

## CHAPTER ONE

“Tessa!”

From the Big House come two males, the sun shining behind them so that I can’t see their faces, only their outlines. The bigger shape on the left is Wade. My tummy tightens at the sight of him. The shorter, stockier one is Connor. My girl bits quiver with excitement.

My boys.

My Cowboys.

I drop my bags where I stand and run up to them, arms wide. God I’ve missed them.

Connor picks me up, swinging me around, holding me tight against his broad chest, breathing deeply of my scent while Wade waits patiently for him to put me down.

I don’t bother waiting for Wade to hug me, because knowing him, I’d be waiting forever. Instead, I wrap my arms around his waist and hug. God. He’s so big and solid and he smells delicious. Like man soap, smoke and hay. His heart beats solidly behind his ribcage, unlike the bird-like pitter patter of *my* overly excited organ.

“Where you been?” Wade asks by way of a greeting. “It feels like forever.”

“I’ve been on hiatus. You know, taking some time to work and just *be*.”

He stares me down, like he’s waiting for a more thorough explanation for my long absence. When I don’t give it to him, he says, “We were starting to think we were going to have to find someone else to perform the ceremony.”

Grabbing his belt loops, I give a little tug. “I wouldn’t miss this for anything, you know that.”

“Yeah, well,” Connor nudges my leg with his. “You’ve been awfully quiet.”

“We get worried when you’re quiet.”

I laugh. God, as much as I love my solitary existence, it’s nice to be missed. To be worried about. I grin up at them, “No need.” Opening my arms wide, I say, “I’m here with plenty of time to spare. At your disposal, whatever you need. Last minute decorations, pre-wedding jitters counseling, sexual tension soothing, whatever it is, I’m your girl.”

The men grin at one another and I have this incredible feeling of love and happiness well up inside of me. “Plus, I’m legit now. I’ve got my license—”

“From somewhere certifiable, I hope.” Wade interrupts.

“Ten bucks. Online. *Marriage Commissioner For Dummies*. I’m sure it’s fine...”

“Tessa.” There’s a warning note in Wade’s voice which I love. Deep, dark and rumbly.

I elbow him in the ribs, “Of course it’s legit. Do you want to see it? It’s temporary, one day only. October 10th.”

“Eleventh.”

I step back and frown up at him. “Eleventh?” Pulling the official document out of my back pocket where I’d stuck it for just this purpose, I carefully unfold it. Wade snatches it from my hands and reads the document, a stern and stormy expression on his face.

“You’re a shit disturber, you know that?”

I flash him my toothy smile. “I never claimed otherwise.” Reaching up, I touch his rugged jaw, loving the rough texture of whiskers against my fingertips as I run a finger along a taut line of muscle. “You are tense, Mr. Messing.” I turn to Connor. “Any ideas about how we can get him to relax?”

Connor’s eyes light up and his dimple appears out of nowhere. He’s thinking dirty, randy thoughts as he takes my shoulders, and directs me right up against Wade’s broad chest. Then he grasps my hand and places it over Wade’s fly.

Oh my fucking God.

He’s hard.

And big.

I’d forgotten how big.

Like that, I start to pant because images of a naked Wade and his big, hard cock coming at me, while he has that serious kind of scowly frown, make me instantly wet.

Wade covers my hand with his and presses. Then he removes it from his package—frustrating man—and says over my shoulder. “I thought we’d agreed we’d abstain until after the wedding?”

I gasp. “Why would you do something like that?” Swiveling my head, I give Connor a questioning glance.

“It’s his idea.” Connor motions toward Wade with his chin. “He thinks it’ll make us extra horny.”

“How long has it been?”

“A month.”

“A month?!” I smack Wade on the chest. “Do you take some kind of warped pleasure in exerting self-sacrifice...no, self-deprecating...what’s the word?”

“It’s called creating anticipation.”

“It’s called, stupid,” Connor said.

“Instilling patience,” Wade added.

“Unnecessary torture,” Connor retorted.

“Restraint.”

“Ooo,” I interrupt their back and forth. “Now *restraint* is something I could get behind. What are we talking here? Hemp rope? Cuffs? Leather cords?”

Connor throws his head back and laughs. Wade doesn’t crack a smile but tiny lines radiate out from his eyes, telling me he found the comment amusing.

“This little deal between the two of you doesn’t extend to me, does it?” I twiddle my fingers between them. “I mean, I prefer you two together, but I’ll take you one at a time. Maybe the other could watch...”

A look passes between my cowboys, one I can’t quite place. Secretive, thoughtful. Something.

“What?” I ask.

Wade gives his head a little half-shake. Fuck, I know that movement. It’s a trait that he and his cousin, Grayson Holt, share. These big, fucking stoic men who think they can control everything and everyone around them.

Ha!

I grab the front of Wade’s shirt and tug him—or try to—toward me. He doesn’t move an inch. Big bastard. “Don’t tell me you’re putting play time for the three of us on hold too.”

“We’ve got a lot to do.”

I angle my head the other way. “Connor? You can’t possibly be in agreement with this.”

“Well...” his gaze meets Wade’s above my head.

“Oh, hell no.” Letting go of Wade’s shirt, I thread my arm through Connors and pull him close. His beefy body moves willingly toward me. “You two can play whatever abstinence game you want, you see

each other every day. I get it. But me?” I gaze up at Connor. Then shift to look way up at Wade. His stern features take my breath away. “I have limited time with my cowboys and I’ve been abstaining already.”

Wade’s features are set—shit, I know what that means—and then he shoots another silent, meaningful look at Connor. “It’s the way it’s got to be, Tess.”

“Says you.”

“Yep. Says me.”

Fuck. When Wade makes his mind up about something, there’s no budging him. Well, that’s not quite true. I’ve managed to budge him in the past. It’s called temptation. And if he thinks that I’m going to forgo some hot cowboy hanky panky just because he’s decided that’s the way it’s got to be—well—he’s mistaken.

Focusing on Connor, I take hold of his open collar and go up on tiptoes, planting my lips on his, kissing him in a way that I hope tells him how much I’ve missed him. And, if Wade has to watch, so be it.

I hope he likes it.

“Jesus,” Connor whispers against my mouth, filling his fists with my hair and pulling me tight.

“God, I’ve missed these lips.”

Oh, so have I. Connor’s mouth is playful and juicy and delicious. I lose myself in the kiss, opening my mouth willingly to his tongue, almost forgetting for a second that Wade is standing a foot away.

Almost.

Except he uses those big, strong hands of his to grasp my waist and bodily remove me from Connor’s embrace. I growl up at him and I swear a look of amusement flashes before he adopts a scowl.

“You never change.”

“Nope.” Hands on hips, I say, “That’s why you love me.”

Again with the weird trace of something flashing over his features. “I do love you, Tess. That’s why—”

“He feels like he has to teach you the same lesson, over and fucking over again,” Connor jokes as he goes to retrieve my bags.

Throwing my arms up in exasperation, I say, “What? The lesson about patience? I’m as patient as they come.” This makes Connor chuckle as he carries my bags closer. “I don’t need another lesson.”

I amble over to Wade, playing with the buttons on his shirt, slipping my fingers in between the spaces so I can touch his warm skin. I’m gratified by his sudden intake of breath. “What I need is for you to strip me…” I raise my eyes. “Tie me down…” I’m using the huskiest voice I can muster. “And fuck me until the cows come home.”

Wade leans down, right beside my ear. “Tess, honey, I am going to fuck you so hard you won’t know what hit you. But you have to wait for it. You’re going to be so ready, you’ll want to come during the ceremony. But we won’t let you. Not until after. Understand?”

I turn my face so Wade’s lips are right there. “Nope, I don’t.”

Wade caresses my cheek and I tilt my face up to his touch, closing my eyes and making a sound that is as close to purring as I’m able.

“You will,” he whispers.

I turn into his hand, opening my mouth for his thumb. Whether he means to or not, it slides inside and I suck, for only a second, before biting.

He grabs my jaw. A challenging look in his stormy, sexy eyes.

“Watch yourself.”

I release his thumb and say, “Ooo...I would if you installed a few more mirrors. That sounds like fun.”

This time the man actually lifts his head and laughs. “I knew it, Con. She thinks she can tempt us.”

“Thinks?” I protest. “I *know* I can tempt you.”

“You can try.”

Damn. I push against his solid chest in frustration because Wade is as immovable as a two tonne boulder. Connor on the other hand...

“Don’t even think it Tessa,” Wade says as I switch my focus to the other man. “He’s not going to cave to your feminine wiles either.”

“Con?” I waggle my brows at him, suggestively. “You must be dying. A month? C’mon. That’s a lot of build up.”

Connor’s nostrils flare, partly from amusement, but partly because he’s as randy as fucking hell. The man is a stallion, bred to fuck.

Often.

Abstinence and Connor O’Reilly do *not* go together.

But, there’s no point belaboring the point right now. I’ve got plenty of time to break them down. It’s not hard. They’ve got way too much testosterone and unspent sexual desire coursing through their systems to resist.

I turn and start toward the Big House, swinging my hips, my body’s way of saying, *Come on boys, you know you want me.*

“I need a shower. Anyone want to join me?” I call over my shoulder.

“Jesus,” Connor mutters as he follows with my bags.

“This is going to be fun,” Wade adds, as he scoops me up and throws me over his shoulder, his hand clutching my ass, in a deliciously frustrating way. “There’s only one thing that’ll tempt me to give into you.”

“What’s that?” I ask, out of breath from being tossed around like a hay bale.

“You’ll find out soon enough.”

“Errr.” I pound unsuccessfully on his solid back. “You are the most infuriating man I’ve ever met.”

He caresses my backside. “Which is why you love me.”

The man speaks the truth, dammit. And, worse, he knows it.