position the calf to slide out. Hopefully one more push will do it."

Jaxon looked over at Karma and then at Dylan. "Who is going to wash my clothes?"

Karma and Dylan looked at each other. In a time of crisis, it would be just like Jaxon to make a joke, even if it did come out in a selfish manner. "That's what I love about you—your sense of humor," Karma stated without thinking.

Jaxon and Dylan looked at each other and smiled. "I'll bet!" they agreed together.

Bertha thrashed and grunted. "This is it now. Here we go." Up on her back haunches, she grunted once more, and out came the little bull, along with the remnants of the water sac, the bloody placenta, and mucous, spilling out on the floor of the stall. Karma immediately went to the little calf. "His breathing sounds labored," she informed her team—the two loves of her life, who now would lose their friendship because of her.

"What do we do?" Jaxon asked, picking membranes and straw off his clothes. "Turn him upside down like a kitten?"

"No!" Dylan and Karma almost yelled.

"I saw you do it last week!" Jaxon reminded her.

"I've seen her do it too, but kittens and calves are very different," Dylan stated.

Jaxon looked at his clothes and then at Dylan's and Karma's. "And less messy."

Karma lifted the calves back feet a little off the ground. Fluid oozed out from his nose and mouth. "That should do it." She set the calf next to his mother. Bertha looked the newborn over. Satisfied he turned out okay, she licked his head,

cleaning him of the birth debris. "Ah! I always love this part," Karma sighed, clutching a hand over her heart. "Only a mother could be that gentle."

"Or a father," Dylan stated behind her.

Jaxon walked up to her. "Who's going to clean up this mess?" he asked.

She looked up at him dumbfounded by this whole series of events.

"We thought you could handle that," Dylan suggested with a teasing smile. "We did most of the work."

Jaxon chuckled. "I don't think so." He turned toward the gate. "I'm taking a shower."

Dylan looked at Karma. Her guilty conscience almost got the better of her. She froze in anticipation of an accusation. She had no excuse or logical explanation to give to either of them. Bracing for the first barrage of questions, she maintained her gaze on the cow and her calf.

"We need to talk," Jaxon said beside her.

She nodded.

"Let's clean this up, bed her down, and then we can talk at the

house," Dylan suggested.

Except for clinical questions and instructions, Karma, Jaxon, and Dylan worked in civil silence. In the vast guilt and dread of her heart, comfort didn't exist. The atmosphere mounted with tension as each man glanced at her, making the barn almost unbearable.

Chapter Seven

Karma walked between Jaxon and Dylan, each one holding one of her hands in his. The short walk to the main house gave her enough time to feel the onslaught of emotions by their simple touch, which tantalized her body in a sweet assault of warmth that almost distracted her from the confrontation awaiting them.

In the house, Jaxon let go of her hand and then sat down at the bar. Dylan stood on the other side leaving one stool open for her. Karma braced herself for the

showdown. I will leave here with my head held high no matter the outcome. She didn't know what to expect really. Regret, dread, love, and disappointment entwined in her heart and ran rampant like a virus into her soul, creating more tense ranges of nerves within her. She'd miss the days of lying with each of them, making love on rainy days, skinny-dipping in Dylan's stock tank, cuddling on the couch with Jaxon during a movie. She turned away from their stares.

Jaxon stood up from the stool, and then paced the floor in mild agitation.

Karma held her breath. Here goes the first strike.

"What's wrong with you?" Dylan asked him.

Jaxon stopped pacing, looked down at his shirt, and pulled it away from his skin. "I have cow blood and...stuff on me," he pouted.

Dylan held back the laugh Karma saw lingering under the surface. "First things first," he stated calmly.

Karma straightened at the second hint of the face-to-face meeting among the three of them.

Jaxon rolled his eyes and stripped out of his shirt right in front of her and Dylan. "I'm going to

borrow a T-shirt from you then," he declared, stomping off to the master bedroom.

Karma looked at Dylan. "How long have you two known each other?"

Dylan tilted his head. "All our lives, I'd say. Our fathers are best friends. He and I grew up together, went to school together, dated girls on many double dates together. I'd say he's like a brother to me."

Great! Just when I didn't think I could feel any worse. The brief history of Dylan and Jaxon's connections added to her regret. Nausea rumbled through her

stomach. She watched Dylan walk to the refrigerator seemingly uncaring of how she and Jaxon knew each other.

"Would you like something to drink?"

Flabbergasted by his hospitality, she hesitated before answering. "Sure. I'll have a glass of tea."

"Jax! Do you want a glass of tea?" he hollered toward the bedroom.

"Yeah! Where the hell are the T-shirts I usually borrow?"

Dylan rolled his eyes and then looked at Karma. "He's here every other day and still can't remember

where I told him I keep them." He leaned toward the bedroom. "In the guest room!"

"Oh yeah! I forgot."

Dylan raised his hands in exaggerated mocked surprise. He looked at Karma. "He'll forget next week."

Karma chuckled. She didn't bother to hold it back. "You sound like a woman complaining about her husband, and he, well, has an uncanny ability to take things lightly. Amazing," she said in reflex to the antics. Her mind crept onto another ulterior motive to his lightness. He didn't really love me

like he said after all.

Jaxon walked back into the room, sat down at the end of the bar with Karma and Dylan on either side, and looked from one to the other. "What did I miss?"

The other two looked at him and laughed. "Nothing," each one said.

Once the laughter died down, they each looked at one another. More silence hung between them.

Karma took in a tattered breath. "Guys, I don't know what to say. I have no excuse for the things I've done..." she said in some attempt to ease over the difficulty about to break between them.

Dylan looked at Jaxon, who in turn cleared his throat. "Karma, first off, we aren't mad at you for dating the two of us at the same time," Jaxon assured her.

Karma held up her hand. "How long have you two known about each other?"

"From about the beginning. The first date you and I had together for sure," Dylan answered.

"I don't understand. You were using me?" Her anger got to her, but then she realized she wasn't innocent in this triangle. "And I used you," she admitted softly.

"We don't see it as using each

other,” Jaxon said. She looked up into his eyes and saw longing for her. His voice softened. “We see it as building a relationship.”

“A relationship?” Karma hesitated to show any emotion: confusion, surprise, or otherwise. Did I step off into an alternate universe? “I don’t understand.”

“Yes, one that is completely unorthodox—” Dylan added.

“Not really!” Jaxon interrupted. “It’s going on all the time.”

Dylan raised a single finger to pause Jaxon’s next comment. “I know, you’ve told me all about it.”

“About what?” Karma asked,

breaking up the debate between the two of them.

"We." Each man took her hand. "Karma," Dylan said her name, and she felt the new flutters of desire. "Jaxon and I don't doubt the way we feel about you. In fact, for the last four months, we both agree we've never been happier, for ourselves, or for each other."

"I love you, Karma," Jaxon confessed. "And Dylan does, too." He turned to Dylan, who nodded. "We don't want to lose you."

Dylan looked at her. "Earlier, you said you hated to lose. Well, so do the two of us."

Karma sat on her stool looking from one man to the other. The reached out to hold her hands. The heat of their hands warmed her body to intimate levels of security. Hope almost blossomed, but what if she'd interpreted what they said incorrectly? "I'm hearing that you two want to continue a relationship with me, but at the same time." Both men nodded. "How?" Shaking with anticipation, she looked from one and then the other. "Can this really be done? Do we flaunt it for the world to see? Do we keep it in private? Have you two dated women together before?"

Dylan squeezed her hand and then kissed it. "Well, that's where we have to decide something."

Oh boy, the impending but. Her heart beat in rapid succession of what was to come. "Decide what?"

Jaxon looked down at her. Love reflected in his eyes. "How far you trust either of us," he answered in a warm whisper. Karma narrowed her eyes. "You see." He smoothed his fingers through her bangs, setting it off her forehead. "Dylan and I know we aren't going to give you up."

"Won't!" Dylan stressed.

Karma's heart swelled. "I don't want to lose either of you." She

looked at Dylan. "I love you, Dylan, for your hard working, nurturing soul. I find myself coming to you when I have those really hard days where I've lost a patient or put one down because of neglect." She looked at Jaxon. "I love you, Jaxon, because you make me laugh, you fill me with joy when I'm with you, and you lift my spirits when my day is too stressful."

Jaxon continued. "We're willing to share, but if you'd rather see us strictly one on one, then so be it. We will live with that, but if we can have little get-togethers like this"—he paused—"all the better."

"Are you willing to carry our relationships to the next level, being a threesome?" Dylan asked. "Or are you only allowing a one-on-one type of thing?"

Her palm caressed both of their cheeks. Her thumb grazed their lips. "If it gets to the point that we, as a threesome, are selfish and uncaring for the other two, this will stop. But for now, I'm willing to try."

The two men grinned.

Dylan looked at her. "I love you." He pulled her close. "I have from the moment I saw you. I know this seems strange to you, but I promise this is what Jaxon and I both want."

Jaxon leaned forward and kissed her lips softly. "The love I have for you is great."

"Guys, what if I fall in love with one of you and want to make it a life-long thing? What if I become pregnant in all this playtime?"

Dylan sighed. "We thought of that, too. If you choose to be with one of us only, we can accept that. If you conceive, you and I will marry."

"What if it's Jaxon's child?"

Jaxon's eyes showed mischief. "Can't be mine. I'm sterile."

Karma stared in disbelief of what her ears heard and her mind only

vaguely comprehended. Her eyes dried from lack of blinking. She looked at him. "I didn't know that."

"Not something you readily tell a girlfriend unless you are planning to become serious."

Karma shook her head. "I must be dreaming."

Jaxon set his arm over her shoulder. "Nope! You're very much awake," he assured her.

"I have another question." The two men groaned. "How do I get two cocks into one hen house?"

"I have a few ideas," Jaxon stated with more exuberance than she remembered seeing ever.

"I'll bet!" she quipped.

He reached inside a drawer under the bar and pulled out a box. "We got this for our special nights together. Just in case you said yes," he stated, handing her the box.

Karma opened it. Inside, on a velvet lining she found a tube of lubricant and condoms, along with other things she couldn't identify. She lifted a small purple cylinder-shaped object. "What's this?"

"That's a mini vibrator. They call it the lil' bullet." Jaxon's enthusiasm bubbled out with his answer.

She looked at him. "How do you know this stuff?" Karma asked.

"I used to date a woman who was all into sex game and toys."

Karma dropped the item into the box and rubbed her hands on the leg of her scrubs. "Is it hers?"

Jaxon laughed out loud. "No, you have your own toys."

"Gee, thanks." She leaned forward to Dylan. "Thank you." She brushed a soft kiss to his lips. He let it linger a little longer than she intended. She felt Jaxon's hand on her shoulder giving it a soft, reassuring squeeze. The kiss ended, and she leaned toward Jaxon. "And thank you." She placed another kiss on his lips. Refocused, she held up

another item. "This is...?"

"A cock ring," Dylan answered. Her eyebrows lifted in silent question. "It looked interesting."

"Oh!" She lifted up a knobbed cone-shaped, top-looking thing. She held it up, inspecting it on all sides. She looked at her two lovers. "I give up."

Jaxon laughed. Dylan shrugged his shoulders.

"That is the answer to the earlier question about two cocks and one hen house," Jaxon stated. "It's a butt plug."

"A what?" She looked at the new device with skepticism. "What does

it do, besides the obvious?"

Jaxon took it from her. He swallowed. "This will help you take the two of us at one time." He squeezed her hand. "When the time is right."

"When will that be?" she asked, curious about the effects of the thing.

"When you say you're ready to try," Dylan stated firmly, glaring at Jaxon.

"Of course. No need to rush anything," Jaxon agreed.

"How does it work?"

"Well." Jaxon looked at Dylan. "First off, we have to get you

aroused."

"I like it so far." Karma giggled. The idea of her men loving her in an open and giving atmosphere sent shockwaves of tingles all through her. "Then what?"

Dylan laid his hand on Jaxon's shoulder. "Let's take it one step at a time. This is where the next level of trust comes into play. In order for this to be a success, you have to give yourself over to us on these nights." Dylan came around the bar and stood in front of her. He helped her off her seat and then laid a soft kiss on the side of her neck. "Give total trust..." Another kiss on a little

farther down. Jaxon eased the tension with soft massaging strokes along her shoulders. Her pussy contracted with every tingling touch of each man. "That we do love you..." Another kiss on the base of her throat. Jaxon reached under her blouse. The contact of his hot hand on her back melted away the first inhibitions of this new arrangement. "And would never in our hearts hurt you." His last kiss grazed the cleft of her bosom. His tongue stroked the top of each breast. Jaxon's finger traced the alignment of her spine. Karma groaned. "Do you agree?"

"Yes" was her breathless answer.

Jaxon's hands massaged her hips. "Do you trust us not to hurt you?"

"Yes."

Jaxon blocked the placement of Dylan's next kiss. "First of all"—he gave Dylan a sharp look—"we take a shower."

Dylan's grin triggered her need, and then it pooled in her panties. "If you insist, I guess we can get acquainted in there before we go to bed." He and Jaxon walked her toward the master suite.

"Why? I know you just fine," Jaxon joked.

Karma snickered on a stifled laugh. This night maybe unnatural, but it would be incredibly fun with her two men...and a little bad. In the master bath, she looked at the large shower with interest. "I just realized I've never used that shower before tonight," she said.

Jaxon looked down at her. "Dylan says it has a special feature we think you'll like very much." He lifted her hands above her head. His long fingers gathered the hem of her top and eased it up, grazing her ribs with his knuckles. She shivered in response. He pulled it over her head and off.

Dylan stood behind her and unfastened the hooks of her bra. His hands scuffed the globes of her breasts. A moan escaped her. "Your nipples are hard and ready," he whispered in her ear. She leaned into his touch, reeling with the sensations of his hands on her breasts. He took the tender lobe of her ear in between his teeth and nipped. The sharp sensation zipped a wave of chills through her. He nipped her neck, and another moan escaped her throat. She laid her head against Dylan's shoulder.

Jaxon pulled her bra down her arms. "I'm getting hard watching

you two," he stated. He untied the drawstrings of her scrub bottoms, bent on his knees, and rolled the material down her legs and let it gather at her feet. His hands traced the inside of her legs as he worked his way back to her panties. He pulled them down to her mid thigh, moved in closer, and sniffed. "The scent of a woman in heat turns me to mush." Karma bit on her bottom lip to smother another moan. He rolled her panties down to meet the bottoms. His fingers opened her slit. She gasped as his cool breath blew on the exposed folds. His tongue delved between the lips of

her pussy, and she sobbed on a small tremor of heat.

“Easy, sweetheart,” Dylan soothed in her ear. “We’ve just started.” He pushed her hair to one side and sucked and nibbled her neck. Karma’s breath caught, her body quaked with the impending eruption waiting inside, and she gasped short pants of air. “That’s right, breathe through it. Don’t come yet. We have a wonderful night planned,” Dylan instructed, his voice laced thick with his arousal.

Jaxon rose onto his feet. “Dylan, get the shower ready.” He pulled

Karma into his embrace. He brushed her lips with his. She opened for him. His tongue slipped inside, and she tasted the dew of her pussy which coated his tongue. The water from the shower misted the room. Jaxon's hands smoothed over her waist down to her rounded buttocks. His hands squeezed the naked mounds of flesh and separated them. She felt pressure at her anus and then a burning sensation.

She pulled back, but Dylan's body stopped her, his hand teased the sensitive bud of her clit. "That is the butt plug," he told her. "It will

open you up for us to enjoy you more." Karma knew anal intercourse would be involved, and she didn't mind. The burning sensation of the device settling into place didn't hurt for too long. In fact, she adjusted to it almost immediately. She relaxed in Jaxon's arms.

"That's it, relax," he encouraged.

Dylan's hands touched her shoulders. "Come here, babe." He eased her back into the walk-in shower and then assisted her into the shower's hot spray. "Let the water work on your muscles." She watched him watch her. Grasping

the soap, he lathered up his hands. A sound came from outside of the shower, and Dylan looked over his shoulder. Karma's eyes followed his gaze. She found Jaxon removing his borrowed shirt but still dressed in his jeans. He took his time undressing as he watched her and Dylan. His eyes apparently enjoyed the view intensely. She gauged the bulge at his opened fly. His arousal gladdened her. This is a dream. How can this possibly work out? Will I wake and lose both of them tomorrow? Soapy hands touched her breasts. Her awareness riveted back to Dylan. Work-roughened

fingertips sparked another slight tremor inside her core. His eyes conveyed his hunger. His hands moved with an urgency she felt pent up inside while they lathered every part of her upper body and then down her back to her butt. His finger traced the crack. He pulled her close to him. "Hang on to me." Unaware of his intentions and showing a valid trust, she wrapped her arms around his neck. He added more pressure to the plug. She fidgeted in discomfort as his finger inserted the object more firmly inside her. "I'm done," he announced a few seconds later.

When she relaxed, he moved his body in sweet gliding measures along hers, lathering himself with the soap on her flesh. He stepped under the faucet spray and rinsed. "Let's rinse you off." He placed her under the showerhead. The water and soap rolled off her body. From her head to her toes and everywhere in between, the bubbles tingled under his scrutiny. He maintained his gaze on her. "Shower's ready for you," he called out to Jaxon.

"About time! I almost came watching you guys." Jaxon entered the shower and then stood under

the water, wetting his body. He put his hands on Karma's hips and nudged her forward. "Step up a minute, honey." She heard him take the shower head off the mounting hook. "Open her up, Dylan." He spread the cheeks of her ass wide. She bucked from him. "Easy. This will make the discomfort better." Jaxon told her. He aimed the spray of heated water onto the plug. To Karma's amazement, it did. She let the soothing water comfort the burning to a dull sting. "Okay, now I have to soap up."

Dylan guided her hands toward the wall. His fingers roamed a soft

path from her wrists down her body, to her thighs. He settled down on his knees, and Karma watched as he used his fingers to open her pussy. "I gotta have a taste."

He leaned into her. His tongue, fat and hard, stimulated the nubbin with one swipe. Karma's knees buckled. She leaned back into Jaxon's strong and capable arms. Dylan moaned, lifted her left leg, and opened her further. His tongue licked. His lips nibbled, and his finger teased the hole to her core. Karma's hands reached for his hair and grabbed handfuls. Jaxon eased

her arms away from Dylan's head. He lengthened them above her head to wrap around his neck. His hands kneaded her breasts. His hot breath lingered on her wet flesh, on her shoulder, her neck, and then in her ear. Dizzy with the need to come, she panted and gripped Jaxon's neck with a firmer hold. Undaunted from his exploration, Jaxon flamed the embers of her desire further when his fingers and thumbs pinched and rolled her nipples. Trembling, Karma burst in an orgasm that spewed hot and heavy, creaming Dylan's mouth and chin in its wake.

"Damn, babe, I want some of that, too!" Jaxon stated.

Dylan grinned and looked at his friend. "It's great!" He gazed into her eyes. "Shall the three of us go on?"

Shaking with aftershocks, Karma's one coherent thought didn't involve backing out. "How can I keep this up with both of you on me?"

The two men looked at each other.

"We'll show you," Jaxon promised. He lifted her from the shower and walked toward the master bed. She heard Dylan turn

off the water.

"Shouldn't we dry off?"

Dylan shook his head.

"The best way to keep up with two lovers is to stay in an aroused state," Jaxon told her his line of thinking. He propped her hips up onto a pillow, bent her knees, and sat back. "This opens you for easier access." Jaxon's hungry eyes feasted on the sight of her. He licked his lips. "My turn." He knelt down and took his taste.

Karma's hands gripped the sheet. She moaned and fell back into Dylan's body. From out of nowhere, he sat behind her, making her more

comfortable in her inclined position. His hands guided hers to the outer slit of her pussy. "Open it for him," he suggested. Basking in the excitement of new ideas, she did as he instructed. Her fingers drew back the thick lips of her pussy, further exposing the swollen nub. Jaxon's suckling grew intense. She bucked her hips against his face. "Easy, hold it back." Dylan's gentle coaching sank into her mind. With small pants, she gained control of the quivering state of her body. His hands lifted and massaged her rosy breasts. The quaking vibrated anew. She pulled back her hands to

grip the mattress. Dylan took them, licked off the creamy wetness, and repositioned them back into place. "No, sweetheart, keep it open."

"I'm coming!" she yelled between shivers. Jaxon's fingers held open the lips of her pussy, and his other finger toyed with the plug in her anus. Dylan pinched her nipples, and at the same moment, she grasped a firm hold on the mattress and rode out the release, this one more powerful than the last. Breathless, she lay back onto the mattress. She opened her eyes to find Dylan no longer behind her, but sitting at her bent knees,

stroking her pussy with his callused finger. "What are you doing?" she asked, excited by the stimulus in his touch.

"I'm following Jaxon's advice. Keeping you aroused."

Karma propped herself on her elbows. The lodged plug crept deeper into her canal. She focused her attention on Dylan's technique, forgetting the discomfort of the gadget. "Where's...?" She paused. How far could she involve one man while with the other?

"Jaxon?" he filled in. "It's okay to say his name. I'm not jealous of him. But I think he's getting snacks

and drink, and—”

“Our little box of toys,” Jaxon finished when he reentered the room with a tray bearing three glasses of tea and the wood box of toys. He set the tray on the dresser, opened the box, and pulled out the cylinder-shaped object. He pushed a button, and the little thing vibrated. He handed it to Dylan. “Here, try this.”

Dylan smiled. He looked at her and set the vibrator on her sensitive clit. She growled. Dylan stoked her pussy, up and down, from the hole to the clit and back, teasing the areas that shivered and shook with

the vibrating toy. Karma shifted positions to find the right spot for her release. The more she moved, the deeper the plug embedded itself into her rectum.

Jaxon lay beside her, massaging her breasts with scented oil. He coated her nipples, bent down, and tasted. "Mmm, chocolate." He suckled her right breast. She pushed her chest farther into his mouth. A quick nip on her nipple with his teeth. She grunted softly. "No, don't come yet, baby," he whispered in her ear. He switched sides and gave the other breast the same treatment. Soft, strong, lean

fingers caressed and bathed her breasts in oil. When his teeth clutched her nipple, Dylan's long finger entered her anus. She stiffened.

"Okay, I think it's ready," he said.

He sat up. She felt them lift her and lay her stomach-down on three pillows, her ass in the air. "What are you doing now?"

"We are testing the plug," Jaxon stated. She tensed. "No, relax. I promise it won't hurt." She felt long fingers glide inside her anus and bump the cork and then retreat over and over again for a minute or more, the sensation almost

exquisite. She relaxed, and the small vibrator settled in the perfect spot. She moaned, panted, and thrashed at the two forces working on her. She wanted to come. Another long finger entered her. She rose up on her knees and spread them apart to accommodate the long finger.

Dylan came to her side. He cupped her cunt. His finger went inside her, adding an intimate pulsation from the toy, working on opposite levels with Jaxon's fingers. The finger in her pussy went in when the one at her anus pulled out. She inhaled and held the

breath to control the orgasm. "Do you like this?" Dylan asked. She didn't reply, but nodded. "It's the way we will both make love to you. One behind and the other in front."

"Okay, baby, come for us now," Jaxon hummed in her ear beside her. Dylan took one nipple into his mouth, suckling with intense pleasure that rocked her body with almost violent tremors. Jaxon pinched and rolled the other nipple between his thumb and forefinger. At the last second, Karma gripped each one around the neck and squealed in low guttural cries while the orgasm ran the short course to

spill out of her pussy. She heaved forward and panted for breath against Dylan's neck. She opened her eyes to find the plug lying beside the wooden box. She turned her head to avoid looking at it, forgetting its existence for now.

"You did great, sweetheart," Jaxon murmured in her ear.

She rose up from Dylan's shoulder, looked at both of them, and smiled at the pride in their eyes. "This relationship may have some advantages after all."

Jaxon caressed her forearms with tender care, almost tickling her skin. His hands snaked down to her

wrists, and then he entwined his fingers with hers, bringing her hands to his lips to kiss her knuckles. The shower of kisses on her arm shook her deep and hard in her cunt.

Dylan's hot breath hovered over her neck. Warm, moist lips skimmed the sensitive area under her earlobe. "Do you want to try with the both of us now?" Dylan whispered.

The husky vibrations of his words reignited the fire in her core. Goose bumps broke out over her body. The two of them together in her excited her immensely, but the

possible pain involved worried her. She turned her head, glimpsing Jaxon's profile. "Will it hurt?" she asked, almost shaking with the fast mounting fear, which overcame the free-spirit excitement she'd harbored seconds before.

Jaxon's eyes reflected concern. He laid soft and gentle hands on her shoulders, gave an affectionate squeeze, and then shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know, honey, but I can tell you that eventually—like losing your virginity—it will not hurt with practice."

She looked from him to Dylan. Their anxious but concerned faces

almost did her in emotionally. Time to make a decision. She inhaled to garner that Rodden attitude that got her through most of her adventures to date. "I love you both enough to try."

"That's our girl," Jaxon praised. He looked at her and then Dylan. "We will take it slow." Dylan nodded. "Who gets front?"

Dylan gave a half-hearted laugh. "I don't know."

"Do you want to stay as we are or switch?"

"Whatever you want to do. Doesn't matter to me," Dylan offered.

Karma shifted positions to see both of their faces. "You don't know?" Her surprised and aggravated question stopped the small battle of courtesy between her two men. "You didn't plan this too well, did you?"

"Of course we did," Jaxon defended.

"We've never done this before. I guess we're trying to be gentleman about this matter," Dylan explained.

Karma shook her head. "Stop. Hold on a second." She looked at Dylan. "You stay here up front." She then turned to Jaxon. "You stay

behind me. Now, let's try this out before I lose my courage."

Jaxon and Dylan smiled.

"Yes, ma'am," Dylan replied.

Jaxon splayed his fingers on her hips. The heat of his slick touch warmed her. She looked down to find a bottle of warming gel next to her knees. His fingers traced the crack of her bottom, spreading thick gel down to the hole where he stimulated the sphincter muscle with an intimate stroke over the top and inside the outer rim of the muscle. "Do you want me to tell you what I'm doing?"

"No," Karma insisted. "I don't

want a play-by-play. I'm supposed to trust you, right?"

Dylan took her chin between his thumb and finger. She looked into his gaze. "Just hang onto me if it gets to be too much when we start." Karma nodded. "We will talk you through this and give input on how to make it better for all of us."

"I trust you," she whispered. Dylan leaned and brushed her lips several times with his. She opened her lips to grant him entrance. He deepened the kiss. Karma's hands roamed over his back, down to his hips and up to the shoulders. His hands cupped the back of her thigh

and lifted her off the bed with Jaxon's help. She wrapped her legs around his waist for support.

Straddling him, he impaled her on his hard, long shaft. He broke the kiss and gazed into her eyes. Her flesh burned with the stretched position. She closed her eyes tighter, waiting for Jaxon's entry. She first felt his hot body next to her back and then his strong arms under hers. He breathed in her ear, and chills raced down her spine to her toes. At the entrance to her rectum, she felt his slow invasion. She took in a quick breath and held it.

"Don't tense, baby. It'll hurt less." Jaxon's strong, reassuring voice coaxed her to relax a fraction. His large hands massaged and lifted her breasts. Her mind concentrated on the sensual touch. "Bear down onto it," he directed. She did as instructed. Her anus stretched and stung, but after a short time of adjustment, she returned to normal breathing.

"How does it feel?" Dylan asked in front of her.

With both men inside her, she felt bloated, full, but not in a way that made her uncomfortable. "I can't describe the feeling."

“Do you need us to stop?”

“No! All I want is more from both of you.”

Her two men worked together in perfect rhythm. One eased in, and the other withdrew, over and over until the pressure of her orgasm built to a level she couldn't hold back. Huffing and panting, she fought the tide inside her. The smell of sweat and sex filled the air around them. Guttural moans from all three of them vibrated her body, adding more wondrous pressure. Jaxon and Dylan pinched her in precise timing, sending her over the edge. Jaxon pinched nipples while

Dylan stimulated the swollen nub of her pussy. Karma screamed, and her lovers roared. All three released at the same time. Karma fell back against Jaxon. Her feet loosened their hold on Dylan's waist. Tired, spent, and in rapture, she let her body appreciate the warm ripples of ecstasy drift to calmer peace.

As gently as possible, Jaxon withdrew himself. He held her, allowing Dylan to lay her on the bed. "I got her" she heard him say. He rose up and stepped back, leaving her exposed and cooling.

Running water from the bathroom got her attention. She

opened her eyes to see Jaxon in the mirror cleaning himself of their sex. He placed another rag under the steamy water, rung it out, and carried it to her. "Here, sweetie. Let me clean you off."

Suddenly embarrassed, she reached out to take the rag from him. "I'll do it."

"No, allow me," he said with a smile.

Dylan took her hands and then kissed their palms. "Don't say no. Give yourself to us." Dylan released her hands. He smoothed over her arms with firm but tender grasps, almost like a massage, but not

quite.

Outnumbered in this decision and in full enjoyment of his masterful fingers, she relaxed.

Jaxon lifted her leg, opening her for the rag bath. He placed the warm washcloth over her pussy and anus. Careful, skilled hands cleaned the private areas that only she and her mother ever cleaned in her life. The semi-coarse material skimmed over the folds of her pussy several times, awakening the tender bud of her clit. When he washed over the sore muscle of her anus, she almost shouted with...glee. Tensing her body to fight the urge to make love

again, she squirmed.

"There you go, all clean," he announced after a few minutes.

Dylan retrieved one of the pillows on the edge of the bed. He placed it under her head. "Do you need anything?" he asked, gaining her attention.

Karma looked over at the tray of watered-down tea. "Something to drink."

"I'll get it," Jaxon insisted. He picked up the tray and brought it to the bed. He passed one to Dylan and took one for himself. She rolled her eyes and reached for one. "Nope, not yet. I have an idea, to

feed you a swallow at a time."

A new flutter of nerves accosted her. "What do you have planned now?"

Jaxon took a swallow of his tea, leaned forward with the mouthful and sealed his lips to hers. She opened and the tea flooded her mouth. Jaxon pulled back. "Like that?"

Karma wiped her mouth with the back of her hand. "Very interesting. Where did you learn that move?"

In a manner that was Jaxon, he replied with his typical casual attitude, "My older cousins told me how to do it."

“Oh.”

“My turn,” Dylan shouted. “I think I may like it.” He took a swallow of tea and mimicked Jaxon’s steps. When Karma opened her mouth to take it in, he squirted the sweetness with not a single drop spilling over. “I do like that trick.”

“I think we should do it again,” Jaxon said. A glimmer of naughtiness sparkled in his eye.

“Do not get me sticky!” she warned. “Again?” she added at the humorous looks on their faces.

“Damn! Spoilsport,” Jaxon accused.

"Yeah, I don't want to clean it," she warned.

"I'll clean you up. I think I can be really good at it," Jaxon argued.

The three of them played around with giving tea shots:. Dylan gave Karma a shot, and then Jaxon gave her a shot. After emptying the three glasses of tea, they lay together on Dylan's bed.

"Let's tuck you in," Jaxon suggested. He pulled the covers over them and settled down on her left side.

"Do I get a bedtime story?"

"Hmmm!" Jaxon stared off into space. "Dylan, do you know of

any?"

"Nope."

Jaxon absently toyed with the fingers of her left hand. "A bedtime story. Let me see. Once upon a time, two brothers found the perfect woman,"

"Trouble was," Dylan interrupted. "It was the same woman."

Jaxon looked at Dylan. "I got this." He shifted positions. "As I was saying, this one woman captured both their hearts. Instead of the brothers fighting it out for the right to have her, they devised a relationship based on mutual respect, love, and happiness for

each other as well as the girl."

Dylan took over the story. "When the time came to ask the girl to consider loving two men—"

"She hesitated for one second," Karma added.

"Her hesitation wasn't because she didn't love them, but as told by the townspeople, this involvement with two men wasn't natural. For days, she thought and prayed for a solution that would save her from hurting one or the other. She cried with the thought of her deceit."

"But deceit isn't love. Love is a bond, and if you allow it to grow, it can sustain a relationship including

three, not two people," Dylan followed.

"But how?" she asked.

Jaxon lay on his side to face her. He looked at Dylan. "We build a trust, a foundation only we can share to conquer all things that stand in our way."

Dylan reached out to his brother. He hugged him around the neck. Both of them pulled Karma into the sentimental moment. "We communicate and keep it open. No secrets, no selfish acts, and most of all, no lies."

Karma's eyes misted with tears of joy. Her heart swelled with

another deep-setting love. "I have to say one thing." She sniffled. Dylan and Jaxon chuckled at her. "I'm reserving the right to be a little selfish. You are two, I'm one." Her two so-called sentimental lovers laughed out loud at her declaration. They snuggled closer to her, arm, feet, and legs entwined together. Karma fell asleep immediately, dreaming of a happy ending to her little story.

Chapter Eight

The sensation of pins and needles in Dylan's hand woke him up. He flexed it, and a shot of pain tingled from his fingers to his wrist. He shifted his body to roll over but couldn't move. Looking down he saw Karma's head rested on his elbow, pinning his arm under her neck, and farther down his body, her left arm and leg were draped over his hip and legs. To make matters worse, Jaxon's arm and leg lay over her. He snorted at the naked limbs on him, no wonder! As gently as possible, he worked to

dislodge himself from the pile with little disturbance to Karma or Jaxon. Finally standing, he shook out his tingling arm and looked down at her. Pert, kissable lips puckered. He bent down, took advantage of the position, and softly kissed her lips and then her cheek.

"What's up?" Jaxon asked, rising from the bed.

"Nothing, my arm fell asleep. Had to get up anyway."

Jaxon looked around the room. "What time is it?"

Dylan looked at the clock. "Three o'clock."

"Why are you up?"

"Had to piss." Dylan headed toward the bathroom. He heard Jaxon get off the bed but continued on. When he entered the bedroom again, he found Jaxon looking down at Karma, watching her sleep. He stood beside him, and for a few quiet seconds, they watched her peaceful face. "What are you thinking?"

Jaxon turned to him. "Was our first night together as a threesome what you expected it to be?"

Dylan didn't answer. The feelings of love stirring inside his heart demanded acknowledgment, but

how could he put into words what he felt inside?

"What's on your mind?" Jaxon asked, breaking the silence in the room.

It was a simple question, definitely one that warranted an answer. Dylan tried to shake it off, ignore the nagging feelings in his heart, but he knew he had to face them and Jaxon once and for all.

"Do we need to talk?" Jaxon asked.

Dylan shook with dread and love at the prospect of a potential confrontation. He nodded. "Yes, I think we do. But not in here."

"Let's go to the dining room," Jaxon suggested. "I'm starving."

Jaxon bent down and gave Karma a kiss on the forehead. Dylan smoothed one onto her pouty lips as well. The two men left her to sleep in the comfort of the bed while they talked. Jaxon followed Dylan to the dining room and then sat at the bar. "Do you want a beer?" Dylan asked over his shoulder.

"Hell yeah."

They sat across from each other, drinking the beer in quiet. Dylan looked at Jaxon. "I've fallen head over heels in love with her."

Jaxon nodded slightly. "Me, too."

Dylan took a ragged breath. "Jaxon, you aren't usually one to be tied down by any woman. You fall in love with every woman you date, but in the end it grows cold, and you leave."

Jaxon looked at the bottle in his hand, he didn't bother denying the accusation. It was one based on fact. "But I feel different about Karma."

"How?" Dylan almost demanded.

"We've talked about this. I have feelings I've never felt before. Strong feelings. And I think having

you in this relationship will keep me grounded."

Dylan looked at his best friend and saw the love he'd seen many times but misinterpreted as a brotherly love. "Are you saying...?"

Jaxon waved his hands in frantic motions. "I admit to nothing more than wanting you and Karma in a relationship with me. I honestly believe the three of us can make it work. I see myself being all the wonderful things she needs in a husband, friend, and considering I can't father a child, I'd be a damn good uncle for you guys."

"How long can the three of us go

on like this? Eventually, she will want to get married and have children."

"I think that can be arranged." Jaxon winked and gave him a conspirator's smile.

Dylan's mind rolled with the possible alternatives. Each idea met with rejection, a simple shake of his head. "I don't see how."

Jaxon adjusted himself on the stool. "I still have some research to do, but the way I figure it, you will marry her, giving our children a name." Dylan kept quiet, but logically, it did make sense. "After you guys marry, the three of us will

have a private ceremony where we will fulfill vows of our own."

"Vows? For what?"

"We pledge our love, we promise to keep our vows within our own circle, we forsake all others, and we devote ourselves to this union."

Dylan thought on it. "What about places to live? Where do we all live?"

"When, and if, we commit forever, we will start here. Hell, I'm sure we can live comfortably and happily here, even if we have four children."

"Whose bed does she share?"
Dylan countered, thoroughly

investigating Jaxon's proposal.

"For now, we can give her a master suite, or a mistress's suite." He looked around the area. "I think we can even add on a guest suite for me. She can choose who she wants to stay with that night, or we can all sleep in your room or other."

"You have this all planned out, don't you?"

"Mostly. I admit I still have some issues I need to work out here and there, but for the most part, yes."

"What do we tell people in town?"

"We love one another, and that we are committed to Karma, and

each other, for the rest of our lives. Hell, if gays and lesbians can be open about their relationships and get married, then why can't we have a love triangle that hurts no one and only betters the three of us?"

"What do we tell the children?" Karma asked from the doorway.

Dylan jumped and spun around. He and Jaxon stood up and extended a hand for her to join them at the bar. "How long have you been there?" he asked.

Karma walked the short distance to them. When she stood before them, she took each hand offered

her. Jaxon bent and kissed her on one cheek, and then Dylan did the same to the other. "Since you two left me in bed." Her retort sounded irritated.

They looked at one another.

"I can't sleep without one of you in bed with me. I've gotten used to it lately."

She looked from one to the other. "Who's going to answer my question?"

Dylan looked at Jaxon. "Go ahead. You have all the answers."

Jaxon brought her hand to his lips. His thumb smoothed over the knuckles. "The truth. Just like our

relationship. We hold no secrets, we tell no lies, and we nurture them with all our hearts."

"Not to be the ugly voice of reason, but we are all professionals in this community. Our association could be viewed as improper. We could lose a lot of business."

Jaxon gave a curt nod. "First off, this isn't an association. Well, right now I'll buy that, but if we go that extra step, we will be a committed union. Second, I don't see this as readily accepted at first, but people will come around."

Karma's face flushed with anger. Dylan didn't rein her in to control

her impending outburst. Instead, he let her tirade loose on Jaxon.

"Jaxon, I've never heard of this arrangement working for more than a year or two at best. The children, my children, will have to attend school in this community. I don't want them ostracized for our agreement by small-minded critics."

"Our children," Jaxon corrected. "Whether or not I'm their biological father or not, I will be their godfather. Their safety and happiness means just as much to me as to you. I have no intention of standing idly by while they endure public humiliation."

"How can we avoid it?" Dylan asked softly. "Kids will be kids. They are unfortunately the victims of our choices."

"Honestly? We can't avoid it. But we love them, support them, believe in them, and act like the loving family we are going to be."

"This sounds so complicated," Karma cried. Heartbreak sounded in her words.

Jaxon took her in his arms. Dylan rubbed her back. "Sweetheart, don't cry. I think right now, we are jumping the gun a little bit here. This is our first night together. We still have issues we need to figure

out as a set."

Dylan stepped closer. "Karma, for what it's worth, I believe in Jaxon. He'd never foolishly put any of our futures at risk. His heart guides his decision, but his mind keeps him from going off half-informed and vulnerable."

Karma pulled herself out of Jaxon's embrace. She looked back at Dylan. "What should we do about this...set, as Jaxon called it?"

Dylan gathered Jaxon and her closer to him. "I say we give it a shot. I'm not shying away from hardship. We'll have each other to lean on, too."

Jaxon shook Dylan's hand. He brushed a kiss to Karma's lips. "One day at a time," Jaxon whispered.

Dylan brushed a kiss on her lips. "One heartbeat at a time."

Karma hugged the two of them to her. "One love, three hearts, growing and beating as one."

THE END

WWW.RONNAGAGE.WEBS.CC

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ronna Gage lives in Texas with her husband, son, dog and cat. When she isn't working on her next novel she is at the motocross track cheering on her son.

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