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WHAT THE HELL? This was twice in the span of half an hour that Colton Cross had a ginormous erection. Maybe he was just *always* erect. Maybe he had the opposite complaint to erectile dysfunction. Erectile hyper function. Was that a thing?

She'd have to look it up later.

Whatever it was, Colton did not seem in the least bit embarrassed. Oh, no. He strode right on by, leading with his Willy Nelson, like he was a stud on the lookout for a ripe filly.

What an ass.

He sat on the edge of the bed and flopped down on to his back, spread-eagle, his towel coming loose, revealing his hip bone.

Ash stared. She couldn't help it. She may have even drooled a little.

She gave him a dirty look and said, "Flip over," in the most officious voice she could muster.

With a groan, Colton rolled on to his stomach, which wasn't much better because in the process of rolling, his towel got snagged—likely on his woody—and now she had a full-on view of his heinie.

His muscular, taut, drool-worthy heinie.

Ash took a slow breath in through her nose and gently let the air out through her mouth. He may be all aroused for no apparent reason, but that didn't mean she couldn't be professional about all of this. No matter how screwed up "all of this" was.

She could handle it. Really, she could.

"Is there anywhere you'd like me to focus?" Ash asked as she crawled up onto the bed beside him, the maneuver feeling not as professional as she would have liked because her eyes were glued to his ass.

"Pretty much everywhere. Don't know if you've ever tried to hang on to a bucking animal, but it jars *everything* up pretty good." He moved his head back and forth. "Neck muscles always get sore, too. Kind of like whiplash."

“Oh. Okay.” She moved up closer and then, very tentatively, swung one leg over him so that she was straddling his waist.

She sat perched above him when she realized the coconut oil was way over on the little shelf beside the bed. Leaning across the expanse of muscles that made up Colton’s back, Ash reached for the tub, her bare tummy coming in contact with his bare hand, sending instant goose bumps racing down the length of her arms.

“You okay?” he mumbled into the pillow when she finally managed to right herself again.

“Yep. Fine.” Except she wasn’t, the proof of which was her too-high voice.

One more calming breath was needed as she dribbled warm oil on to Colton’s back.

Why did he have to choose coconut oil?

She *loved* the smell of coconut. It reminded her of a holiday fling she’d had—her one and only holiday fling. It was during spring break a few years ago. A beach resort. His name was Alejandro and he was studying at Berkley, an exchange student from Spain. It’s not that Ash hadn’t dated. She’d dated plenty—if a nine-month relationship counted as dating—but Alejandro was everything she dreamed of in a man. Romantic, intelligent, sexy as sin. On many a cold night, she relived those moonlit walks along the beach, the long, slow kisses, the sensual way he spread coconut-scented lotion on her body. How she returned the favor. The way that sensual touch led to delicious sex in an open-air hut with the wind blowing in off the ocean.

Ahh.

Colton moaned, then muttered, “You’re really good.”

“Oh. Um. Thanks.” She should not be thinking sex-laden thoughts while massaging a naked man in his trailer.

She took one more deep breath to steady herself, except the warm scent of coconut filled her senses, and she sighed, her clit throbbing so badly she wanted nothing more than to lower herself on to Colton’s ass and rock like a cat in heat.

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CHRIST. WHO WOULD have guessed the plainest of the Ozark girls would be so good at this?

Colton immediately chided himself for such an unkind thought. Ashley might be the least pretty of all her sisters, but she certainly wasn’t plain. In fact, now that he thought about it—and lying beneath her while she worked miracles with his muscles gave him ample time to think about her—he had to admit that she had gorgeous legs. They were long in relation to the rest of her. Shapely,

too. She might not have big breasts, but they were the right size for her frame, and Colton was willing to bet they had cute, little pink nipples that stood high and erect, even when she was standing upright.

Her hands were strong and sensual as they worked the knots out of his shoulders and upper back, pressing on the sore spots in a painfully good way and kneading the stiff muscles into relaxation.

“Oh, right there,” he groaned.

Her hands felt so damn good, particularly when she ran her thumbs along the muscles that lined his spine.

“Harder,” he said into the pillow.

“Huh?”

“Can you go harder?”

“Um. Sure.”

There. That was even better. She hit some tender spots in his lower back, making him grunt.

“You sure that’s not too hard?”

“No. It’s perfect.”

“Okay.”

She continued to work those muscles, one side and then the other, and Colton felt as if he’d died and gone to heaven.

“I don’t get it,” she said, breaking the silence.

“Don’t get what?” he eventually replied.

“Why you feel the need to ride a bull. A bucking one at that.”

“Dunno. Runs in the family, I guess.” Even when he was a little kid and had watched his older brothers ride, all he’d felt was excitement and an incredible amount of impatience for the day he’d be allowed to ride.

“But you’re so sore and stiff right now. It can’t be good for you.”

“Maybe, but you don’t feel it when you’re doing it.”

“Really? What do you feel?”

Colton was going to say something trite, just to get her to stop talking so he could enjoy the massage in silence. But he paused and thought about the question for a second. “It’s kind of hard to explain.”

“Is it the thrill? The danger? The rush?”

“Yeah, it is those things, but...” Colton thought about it for another few seconds. “It’s more like—I don’t know, maybe this sounds stupid, but—for those eight seconds, I’m there. I mean, I can’t think about anything else. I’m completely focused on what I’m doing and where I am and how it feels. Those eight seconds are a lifetime. And it’s—I just like being in that space of complete concentration. With nothing to distract me. Not what’s gonna happen tomorrow. Not the things I regret about yesterday. It’s just me and that damn bull for eight, very long seconds.”

He shifted beneath her, thinking about what he’d just said. It was the truth. Maybe the truest thing he’d ever told anyone.

It was a few minutes later that he realized Ashley’s hands had stopped moving.

He lifted his head and said over his shoulder. “Sorry. I don’t mean to sound like I’m talking out of my ass.”

“No. Not at all.” She cleared her throat. “It’s just weird.”

“If you’ve never done it, I guess it would sound weird.”

“No. I mean, what you just described? That’s exactly how I feel behind my camera. Time is different and I see the world differently. Like how it’s supposed to be. I don’t think, I just see and do and capture the moments that we forget because we’re too busy worrying about other stuff.”

He lifted his head and attempted to turn around. “So, you know what I’m talking about?”

“I guess I do.”

Her hands started moving again, and he flopped back down as her thumbs began working the base of his spine.

“Is it sore here?”

“Yep.”

“You’re really tight.”

She dribbled a bit more oil on to his skin and worked that area for a while before moving lower, digging her strong fingers into his hips and using the base of her palms to work the knots in his ass.

“Damn, girl. You could do this professionally. You’re that good.”

“Don’t get too used to it, cowboy.” She unexpectedly slapped his ass. “This is a one-time deal.”

“You sure you don’t need a boyfriend for a little longer? I’m around for a few more weeks. I promise I’ll make it worth your while.”

“Oh? And how, pray tell, would you make it worth my while?” There was a playful tone in her voice that was unfamiliar.

It was that playfulness that prompted Colt to roll over on to his back. He was gentlemanly enough to make sure the little towel covered things—sort of. “All manner of ways.”

His hands brushed her bare thighs where she knelt above him. Tentative. Questioning.

For a split second, there was passion in her face. He was certain of it because her cheeks were flushed, her eyes were bright and the right side of her mouth turned up with sexy promise. Plus, her gaze raked his body in a way that told him she liked what she saw.

Then her eyes met his, and in a flash, it was all gone.

She blinked. Her brows drew together. Then she was scrambling to get off of him, as if she might catch some nasty plague if she stayed there any longer.

Without a word, she scurried to the little bathroom, and he heard the water running before she returned a few minutes later, drying her hands on the front of her shorts because he’d taken the only towel available.

She shifted in the doorway, as skittish as a new foal. “Look, Colton. I know we’re just messing around. And, I know you were just kidding right then.” She pointed to him—more specifically at his barely covered erection. “But, I think we need to keep this on the up-and-up.”

He snorted.

“What?”

“In what world is pretending to have a boyfriend in any way ‘on the up-and-up’?”

Her face clouded over, and she was once again the snippety girl from the bar. “I’m just saying, given the circumstances, we should create some clear boundaries about all of this. We don’t need anyone to get hurt.”

Colton sat up, making sure the towel stayed put. “Who, exactly, is going to get hurt? You?”

Her mouth hung open in shock as she pointed at herself and gasped with great exaggeration. “Me? Oh no. *I’m* not going to get hurt. Uh-uh.”

Colt pushed himself to his feet, securing the towel low on his hips. Then he took two strides, which brought him right up in front of her. “So, you think *I’m* the one who is going to get hurt if we take this fake relationship a little further than sloppy kisses?”

“I don’t know,” she sputtered. “Maybe.”

“Really.” He put a hand on the wall above her head and leaned close, just like he’d done the night before. “You think if we have sex, I’ll find you so irresistible I won’t be able to let you go, is that it?”

She squinted up at him. “Stranger things have happened.”

He reached for her jaw, tracing the line with the back of his index finger. “You know what I think?”

Ashley didn’t say a word. She simply swallowed hard as she shook her head.

“I think you’re worried about what will happen if you get a taste of me. In fact—” he cupped her chin and ran his thumb across her lower lip “—I think you’re already worried.”

Her breath came fast, whether it was from anger or arousal or a combination of both, it was hard to tell.

“You’ve got some ego,” she panted.

“Nope. It’s not ego.”

“Then what is it?”

He shifted his gaze from her lips to her eyes. “It’s the truth.” Then he leaned down and kissed her. Nice and hard.

Best part was, she kissed him right back.

\*

WHY, WHY, WHY, why, why?

Why had she let Colton kiss her in the trailer? Why?

And worse...why had she kissed him back?

Oh, she knew why. It was a moment of weakness. Colton had lulled her with his incredibly hot body and then seduced her with his thoughtful explanation about why he rides bulls.

But it wasn’t real. It was a trick, a trap, a sham.

She should never have fallen for it.

“Everything okay?” Beth asked as Ashley wiped the already clean bar top for the tenth time.

“Dandy,” Ash said through clenched teeth. “Everything is just dandy.”

Beth placed a comforting hand on her shoulder. “Trouble in paradise?” She smirked.

Ashley shook her head, tightening the apron strings around her waist. After leaving Colton’s trailer—and by leaving, she meant running out of there like the place was on fire—Ashley had

come straight to the Prospectors Saloon. She'd made herself some fries and gravy, which were still sitting in the kitchen getting cold because her stomach was in knots over what had just happened.

And what didn't happen.

Even now, there were mutinous parts of her body that not only *wished* something had happened while Colton lay naked beneath her, they wouldn't stop thinking about the possibility that it might *still* happen, if only Ashley would let it.

Stupid bits.

Her body was so consumed by thoughts of Colton, the idea of eating was not in the cards, even though she was starving.

*For sex*, some random part of her shouted.

*Yes, some good, old-fashioned, kinky sex*, some other part called.

*Hay loft sex*, shouted another

*Trailer sex!* all the parts cried out in unison.

"Shut up," she muttered.

"What's that?"

"Nothing. Where's Brandi?" She glanced around. "More importantly—" Ash indicated the nearly empty bar with a sweep of her hand "—where are all the customers?"

"There's a talent show going on at the stage down at the fairgrounds. Plus, the beer garden is open until eight. People should start trickling in soon."

"And Brandi?"

"She's probably singing at the talent show."

"Right."

"Where's Jasmine?"

"My guess is she's down there, too. She'll be by later."

"You having a good visit?"

"Sure." As soon as the word came out of Ash's mouth, she could hear the false tone.

The way Beth narrowed her gaze meant she heard it, too. Damn, it would have been nice to have a brother or two.

"What's going on?"

Ash rolled her eyes. "Nothing."

"Ash?"

“Ugh. Okay. I love Jasmine, you know I do, but sometimes...”

“Sometimes it’s hard to compete?”

“Yeah.”

“Hence, the hot new boyfriend.”

Ashley felt her face go red. She tugged at one of the fringes of her shorts. “Maybe.”

Slinging her arm over her shoulder, Beth hugged Ash to her side. “Hey, don’t worry. I get it. Your secret’s safe with me.” She squeezed. “But a word of warning.” With an upward tilt of her chin, Beth indicated something on the far side of the room.

Ash turned to see what, or rather *who*, Beth was referring to.

Colton stood in the doorway, his hat pushed back and—thankfully—quite a few more articles of clothing covered his muscular physique.

*Too bad*, whispered her naughty bits.

“The hot ones are always hardest to get over, even if it is all for show.”

“No need to worry.”

“You sure?”

“Mmm-hmm.”

It wasn’t a lie. Not really. Ashley didn’t like Colton. No matter that he had all these freakishly developed muscles across his chest and back, or that he had the nicest ass she’d ever seen, or that he had the ability to say something that didn’t sound completely macho or sexist. Unfortunately, as he ambled across the room towards her, she realized that no matter what she thought of him *logically*, the rest of her was irrational and could only think of one thing.

Jumping him.

Stripping him.

Having her wicked way with him.