

A man and a woman are shown from the chest up, wearing black leather motorcycle jackets. The man is on the left, holding a vintage-style microphone. The woman is on the right, with her hand near her blonde, wavy hair. They are both looking towards the camera. The background is dark and textured.

MAKE
ME
STAY

M.E. GORDON

We had everything together. How could she leave all that behind...leave me?

I ran through the parking garage, after parking my truck in the first spot I saw. It might have been a handicapped spot. I wasn't really sure and, right then, I didn't give a fuck. I bought a ticket so I could get back to the gates. I was rounding the corner when I heard them announce the flight that I knew Kitty was getting on.

I got to the gate, scanning all over but it was nearly empty, the sign above the doorway that lead to the plane was flashing last call. I went to make my way down to the plane, but the ticket lady stopped me. When I looked down the walkway, there at the bottom was Caroline. The large woman still blocking my path, I called to her, "Caroline!"

"Sir, you can't go down there without a proper ticket," the pudgy woman said, taking another step forward to block me.

"I need to get down there!" I said frantically.

"I'm sorry but, no ticket, no plane."

What a bitch.

"Caroline!" I yelled, again.

Kitty stood there, a slight hesitation in her body that I had come to know so well, staring at me. I could have sworn she was going to run back, run to me—that is, until she lifted her chin, fixed the bag on her shoulder, and walked away, taking with her what was left of my heart.

Caroline:

When someone says “Make me stay” in the most dramatic, lovesick kind of way, most people think it sounds desperate, weak, or needy. I, for one, think it sounds like all of the above! I’m not stupid, and I sure as heck am not desperate. In fact, I’m the complete opposite of weak. I’ve lived my life with a steel trap around my heart, and I don’t need anyone—especially a man. So how in the hell did a wannabe rock star get me to say those three words...make me stay?

Kane:

One-woman man? You’ve got to be joking. I was a rock god...in a bar...in a small town...eh, details. I was getting women like I was their gift from God. I was going to make it big. My band and I were going to bust out of Small Town, USA, and we were going to knock the panties off every woman in sight. So, when I caught some sexy groupie touching my baby...my beautiful guitar, did I want to test those waters? Hell, yes! But did I want to be a one-woman man? Hell, no! But after that, all I knew was that I wanted to make her stay.

KUDOS for *Make Me Stay*

In *Make Me Stay* by ME Gordon, Caroline “Kitty” James is determined not to commit to sexy Kane Lawson, lead singer of the band, One Night Stand. Kane is equally determined to make Kitty his, despite the issues they both face. He woos and wins her, or so he thinks. But when Kitty walks away and breaks Kane’s heart, it may be more than they can overcome. With a solid story from both points of view, a strong plot, and lots of steamy sex scenes, this is my kind of book. ~ *Taylor Jones, Reviewer*

Make Me Stay by ME Gordon is a steamy romance told from both the heroine and the hero’s POV in first person. At first, I wasn’t sure it would work, but it did, quite well. Our heroine, Kitty James brings a lot of baggage when she reunites with her father after a four-year estrangement. And it’s not physical baggage but mental. Her mother’s death has left Kitty unable to commit to relationships. She also has a dream job in New York after her summer in Nowheresville, Maryland, is over. So what if she has to leave the only guy she has ever loved behind when she goes? Relationships never work out anyway, right? *Make Me Stay* is a fun, heart-breaking and heart-warming story of love, loss, and forgiveness. Add in the hot love scenes, and you have a story you will want to read again and again. ~ *Regan Murphy, Reviewer*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

What can I say? The men of One Night Stand came into my life and stole my heart, each of them with their own stories, their own demons.

You see it all started one night when I was driving down my hometown's historic downtown main street. There's this bar at the end, high above the street, and as I drove by I could see people inside, laughing and listening to music. I wondered what it might be like to go to that bar every week and see the same band play. What kind of music would they be playing? Would they be gentleman, would they be wild and sexy? What would they look like? That night I came home and wrote the first five chapters of *Make Me Stay*.

Make Me Stay was an amazing book to write, and it sure wouldn't be as great as it is now without the help of these awesome people: To Faith, my editor, thank you for not killing me for over using the word "toward." I'm still learning so much from you, and I can't wait to keep learning and working with you. To Lauri, thank you for seeing something in me and getting *Make Me Stay* out there for everyone to read. To Melissa, you are beyond talented. You've taken my ideas and made them not only into amazing book covers but beautiful artwork.

To this next group, I hope you were telling me the truth when you said you loved this book: Dora, Susan, and Jessica, thank you for your support.

A special thank you goes out to my friend April. You were the first person to read *Make Me Stay*, and I was a little terrified I might scare you away so early in our friendship, but I think it just did the opposite. Thank you for encouraging me and helping me.

To my development team person, Meaghan. Thank you for listening to me rant on and on about the people talking in my head and for helping me make sense of it all.

To my children, thank you for being patient with me. I love all four of you equally, with all my heart.

To my husband, thank you for being so supportive and for getting up every morning and working so hard so that I can stay home with our babies and write sexy books about other men. I love you more than you could ever imagine.

It is my hope that everyone who reads this book falls in love with the men of One Night Stand as much as I have.

MAKE
ME
STAY

M E GORDON

A Black Opal Books Publication



GENRE: STEAMY ROMANCE/CONTEMPORARY ROMANCE/CHICK LIT

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MAKE ME STAY

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DEDICATION

*To the Upper Deck Bar in
Historic Downtown Mount Airy.
Without you there would be no
One Night Stand*

CHAPTER 1

Caroline

For four years I had managed to keep my distance. I kept myself busy so I wouldn't have to think, or remember. Now I stood in front of the old building. My bags weighed me down, and so I dropped them. Spring was present, the trees all had early buds on them, flowers were poking up through the winter mulch, but there was still a slight chill to the air.

I stood before the large wooden doors, not sure if I really wanted to go through them. This building was my father's way of coping. He bought the place in the middle of his mid-life crisis. He packed up my childhood home—without asking me, I might add—and moved from our beautiful two-story house in our relaxed neighborhood and charming little town that was right outside of New York City. And this, was where he picked... Nowheresville, Maryland.

Okay, it wasn't "nowhere," it was forty-five minutes to Baltimore and an hour to DC but, to me, it was a foreign country. I knew nothing about this place. Glancing from side to side, I took in the surroundings. Surprise, surprise, nothing was to my left and nothing was to my right. It was a beautiful day and I was standing in the middle of an empty main street, one of the two streets that even existed.

If someone was looking for small town USA, it was right here. Although it was quaint, with about a mile or two of shops and eateries lining either side of the street, it was empty, and old, really old. I expected people to be walking up and down the street, holding hands, walking babies in over-dramatic carriages, a kid or two on the playground across the street in the park. My father had totally lied to me.

It was a Sunday afternoon and there wasn't a soul in sight. Craning my neck I took a deep breath and took in the tall three stories of the building. It was an end unit, in a row of attached buildings. An alley way, large enough for maybe a large SUV to fit through, separated the last building, a body shop that looked a little too rundown to actually be functioning.

The sign that hung in the middle of the ground-floor windows was lit up. I shook my head. He could have named it anything in world and all he could come up with was BJ's? My father named a bar, BJ's. It was the letters of his name, Benjamin James, but come on, Dad. BJ's? Really? It didn't help that there was another glowing, flashing sign on the other window that said *BJ's you'll never go home disappointed*. I should have run. I hadn't seen my father in four years, what's one more? I still can't believe that I agreed to work here until I could find a job. What was I thinking?

I was in the middle of planning my escape and excuse, when one of the large doors opened.

My father practically knocked me over in an embrace. "Caroline! You're here!"

There was something about being held tightly by your dad that seemed to take all your cares away. Holding my upper arms, he took a step back to admire me, and I got my first look at my father in the flesh. We had skyped and talked on the phone, but other than that, nothing. He was tall, with broad shoulders, surprisingly fit, his hair more salt than pepper. A few more lines appeared at the corners of his green eyes, but overall he looked good. I was relieved. I had this image of him looking worn and run down, beer gut, and un-

clean, but he actually appeared to be the complete opposite. His spirit was bright, and he looked happy.

If there was one thing I knew about my father, it was that he did whatever he could to make others happy. He worked his butt off when I was a kid, commuting to the city for a job that paid extremely well, but left him in a day in, day out, state of mind. He took the overtime that was offered and sometimes worked late at night, so my mother and I could have everything we ever needed.

Toward the end of my high school career, I could see my mother and father wearing down. He had moved all the way to the top of his company, but he hated it. My parents had more money than they knew what to do with, yet they were both miserable. So when I got a call, six months after my mother died, that my father had sold the house and moved here, I wasn't too surprised. That doesn't mean I agree with it. I mean, the man could have moved anywhere, the tropics, Europe, a log cabin hidden away. No, not my father. He decided to put roots down in Nowheresville.

“So, what do you think? Is it how you remember it?”

Remember it? What was my father talking about? He must have been getting drunk on his own liquor.

“Dad, I've never been here before, what are you talking about?”

Scratching his head he scrunched his face. “You probably don't remember. You were pretty young.”

I nodded.

“Do you remember Uncle Brian at all?” he asked.

The name sounded familiar.

“Well, he's not really your uncle, he's my cousin. We came here a lot when you were little, probably until you were four, maybe five, I can't remember. Anyway, this is where they live. Don't you remember playing with his son JJ?”

I took a moment to search for anything I could on this JJ. A picture, in an old photograph binder we had, came to mind. I could see me sitting on a beach—no, not a beach, a

lake. There was a little boy sitting next to me with his arm around my shoulder.

“I think I remember,” I said, still trying to recall him.

“It’s fine. You’ll meet him tonight. In the meantime, I’m sure we have a picture of you two somewhere around. Your mother use to take them all the time—” My father immediately stopped talking. Still standing before me, he seemed to be miles away in a memory. Shaking his head a moment later, he smiled down me.

I felt like I should have said something about her, comforted him, but I didn’t, because I didn’t talk about it, not to him, not to anyone.

“So, what do you think?” he asked again, showing off the brick building.

Nodding and smiling at him, I said the first thing that came to mind, pointing to the glowing sign in the window. “I guess I’ll never leave disappointed.” His booming laugh took me by surprise.

“Oh, Caroline, I’m so happy you’re here. You’re not going to want to leave.”

I huffed on the inside. I might have agreed to this for the summer, but I was moving on after that. College degree in hand, I was out of here and back to New York as soon as the summer was up and a job was in line. I needed the city. I needed the noise, people walking down the street, tall buildings. Hell, I even missed the rats in the subway. There was no way I was staying there any longer than I had too.

CHAPTER 2

Kane

Why did the mornings have to come so fast? I stretched my stiffened arms over my head and hit bare flesh. Tilting my head I saw that I'd hit, a long, slinky leg. I watched as it moved under the covers. Facing the ceiling again, a wolfish grin spread across my face. I didn't know who it was, or what happened last night, but that was just how I liked it.

Soft, warm fingers ran up the inside of my leg and suddenly, I was more than awake. A soft giggle came from under the covers as I sprung even more to life. Resting my hands behind my head, I lay back and enjoyed my morning entertainment.

Tossing the covers off us both, the lucky winner from last night was anxiously licking her chops to get a piece of me—again. I've never had a problem with women. They just flocked to me, I didn't even have to try, really. I was living out every fantasy that I had ever imagined for myself. I spent my days working in construction—which helped with keeping in shape—then at nights, I was free to explore more intimate and sometimes, non-intimate, fantasies.

“Oh, yeah, Sarah that's good, keep going,” I called breathily to her.

“My name’s Ashley,” she said through a full mouth.

“Oh, right, Ashley.”

Releasing me she sat up in bed.

Damn it!

“You don’t remember my name? What about last night, you said—”

I cut her off before she could finish. “Listen, Ashley, I don’t remember anything I said last night, but what I do remember is you doing that amazing thing with your tongue.” I gestured to myself, all the while flashing a naughty grin.

She was completely naked. Her small chest was perky and asking for it. Black hair spilled down around her face, making her hazel eyes pop in color. *Damn, I did good last night.*

“But you said—”

Sitting up, I held a finger over her lips. My current situation was begging for her to shut up and finish what she started, so I could “finish” and kick her the hell out. She should know the deal. I had a reputation to uphold, and no woman was going to attach herself to me, except to say that they had an amazing one night stand. Maybe I had a couple girls on rotation, but not this one. This one clearly wanted “more,” and I didn’t do more. The girls who were frequent visitors knew the rules—no snuggling, no cuddling, and definitely no relationships.

I almost had her reigned back in—my lips were presently making their way down her neck, my hand was cupping her perky breast, when out of nowhere my door flew open.

“Kane, come on. We got to get heading out, we need to practice before tonight, it’s already three.”

Jumping out of bed Ashley, or so she called herself, grabbed the covers and wrapped herself up. “Oh my God! Can’t you knock?” she yelled across the room at an unfazed JJ.

He gave her the once over, then turned back to me. “Nice one, dude. She looks good in the daylight too, might have to add her to the rotation.”

He wiggled his eye brows, and we started laughing. I watched as Ashley's face turned all red. Holding the cover tighter to herself, she widened her eyes at me, begging me to kick JJ out, but that wasn't going to happen.

"Well, you want to be added on?" I asked.

Dropping to the floor, she grabbed her clothes and huffed into the bathroom behind her.

"I guess that's a no. Better luck next time, bro," JJ said. "Can you be ready to leave in thirty?" he asked, fixing his spiked up hair in the mirror that was hanging on the wall near the door.

"Yeah, I'll meet you downstairs."

The bathroom door swung open, and Ashley stormed out fully dressed. I on the other hand was still sitting in bed, naked with no covers.

She paused at the end of my bed. "I can't believe I'm doing this, but, here." She tossed me a piece of paper and strutted to the door.

JJ and I both watched as her ass swayed past us and down the hall.

"You are one lucky bastard," JJ called over his shoulder as followed her down the hall.

Unfolding the piece of paper, I found her name, number, and a little parting gift. She had kissed the paper and wrote, *Add me on for Tuesday nights*. Shaking my head, I crumpled the paper and tossed it in the wastebasket across the room.

I grabbed some clean clothes from my dresser and headed for the shower. As I waited for the water to heat up I checked myself out in the mirror. My hair was wild with curls and unruly from the previous night's escapades. The hairs on my face needed taking care of and as I lifted my head I noticed little sparkles as the light bounced off them. I'd do my best to get rid of them but they'd just be back tomorrow morning.

CHAPTER 3

Caroline

My first thought was, this place looked awesome. It was not at all what I had expected from the outside. My dad took my bags from me and placed them near one of the many tables.

“Pretty nice huh?” he asked.

There was a bar that traveled along the side and, where it ended, was an arched doorway that looked like it led to pool tables. In the very back was a decent sized stage, littered with drums, guitars, basses, and a key board.

It was your typical bar, but decorated really nicely. My father must have hired someone. There was no way he did this all on his own.

I nodded. “Wow, Dad, I’m impressed.”

Smiling in triumph, he took another appreciative look around. “It’s not too bad. I got it for practically nothing. Luckily, it came fully staffed. Kara, who you’ll meet later, is a godsend. This was all her idea. I just gave her the money to get it done.”

Kara? My father had never mentioned her before. Then again, our conversations usually didn’t go into too much detail. *Is he dating her? Are they in love? I’m not sure I can handle that.* It had been close to five years since—had he

moved on? *He's a good man. He should be happy, and if this Kara makes him happy, then I'm going to have to like her, no questions.*

Just then, the back door, which led to a hallway, opened. It slammed loudly against the wall. The bang of the door hitting, made me jump. "B, can you come give me a hand?" a squeaky female voice called from behind two large boxes.

My father smiled down at me. "I guess you can meet her now."

The female voice dropped the boxes on the ground and brushed her hair out of her face. *Okay, I'm going to have to have a talk with my father.*

Kara was young, or she had an amazing plastic surgeon. She was a petite blonde, who didn't look a day over eighteen. *Great, no wonder my father is happy. He turned into a sugar daddy.*

She had on a cropped top that barely covered her boobs, and her jean shorts looked like she had swiped them from a cheese country music video. Flipping her head down, she grabbed all her hair and tied it up in a big floppy bun on the top of her head. A few loose, blonde strands fell around her face perfectly. *Yup, I'm going to have a talk with my father.*

"Kara, this is Caroline, my daughter."

I tried to smile politely, but I had the most disturbing image in my head.

Kara smiled. "Hey, it's nice to finally meet you. B won't stop talking about you, like ever," she said, reaching over the boxes to shake my hand.

"So, are you guys..." *Great, I'm too embarrassed to even say it.*

She ripped her hand from mine, shook them both at her sides, and ran in place while shaking her head back and forth. "Ew, you think? That I'm? With?"

I had clearly made a huge mistake.

Kara looked over at my father, clearly confused. "B, what the hell? Why does your daughter think I'm dating you?"

My father turned all sorts of red. “Caroline Ann! I am not involved with her.”

Yeah, big mistake. “I’m sorry, I just thought that—”

“Well, you thought wrong, honey. I like him, but not like that,” Kara said, laughing.

My father grimaced. “Well, now that we have that all taken care of, I’ll give a proper introduction. This is Kara, the manager. She started as soon as I bought the place and had some great ideas, because I was too stuck in the eighties, like this place used to be. Kara sold me on remodeling and things have been non-stop-busy since the day we re-opened.”

Clearly, this girl had some real talent with decorating. Why she was working at a bar was beyond me.

She seemed to squirm a little at his praise. “Well, it wasn’t all me—ah, who are we trying to kid? It was all me. This place was a pig pen before I came along,” she said, admiring her handy work.

“I’m so sorry. I kind of jumped to conclusions,” I said apologetically.

“Its fine. You weren’t the first person to think that. Your dad and I have been hot gossip since I started working here.”

There was another reason to make sure summer ended with me leaving—small town gossip.

Kara grinned at me. “It was great to finally meet you, but I have to get back to it. It’s going to get crazy in here tonight.”

Thinking back to the barren streets and closed shops, I frowned. Right then, I doubted anyone but my father and Kara even lived in this town. “Oh, okay,” I said, not believing her at all.

“Tomorrow won’t be as bad, so I’ll start training you then. Enjoy tonight and welcome.” Grabbing the top box, she walked off into the back of the bar.

“Hold on one sec, I’ll help you with these,” my dad called to Kara. He turned back to me. “I’ll show you the rest of the place and your room in a minute. I’ve got to help Kara with this stuff,” he said, taking the other box to follow Kara.

I stood there awkwardly by myself in the unfamiliar room. Light bounced off one of the symbols on the drum kit and caught my eye. I made my way to the stage and stepped up to get a better look. There was a name on the front of the biggest drum, ONS, all done in a cool calligraphy. Under that was the proper name One Night Stand. I guessed it was fitting, since they were playing at a bar called BJs and, apparently, you never left unsatisfied.

I took my time walking around all the instruments. The drums were nice. Tapping a holder for extra sticks, I was so tempted to grab one and go to town, but I held back. The keyboard looked extremely used, but it had more buttons on it than keys. The black, slick, base was propped up on one side of the stage. A guitar was a few steps away from that, and it was a beautiful electric blue color. I walked over to the guitar on the other side of the stage. I seemed drawn to it. The glossy red paint was beckoning me toward it.

I knelt down to get a closer look. Within the glossy red paint were very fine black words. They looked like song lyrics, but the closer I got, I realized that they were girls' names. Appropriate, I thought, for a band named One Night Stand. The eight strings summoned me to run my fingers across them.

My index finger was mere centimeters from the tightly strung wires—

“You break it, you buy it.”

A male voice, warm and very close, made me lose my balance. In a rush, I tried to stand, but fell back and into the arms of the man behind me.

Hastily getting to my feet, I turned around to see the guy still flat on his ass. He pulled his knees up and rested his arms on them as he eyed me up and down

“I'm sorry. I didn't mean to touch your guitar,” I said apologetically.

Of course, he had to be gorgeous. I wouldn't knock over an average guy. “Well, it sure as hell looked like it,” he said, as his lips curled up in a smile.

“I said I was sorry. Won’t happen again—trust me.” I turned from him and prepared to jump off the stage. *What a jerk!*

“You’re not even going to help me up?” he asked.

Four other guys came into view from around the corner. *Must be the rest of them, the One Night Stands.*

Rotating back to him, I held out my hand.

“Such a lady,” he said as he took hold of it.

I wanted to let go so he would fall on his ass again, but his grip was too tight. If I tried, we were both going down.

“Anything else?” I asked smartly.

Still holding my hand, he pulled me closer. The sudden intimacy made my stomach do a nervous flip. He was almost a head taller than me, so my eyes were dead even with his lips—plump lips, that were curved up in a wicked smile. This ass knew exactly what he was doing.

Pushing against his chest, I successfully put some space between us. “What’s your problem?” I demanded.

“What’s *your* problem? You’re the first woman to ever jump off my lap that fast. You into chicks?”

I can’t believe the nerve of this guy. Rustling my hair in frustration, I couldn’t believe a human being who looked as good as he did could be so crude. His dark brown hair was wavy, unkempt, and swept off his face, but damn if it didn’t beg to be played with. He was tan and lean. He clearly took pride in his body. The cutoff shirt he had on gave him away. I unexpectedly got an image of him playing that beautiful guitar, the muscles in his fore arms and biceps moving under that tan skin, his fingers working the strings rhythmically—

Holy shit! I need to snap out of it. I stared at him. “Not that it’s any of your business, but I’m not into ‘chicks.’”

His smile reached his blue eyes and I found myself trying to remember why I was mad.

“You know for a fan, you’re pretty early. The groupies usually don’t start showing up till three hours before B opens,” he said, cocking his head.

“Groupies? Do I look like a groupie?”

He took that as an invitation to give me a once over.
Disgusting pig!

“Well, now that you mention it, you are a little over dressed.”

I glanced down at my skinny jeans and flip flops. The T-shirt I had on was thin but it was not see-through, thanks to its dark blue color. It was tight but not clingy, and the neckline was a simple U-shape.

Tucking my wild, curly, blonde hair behind my ears, I glanced over at my father, who was still helping carry large boxes in.

“Oh, I get it,” he said crossing his arms. “You like them older.”

“You are way off base, plus you’re a disgusting pig. Your ‘groupies’ must all be brain dead, if they follow you around.”

Yeah, that’s right, Mister Rock-n-Roll, let that sink in for a moment.

“You know what—”

“Kane! Hey, man, you guys are really early,” my father said, interrupting him as he made his way over to us. So the jackass had a name.

“B, you should really start locking the doors, some out-of-town trash rolled in.”

All I could do was smile. Catching my reaction, this so called “Kane” looked me up and down again before turning to my father, who looked ready to punch him in the face. Good to know my father still had that protective streak in him. “Kane, this is my daughter, Caroline.”

Kane’s perfect little sneer quickly turned to a stunned, open-mouthed gape.

“Is there a problem?” my father asked skeptically.

I should have totally ratted Kane out. *Look at him trying to bat those baby blues at me. Not going to work. I got a pair of my own, and I know how to use them.*

“Oh no, Daddy, Kane here was just telling me how much he appreciated you. He was even saying how he was

going to stay late tonight to help you close up and that he really wants to clean the restrooms. He also offered to carry up all my bags for me. Isn't that sweet of him?" I flashed the most charming smile I could his way and girlishly tossed my hair.

Shaking his head and grinning, Kane couldn't say a word in his defense.

"You really going to do that tonight, man?" my father asked. "We could really use the help."

Still acting coy, I made sure to wink at Kane before turning my attention back to my father.

"Yeah, I'll stay to help you out tonight, so long as she helps," he said, winking back.

That asshole!

CHAPTER 4

Kane

I knew B's daughter was coming to stay for the summer, but I had no idea that the girl I had just tried to hit on was her. I had come around the corner to see some girl up on *our* stage, fingering all our instruments. When she turned to look at my guitar, my baby, I made my way to the stage to confront her. I was only able to take two steps, when I saw her face. She was every bit of a ten in my book. Average height, long legs, made even longer by the tight-ass jeans she was wearing. Her shirt hung low enough when she knelt down, I could see the swell of her delightfully large breasts. I suddenly got the image of my hands full with them, and my mischievous friend began to make an appearance in my jeans.

I moved quickly, but silently up on the stage behind her. The smell of her, tickled my senses. I wanted to run my hands through the mane of wild blonde curls on her head as she screamed my name in ecstasy. I wanted to taste her, feel her—I don't think I've wanted to touch a girl as much. I wanted to experience every inch of her.

Unfortunately, all those scrumptious ideas quickly left my mind when I found out she was B's daughter. I expected his daughter to be short, frumpy, and average. What was cur-

rently standing in front of me was anything but. He had shown us all a picture of her five years ago when we started playing regularly here. It was a girl with a flat chest and plump body. Her hair was pulled back in a tight braid and she had glasses on. So of course, I didn't expect this girl to be her.

B slapped me on the back. "Okay, I'll be right back. The delivery truck just pulled up. Let me help Kara, and I'll be right back to show you upstairs, honey. Kane, I can't thank you enough for helping tonight. Caroline has the night off, though, so she won't be helping tonight. Kara's going to train her tomorrow, so having you here will be such a help, and thanks for helping my little girl carry these bags up." Smiling, he slapped my back again and then walked to the back door to find the delivery truck. I didn't know if I should be pissed that I had to stay or delighted that I got to see where this beauty was going to be sleeping, even though I had already seen it.

"You can wipe that stupid grin off your face," she said, tossing that mane of hair again.

"What are you talking about? It's not a grin. You think I want to stay sober tonight to help B clean up after our show. I'm usually knee deep in between some brunette or blonde's legs, so it's not a grin. It's me trying to figure out how I'm going to make you pay for getting me stuck here tonight."

If I knew one thing about women, it's that they couldn't resist me. This girl was a challenge that I was determined to make putty in my hands. I'd come across them once or twice—the girl who played hard to get. They always had a hidden agenda, which usually involved them wanting to date me, but I never let it come to that. They'd say that they wouldn't give it up until I promised to date them exclusively, but ten minutes alone with me in a dark room, and they were usually screaming a different tune.

"You're the one who practically invited me up to your room."

Damn, she looks cute with that scrunched up confusion on her face.

“I did not!” she snapped back.

““Oh, Daddy, he even said he’d carry my very heavy bags up,”” I teased in a girly voice while I waved my hands dramatically. *Shit!* She socked me. Rubbing my suddenly sore arm, I glared across at her. This girl had a mean punch. I had to remember to keep my face away from her fists.

“Jesus, you don’t have to beat me into submission. I’ll carry your bags up,” I said, reaching down to pick them up.

“Kane, what are you doing? We have to practice. We don’t have time for you to fuck the help.” Reece’s red Mohawk was combed back and not in its usually upright position.

The girl fumed. Placing the bags down, I sat back and enjoyed the show.

“There is no way in hell that I would ever have sex with him,” she snapped. “And tonight, I’m not the help, you wanna-be-clown.” She cocked her head to the side and studied him a moment. “Bozo wants his hair back by the way.”

I think I’m in love. I had never heard anyone talk to Reece like that before. He looked like he was going to cry. Why not put the nail in the coffin?

“Reece, this is Caroline, B’s daughter,” I said. His mouth hung open. I slapped his back. “Yeah, let that sink in a moment.”

“That’s not funny, Kane,” he said nervously.

“It’s fucking hysterical. Caroline, this is Reece.”

Stepping up to Reece, she got in his face. I was suddenly aware of their closeness to one another. Weird.

She poked a finger in his chest. “Don’t ever assume I’m fucking him. You got it?”

Nodding in agreement, Reece was clearly rendered speechless. Just like me, my fellow band mates weren’t use to women putting us in our places.

The rest of the guys walked over and, before I knew it, they were all clamoring around her. I wanted to push them

out of the way, hold them off, but I wasn't going to show my cards.

I began to introduce them all, I pointed to Reece, "Reece plays the drums," He was in his usual tight-ass pants—that I'd have sworn he bought from the kids department—and a black T-shirt. I turned to my left. "Aiden is a genius on the piano and does all our lighting and boring stuff."

"Dude, without me no one would be able to hear you. I'm basically the tech guy. These assholes would still be in their mommies' basements if it weren't for me," he said irately. Okay, I'd give him that one. We did need him. Aiden had shoulder-length, jet-black hair, which he kept pulled back. Girls went fucking nuts for that guy's hair.

"Trent here is our bassist," I continued while he held out his hand, clearly the only gentleman of the group, even though he looked like a badass biker on steroids. "And this is—"

"JJ?" she asked, taking the words from my mouth.

"Yeah, that's me," he answered hesitantly.

"Do you remember me?" she asked, hopeful.

Great. Competition with JJ was never good. It usually ended up with both of us having a black eye and busted lip. Have they hooked up before?

She smiled at him. "I think we're second, maybe third cousins? I used to visit your family when I was younger."

Taking a moment, he examined her some more. "I think I'd remember if I had a fucking-hot-ass cousin," he said, shaking his head.

I was pretty sure I would have remembered too. After all, I'd been friends with the guy since grade school, and I would have remembered running into her.

"JJ here is lead guitar," I said, draping my arm around him "Dude, why the hell haven't we met your hot-ass cousin before today?" I asked through gritted teeth.

"I can hear you, you know," she said, crossing her arms.

I flashed her a usually effective winsome smile. She didn't buy it for a second. Caroline smiled. "So I guess that

just leaves the oversexed, disrespectful, caveman of a lead singer—I'm only guessing here but, by the looks on all of your faces, I'm right."

The audacity! I am not oversexed, if anything, I'm undersexed today. "Yes, I am the lead singer, and I'm damn well proud."

Throwing her head back, she laughed. Her scent filled the air, her full breasts shook with her laughter and, as much as I wanted to deny it, I was fucking turned on.

"I was going to ask why the name, 'One Night Stand,'" she started to say. "Then I met your lead singer here, and all my questions were magically answered."

All of my so-called friends nodded in agreement.

"Hey, these guys aren't saints, either." I found myself trying to throw them under the bus with me. I couldn't have her thinking I was the only asshole in the bunch. "Aiden once took a girl to traffic court just to get some. Reece, he had sex in that bathroom last night. Trent rented a puppy for a day to get a blowjob, and your cousin over here flirts with being a pedophile. It's not just me, honey, we're a group package."

Taking a careful step back from the five of us, Caroline held her hands up. "I'm going to let you all know something right now! I'm not sleeping with any one of you—ever! I'm here to spend time with my dad, make some money, and leave, once I get a job." She put on a good front, but I had a feeling she was finding it just as hard to keep her true feelings about us under wrap.

"All right, everything is taken care of," B said as he joined us and placed his hands on his hips. "Good, you've already met the guys."

"Oh, I've met them," she said, sounding irritated.

"Get use to them, honey. If these guys weren't playing here, I might have to pack up and find a new hobby."

At least B appreciated us. Now I just had to work on winning over his daughter, for a night at least.

“Let’s get you unpacked.” Grabbing a bag, B turned and headed for the back of the bar.

“I guess I’ll see you guys around,” Caroline said, spinning to follow her father.

We all stood there watching her walk away.

“Dude, I have to sleep with her,” Reece moaned, bending over in fake pain. The moment he stopped talking, Caroline whipped back around. If she had heard him, I was almost positive she was going to come back over here and slap the shit out of him.

“Kane!” The sound of my name coming off her lips had me going from picturing her slapping the shit out of him, to me, and I didn’t even say anything this time. “My bags,” she said sweetly, too sweetly.

Huffing over, I grabbed the remaining two bags that were fucking heavy as shit. “What do you got in here, a collection of dead bodies?” I asked, walking up behind her.

“Keep pissing me off, and you’ll be one of them,” she said, before heading up the stairs that led to B’s home.

CHAPTER 5

Caroline

I followed my father up the stairs, our shoes clonking on the hard wood. Glancing behind me, I saw that Kane was dutifully carrying my bags. As we entered the apartment that was above the bar, I moved aside so Kane could get in all the way.

My father gestured around. “This is the living area. Over there is the kitchen. It’s small, but we’ve got the huge one down stairs if you really want to cook anything.”

The room was small for both the living area and kitchen, if you could even call it that.

There was one couch and a chair that faced a huge TV. Behind that was a small table with two stools. The kitchen was a sink, two cabinets, and a small refrigerator. On the cramped counter sat a microwave and coffee pot.

“Come on, I’ll show you your room,” Dad said.

Grabbing both my very heavy bags, Kane followed along behind us silently, for once since I’d met him. I didn’t want to, but I watched in total guilty pleasure as his muscles flexed when he picked up my bags. Running my eyes up his arms, I caught him watching me as well.

“Like what you see?” he asked, once my father was down the hall.

“You repulse me, so no,” I said, turning on my heel to follow my father.

“What do you think?” Dad asked. “You have your own bathroom, those doors lead to a balcony off the back.”

This room is huge! The bed had to be king sized and beautifully made. There was enough room for a love seat and full desk. I walked over to the bathroom, which was completely remodeled and updated. There was a huge soaking tub and glass shower.

Stepping up to the French doors, I couldn't help but smile. The view wasn't what I was used to. It was nothing but farmland and mountains in the distance, but it was breathtaking.

“Dad, this is insanely nice.”

Nodding in agreement he draped his arm over my shoulder. “I've been working on it for the past few months, getting it ready for you. You can thank Kara for all the decorations.”

I took another glance around. It was like the room was pulled from a magazine.

“B! Get down here. I need you to sign for this.” We all heard Kara yell from down stairs.

Kissing my forehead, he hugged me again. “I'm so happy you finally decided to come out here. I've missed you so much.”

As he exited from my room I was left standing there, feeling guilty. Why had it taken me this long to come visit him? *I was a horrible daughter, that's why.*

Kane cleared his voice, gaining my attention. I looked over at him. He was still holding my bags.

“I guess just leave them there,” I said pointing to the floor. Dropping them, he held out his hand, wiggling his fingers. I sighed. “I'm not tipping you, so you can stop begging.”

Reaching out to feel the lushness of the bedding, I didn't notice that he had moved and was now across from me on the other side of the bed.

“I never have to beg,” he stated, placing both hands on my new bed. He leaned across it with a downright scrump-tious look on his face.

I too leaned farther toward the middle of the bed. He licked his lips seductively the closer I got. I swear I even heard him growl.

“Can I tell you a secret?” I asked, whispering. He nodded. I reached out and ran my hand down his stubbly cheek. “You are—” I paused for a dramatic effect, “—never stepping foot in this room again. You may have tons of ‘groupies,’ but I’m not one of them, and I’ll never be one of them. So get your nasty, womanizing hands off my bed and go clean some toilets,” I said, slapping his cheek lightly before I stood up straight.

He did nothing but grin back at me. “You’re feisty,” he said, still smiling “I like it, and I will be back here, maybe not tonight, but I’ll be back.”

“You’re insane. Now, get the hell out,” I yelled.

“I’ll see you tonight, front row. I’ll make sure there’s a spot for you,” he said, standing in the doorway.

“Not happening,” I called to him as he turned and left my room.

That right there was the cockiest man in the world. I guessed when you looked that good, you could get away with it. Lying in my new bed, I took a moment to breathe. In the last twenty four hours, my life had drastically changed and I needed a moment to just relax.

My internship at J&K Marketing was up, and they hadn’t offered me a job yet, so I had to move here, until I could find one. The lease I had on my small studio apartment was also up. After packing everything I owned into a storage unit, I took only the necessities, which fit in three large suitcases.

I stayed in bed, my eyes becoming heavy from traveling all morning. I was on the edge of sleep, that moment where you could feel yourself slipping into a dream. That’s when a ridiculously loud guitar riff started echoing up through the

floor. I suddenly realized my bedroom was directly over the stage. *Awesome...*

Soon after the guitar started, the rest of the instruments came to life. I tried to lay there and block it out, but it was useless. Groggily I got out of bed, dragged one suitcase over, and heaved it up on the bed. The next one was even heavier.

Opening them both, I started to take out my clothes and place them in drawers. The music coming through the floorboards had a catchy beat, and I soon found myself nodding along to it. It wasn't hard core rock music, it wasn't metal, and it wasn't pop music. It was somewhere in-between. I hated that I was actually tapping my foot along to it.

Forty minutes later, the music stopped and silence filled my room. *Shit, now it's too quiet.* I had finished unpacking just as the music had stopped. Stepping up to the French doors, I turned the handles and opened them both up.

A crisp breeze flowed through my hair, cooling my face, warm from un-packing. It wasn't a large balcony, just enough for two small chairs. The black iron bars looked freshly painted. Stepping out, I leaned over, resting my arms on the iron railing.

I was staring out at the open farm land and rolling hills off in the distance when an unpleasant noise ruined it.

"Look, boys, that beautiful, sexy woman right there is going to be my wife." Standing below the balcony in the back parking lot, Kane stood with his band mates staring up at me.

"Dream on, Romeo!" I yelled back.

"I don't know, Kane, I think she hates your guts. I'm just going to put that out there," Aiden said as he clasped Kane on the shoulder.

The other guys all stood around laughing. They all had tattoos and wore similar style clothes—jeans and T-shirts, except for Reece. He seemed to have a style all his own. They were a good-looking bunch, I couldn't deny it. Aiden's slicked-back, black hair, honey-colored eyes and striking features were borderline making me want to go back on my

previous statement about not sleeping with any of them. He seemed mysterious and smolderingly sexy. Plus he was the only one who didn't hit on me, besides JJ. Trent was scary quiet. He looked like a big bad biker, with his shaved head and dark beady eyes. I wouldn't want to be on his bad side in a dark alley. Although Kane carried top honors for being the sexiest man of the bunch, he was dangerous and probably had an STD.

I stood from the edge of the balcony and started to go back inside. "Kitty, come on, don't leave me so dissatisfied."

Stopping dead in my tracks, I whipped back around. "Don't ever call me that again and, as far as your satisfaction, find one of those groupies who adore you so much."

All the guys "ooed" at Kane and pushed him around. Flipping him off for an added effect, I left the balcony and closed the doors.

I didn't want to smile, but there's something about arguing with that man. *Maybe this summer could be fun, as long as I keep my wits about me, and keep him at arm's length.* I was here to spend time with my father, get to know him again, rebuild what we had lost when—

I just needed to stay focused. It wasn't like I'd be seeing these guys all the time. They had to have day jobs and, as long as I was working, and they were playing up on stage, then there wasn't going to be a problem.

CHAPTER 6

Kane

We drove fifteen minutes to the next town over to get some burgers. Sitting in the cramped booth with my fellow bandmates, I listened as they carried on conversations around me. For some reason, I wasn't into talking. I wasn't really into anything at the moment. Our cute waitress, who barely looked sixteen, came to our table way too many times, asking us if we needed anything.

"Kane," Trent said, hitting my shoulder. "You okay man?" he asked while JJ harmlessly flirted with the waitress.

"I'm good," I answered back.

Nodding, he turned back to the conversation that was going on across the table. I didn't know what put me in such a mood. I was usually really pumped up before we played at BJ's but, tonight, I was anything but. Sitting in the family burger joint, it was hard not to notice all the happy families. We were sticking out like sore thumbs, but that's usually how I liked it.

Most guys my age were well on their way to marriage, having kids, but I had sworn I wasn't going to turn into what everyone expected me to be. My friends and I weren't going to conform to the norm. I knew we were bigger than that, I

knew we were good, that one day we'd make it out there and be playing the arenas that I was certain we were destined for.

I was twenty-six and loving life. I had women throwing themselves at me, friends that always had my back, and I knew that sooner or later our band was going to get noticed. People came from all over to hear us. We traveled everywhere we could. It was going to happen for us—we just needed that one break.

During the day, I played my role as construction worker. Although B paid us to play at the bar, it wasn't even close to being enough to survive on. Luckily, my uncle had a construction business. The boys and I all worked for him, so we could pay rent and keep up with our music.

"All right, someone needs to say it, and I'm not ashamed," Reece said, after taking a drink of his beer. "I call dibs on Caroline. I know she's B's daughter and all, but fuck if I don't get hard when she's around."

Aiden shook his head in disbelief. "You can't call dibs on her."

"You fuckers can figure this one out on your own. I'm automatically knocked out. She might be hot, but not enough to bang my own cousin," JJ said, holding his hands up.

Four heads turned to look at me. "She already said she's not shacking up with any of us. I think the odds are against us, boys."

"You're kidding right?" Reece asked.

"What? You heard her," I said, sitting back in the booth.

"Like that's ever stopped you before," Tent added sarcastically.

"You want her all for yourself, don't you? You must want her bad, really bad," Reece said, nodding his head and grinning like the Cheshire cat.

"No, I don't want her. She's a seven all day. I can get much better." *I was drowning, fast.*

"Look at you," all quiet and serious. That girl has you all fucked up," Reece continued.

“Shit, Reece, if you want to fuck her that bad, go for it. Why the hell do you need our permission?” I snapped at him.

“Fine, I will. Wish me luck, boys.” Getting up from the table, he went out the front and lit up a cigarette.

What the hell did I just do? Of course, I had my sights set on her, but now I had to play it off, like I didn’t care. I had to hope that Caroline wouldn’t make the mistake of sleeping with Reece. He was an even bigger womanizer than I was. Who knew what kinds of diseases were festering in him?

CHAPTER 7

Caroline

The music from down stairs grew significantly louder in the last hour. It was 8:30. *Must be getting busy down there.* Closing the door behind me, I headed down the stairs to get my first look of my father's bar in full swing. With every step I took, the louder it got.

I guess people do live in this town. Opening the door that separated the stairs of our living area from the back hallway, I stepped out from its safety and headed toward the bar.

I stood in the doorway in awe. The place was packed, like wall-to-wall packed. Every table was full, every stool had a body on it, and there was nowhere to stand. *I can't work here. How am I going to do this?* You couldn't even move. Add a tray full of beers and a basket full of buffalo wings, and I'd call that my worst nightmare. I'd never waitressed before. I expected there to be maybe twenty people, not 200!

"Caroline!"

I turned around in the hallway as Kara walked up behind me.

"Don't freak out, it's not always this bad," she said, clearly seeing the panic on my face.

“This is insane!” I shrieked. My eyes went back and forth over all the people milling about. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw someone walk by with a pool stick, it’s then that I remembered there was a whole other room. Craning my neck, I glanced in. *Shit, it’s packed in there too!* “Why are there so many people here?” I asked frantically. “It’s a Sunday night.”

“It’s pretty simple, ONS.”

She’s got to be joking. “There’s no way this many people are here just to hear them,” I said.

“Believe it,” she said, looking out at the crowd. “It took about a year, but every time they play here, it’s packed like this. Those boys have a cult following. You think this is bad, wait till Friday nights,”

Just then the back door opened and the devils themselves walked in. Aiden, with his mysterious features walked by me first. Trent, the big bad biker, politely smiled at me before he headed into the bar, which instantly reacted with cheers and screams. *That man is hot!* Trent was followed by Reece. Blowing me a kiss, he moved on and smacked Kara on the ass as he walked by. She tried to smack him back, but he was swallowed by the crowd before she could get him. I took a step back and tried to become one with the wall.

JJ stopped in front of me. “Hey, Cuz, pretty cool, huh?” he said, tilting his head to the open doorway that I had just back out of.

Was it cool? Were they that good? I mean, I had heard them through the floor and thought their music was catchy. These guys were famous here, living out a rock star fantasy, without the bull crap that usually followed famous musicians. I watched JJ walk through the doorway, holding his hands up in the air as the crowd erupted again. I was in shock and couldn’t take my eyes off the now empty doorway.

“Kitty, you came for my performance.” Kane said as he stopped in front of me. He pinned me on the wall as he spoke

in my ear. "I have a seat front and center with your name on it." He pulled back and winked.

"I'm good right here," I responded, not moving my head from the wall.

Leaning in again, he placed his hand on the wall to keep from falling into me. "Ah, come on, loosen up. There's really a chair up front with your name on it. Your father set it up for you."

Up until this point I'd managed to keep my eyes from his. I was looking at everything but him, until I couldn't look at him. His blue eyes were sparkling down at me and that stupid grin was plastered across his face.

"Just think. I can't try to hit on you if I'm standing up on stage singing to the masses. You're safe." He winked again.

The crowd started chanting O—N—S, O—N—S over and over, no doubt waiting for the man standing before me.

Locking my eyes back on his, I shrugged. "All right fine, I'll go watch." *I know I'm going to regret this.*

"I guess I'll see you front and center then." He took a few steps, paused, then turned back to me, his lips curling up even more. Taking me off guard, he grabbed my hand and began pulling me out of the hallway and into the crowded room. I covered my ear with my free hand. *Shit, it's loud.*

He tried to pull me behind him, but people were clamoring around us. Kane let go of my hand, and I thought I was going to get trampled, but he wrapped his arm around my shoulders and secured me to his side. Leaning over, he practically licked my ear as he talked above the crowd. I should have been cringing, but instead a chill ran down my spine, the kind of chill I got when something felt too good, like hot breath tickling my skin.

"Stay close. Wouldn't want you to get trampled by my groupies on your first night here."

That was the first time that I punched him in the ribs. I did, however, choose to stay conveniently close to him, but only because people were making a path for us to walk

through, and definitely not because it felt damn good to have him hold me close.

I had just met this guy less than six hours ago but I felt strangely comfortable around him. Sure, he was an ass, but even I had to admit it was fun messing with him.

Pulling out one of the two vacant seats at a table near the front he smiled, “Your seat, my lady,” There was a piece of paper on top that said, *Reserved for our new mascot, Kitty*. I went to punch him again, but he had already hopped up on stage. The rest of the guys were all laughing. *Oh forget everything I just said. They have officially started a war.*

Wiggling his eyebrows at me, Kane took his guitar off its stand and slung the strap around his neck, blowing a kiss in my direction. I swear I heard a girl swoon behind me. I sat down, crossed my legs and arms, and then gave him the finger.

Walking up to the microphone, he held it with one hand, the other rested over the neck of his red guitar. He was still in his cut-off shirt, and I had to laugh as I thought back to how I imagined it would be to watch him play that beautiful guitar.

I was right. It wasn't the worst thing I'd ever had to watch. *Fine, whatever, it was sexy as hell to watch him up on stage—there I admitted it.* People behind me had cleared the tables and chairs to make a dance floor. He was really good—his voice was amazing, he didn't miss a note, and never fell off key. The rest of the guys were flawless too. They were really good. If they hadn't been discovered yet, I was sure it was right around the corner.

After a few songs, they took a break. “How's everyone doing out there tonight?” Kane asked. He commanded the crowd and knew exactly where to move and how to make the women swoon. It was no wonder he had groupies. “We have a special guest here tonight,” he said, looking directly down at me.

My heart sank to my stomach, the same time his lips curled up. I put a stern look on my face. *He had better not do what I think.*

“Tonight we finally get to meet the one and only—”

Don't you fucking call me Kitty, you bitch, ass—

“—Caroline, the daughter of the man who kept this fine establishment alive and well.”

A chorus of hoots, hollers, whistles and claps erupted around me.

“Come on, Caroline, don't be shy,” he said, as he knelt down on the edge of the stage and held the microphone in my face.

I ground my jaw and clenched my fists. *I swear, if those people weren't here, I would slap that smug smile off his face.*

“Aww, she's still a little shy, but don't worry, she'll be here all summer, helping B out.”

Yup, if he leans down again, I'm going to slap him, I don't care who's looking.

Luckily for him, he kept to entertaining the crowd. I needed a drink. I made my way over to the bar and, thanks to Kane's warm welcome, I was stopped at every other table. Once I made it safely to the bar, I saw my dad, Kara, and two other girls working frantically to serve drinks.

Catching my eye my father walked over and slapped his hand on the bar. “Hey, honey, what do you want?”

“Something strong,” I replied.

My father reached under the counter, pulled a shot glass out, and placed it on the worn bar top. “He's not that bad, Caroline. Try to enjoy tonight, meet some people,” he said, as he filled up the shot glass with straight bourbon. Holding up my shot, I tapped it on the bar and drank it. “Another one?” he asked. I nodded for more, and he filled it up again. “At least I don't have to worry about you driving home. Remember that time I had to come get you at that party. Your mom was so mad at me for covering for you.”

The memory of my mother sitting on the front porch when my dad and I got home still made me anxious. I didn't let myself finish out the memory. It was always too much. Taking the second shot, I simply smiled at my dad.

"You know, you can talk about her. It's okay," he said, filling the drink again.

"Thanks, Dad," I said, after downing the third shot. "I think I'll take a beer now."

My father did as asked and soon there was a tall beer resting on the bar. I took my beer and tried to make good on what my father had suggested. I was going to be here, I might as well meet some new people. I struggled to navigate the crowded room with my filled to the rim beer. I was in search of a table in the back, the way, way back. I wanted to be as far away from the eager fans, and wanna-be rock stars looking to get laid, as I possibly could.

CHAPTER 8

Kane

Why did her hand have to feel so fucking good in mine? I was clearly off my game, but thankfully the crowd didn't seem to notice. I kept finding myself looking for her in the crowd of people.

When I stopped her in the hallway, I had all intentions of leaving her there, to greet the fans. My hand was flush with the wall, and a little above her head, I had her pinned, with nowhere to go but through me, and I couldn't fight the urge to get even closer.

That was my first mistake. I wanted to grab her, shove her up against that wall, have her legs wrap around me, fist my hand in her hair, and finally taste her. I settled for whispering in her ear. It might have had something to do with the fact, I wasn't sure if she would knee me in the balls, and I liked my balls, so I held back.

My second mistake was coming back and taking her hand in mine. I expected her to pull away, possibly even smack me, but she didn't, which totally discombobulated me. In the six hours that I had gotten to know this girl, I did not take her for the dutifully following type. When the people around us started getting closer and the women tried to grab

onto me and push her away, I made my third mistake of the night.

I pulled her up next to me and let go of her hand. I draped my arm around her, pulling her close to my body. The women seemed to back off enough for us to make our way to the stage. I squeezed her shoulder farther into my side, and talked closely in her ear again.

“Stay close. Wouldn’t want you to get trampled by my groupies on your first night here.” It wasn’t that bad, but I couldn’t resist messing with her or having my lips centimeters from her skin again.

Her now-familiar punch to my side was delightfully welcome, even though I knew there was a good chance I’d have a bruise tomorrow. I led her to the table that I had lied about earlier. Her father didn’t reserve a table, but the guys and I had. She wasn’t quick enough to hit me after reading the reserved paper that sat neatly on it. She made sure to let us know she hated the name Kitty earlier, rookie mistake. *Doesn’t she know that’s what I’m going to call her from now on, just because she despises it so much?* So now, I was trying my best to engage with the audience, when the only thing I wanted to do, was watch her. In between two songs, I went back to the drums to grab my beer. Taking a huge swig, I leaned over to place it back.

“Kane, you all right? That girl got you pussy whipped after one afternoon?” Reece asked, still keeping the beat to the next song going. *Pussy whipped me? Hell no!*

“Not a chance, Reece!” I yelled back over the drums.

“Prove it! See that red head?” he asked, pointing to her with one of his drumsticks. “I want to see her in the morning, doing the walk of shame. I want to know if the carpet matches the curtains.” He grinned, wiggling his eye brows.

Taking another sip of beer, I leaned over the drums, “Done,” I said before heading back to the microphone. *Hopefully, this will get him off my case.* Eyeing up the red head Reece had pointed out, I realized that it was going to be a piece of cake. That girl was pretty much spreading her legs

already. Her top was so sheer you could see her bra, and her skirt was so tight and short it didn't leave much to the imagination.

I let go of the guitar and held the microphone with both hands. My lips touched the intertwined pattern, and just as I was about to start the next song, I caught sight of Caroline, sitting at a table in the back. A man appeared next to her. Placing his drink down, he whispered in her ear, and she gestured for him to sit down. I had missed the count were I was supposed to start singing and the guys thankfully started the intro again for me. I quickly turned around to gain my composure. Reece was shaking his head and whipping his hand at me.

“Kat chow!” he yelled to me.

God damn it, I don't know if I'm going to be able to explain this one. Hearing Reece and the other guys cackling behind me, I knew for sure that whatever cover I thought I had was just blown.

CHAPTER 9

Caroline

I found a table at the back that was empty, since people were clamoring around the stage.

“This seat taken?” a deep voice asked from beside me.

I turned in the direction of the voice to find a guy placing his drink down. He was tall, and well built. Dressed in a T-shirt and khaki shorts, he was clean cut, with a healthy five o’clock shadow on his jaw. His hair was dark and in a short buzz, but still long enough to run his fingers through. His green eyes stared down at me waiting for an answer. This guy was good looking, but not—

I took a chance and caught sight of Kane on stage. *I hate that he’s so fucking sexy up there.*

“Yeah, I’m sorry. Go ahead, have a seat,” I said, tapping on the stool next to me.

“So, this your first time here?” he asked, leaning closer so he didn’t have to yell over the loud music, which seemed to be on repeat.

Didn’t they already play this? I glanced up at the stage again to see Kane turned from the crowd. Guess he’s not as good as he thought if he forgot his own lyrics. It made me chuckle.

“Do I stick out that much?” I replied. As he smiled down at me, I took notice of his kind face.

“Yeah, you kind of do.”

Both laughing, we took a simultaneous sip of our drinks.

“So, what brings you to our small town?” he asked casually.

“I’m spending the summer with my dad. He owns the place.”

“Oh, B’s daughter. He’s been telling everyone about you.” Taking another sip of his drink, he stretched on his chair and glanced around the stage area.

“What brings you here tonight? You like One Night Stand?” *Did I really just ask that?* Cringing, I quickly took another sip of my beer.

Chuckling he answered, “They’re okay, but I’m here on big-brother duty.”

They really needed to change the name of their band—it lead to some pretty awkward conversations.

“My sister is a super fan, I guess you could say, and she wrangled me into bringing her here tonight since she’s seventeen and can’t get in on her own.”

I turned back to the stage and noticed that the row in front of it was all women, scantily dressed. No wonder JJ flirted with the line. These girls were dressed to impress and, my guess, not legal yet.

“I can’t believe my dad lets them in underage. Can’t he get in trouble?” I asked.

“Your dad has an in with the sheriff. They’re allowed to come in only while ONS is playing and they have to have a chaperone. Once their set is over, everyone under eighteen is kicked out,” the man clarified for me.

I shook my head in amazement that my father had an “in” with the sheriff.

“How do you know all this?” I asked.

“Because, I’m a cop and I know everything,” he said, taking another sip of his beer.

“Oh, you don’t look like a cop,” I said, smiling over at him.

“Thanks. If I ever decide to go undercover, I guess that’s a good thing.”

“You must really love your sister to sit here.”

“Pretty much. She owes me big time for this. I went to high school with these guys, and let’s just say their band’s name wasn’t a coincidence.”

Nodding in agreement, I glanced back up on stage, where Kane was currently singing about all the different ways to catch a girl.

He looked right at me and pointed. Our eyes locked for a brief second when he sang, “I’ll make you mine.” I shook my head and held up my middle finger proudly. It made the biggest smile spread across his face, as he placed his hand back on the strings of his guitar and continued playing.

“I guess you met Kane already?” my neighbor asked.

“Yes, I had the unfortunate experience of meeting him earlier today.”

“Well, not much has changes about him. These guys have been playing together and banging anything that walks since high school.” I didn’t doubt that either. “I’m Nate, by the way,” he said, holding his hand out.

“Caroline,” I responded, placing my hand in his.

Downing the last of my drink, I went to stand from the stool, but swayed slightly. *Three shots and a beer had me tipsy?* It had been a long time since I last drank. It might have even been over a year and half ago—hell, maybe two. I had poured everything I had into the internship at J&K and what did I get in return? The boot! I put everything on hold for them, friends—which I had lost over the years, boy-friends, who lost interest because I wasn’t around, and even my gold fish Roxy died because of that stupid internship.

“Sit down. I’ll go get us another beer,” Nate said, standing and taking the glass from my hand.

“Thanks.” Sitting back down on the stool, I watched as he walked across the room to where the bar was. I pulled my

phone out of pocket to check the time, 9:45. *These guys can't have much longer up there, can they?* They had been playing for over an hour, only breaking to get sips of beer, and tease the girls who were practically crawling on stage with them.

During the next thirty minutes, I chatted with Nate and continued to throw back at least two more beers. When the guys finally told the crowd goodnight, I watched them all jump off the stage and into the throng of women. They were swallowed whole, but I saw them all leave through the hallway that we had all come through earlier—a few extra people leaving with them, all women, of course.

My father got up on the stage and took the microphone in his hand. “All right, another great performance from the one and only ONS! Sorry, but if you don’t have a yellow wrist band on, we’re going to have to ask you to leave.”

A chorus of groans vibrated in the room. Two girls came up to the table that Nate and I were sitting at, and I could tell instantly that this was his sister.

“Can’t you pull some strings, I’m going to be eighteen in two weeks. It’s ridiculous that I have to leave,” she said, pouting.

“Caroline, this is my sister, Piper, and her friend Morgan,” Nate said, introducing us.

“You’re the girl that Kane was walking in earlier, Caroline. You’re B’s daughter. You are so lucky. I’d give anything to—”

“Hold it right there, sweetheart. Don’t get any absurd ideas about Kane and me.”

“So you’re not—”

Cringing, I shook my head. “Don’t even say it,” I said, holding my hand up in her face.

That seemed to put a smile on Nate’s face but, unfortunately for him, I wasn’t here to date. I was here to work and hang out with my dad.

“Come on, girls. We’ve got a forty-five-minute drive, better get to it.”

A forty-five minute drive? “You came forty-five minutes out of your way, to watch those guys?” I couldn’t for the life of me see why...well, that was a bit of a lie. All of them were good looking in their own way, and their music was catchy. I guess I could understand why these teenagers and grown-ass women would clamor around to see them.

“It’s not that bad,” Nate replied. “I guess I’ll be seeing you around. This is the best bar in an hour radius. Don’t judge me if you catch me in here more than once a week.” Smiling, he stood up from the table.

“I live upstairs, so I’ll be here every day.”

“You are so lucky. Did I already say that?” his sister said for the second time.

I suppose having some eye candy while I worked the summer away wasn’t the worst thing that could happen.

CHAPTER 10

Kane

Backstage—or in our case, out back of the bar—we all grabbed a beer from Kara and sat at the table and chairs. Not the best backstage, but we took what we could get. B always gave us free booze and let us have our own private party back there, under the covered patio. Hell, even if it was snowing, we'd have a fire, warming pots. It might have been below freezing, but our little area was a toasty seventy degrees. Plus the guys could smoke and we could all come down from our high of being rock stars, kind of.

The redhead, sitting on my lap, kept messing with my hair. I hated when girls messed with my hair. Maybe this wasn't going to be as easy as I thought. I was getting over it fast, until Caroline walked outback.

Swaying as she walked, Caroline tossed her arms around her father. "Hey, Dad," she slurred. Her eyes were hooded as she smiled up at her father. The next thing I knew, she was mean mugging me. "You were awesome," she said, pointing in my direction. She was definitely wasted, there's no way she'd openly admit she liked me. "Oh, wait wrong person." Turning to Trent, she swayed across the patio and plopped herself down on his large lap, taking him totally off guard.

“You, were amazing. Everyone else sucked, especially that one,” she said, pointing at me.

I knew there had to be a catch. “Can you guys keep an eye on her for me?” B asked. “I have to go help out inside, there’s still a ton of people.”

“Hell, yeah, we’ll take good care of her,” Reece said, nodding his head and bouncing the blonde who was on his lap.

B shook his head. “No, not you. You stay away from her,” B said, before heading back into the bar.

“What the hell? What’s his beef with me?”

We all laughed and ignored any further noise coming from Reece. I couldn’t help but watch as Caroline made herself familiar on Trent’s lap, laying her head gently on his broad shoulder. He took advantage and held her waist tightly.

“You smell really good,” she said through glazed-over eyes.

Why won’t this bitch stop messing with my hair? Taking her hand in mine, I moved the redhead’s hand to her lap for the tenth time. I caught Trent’s hand move from Caroline’s hip, to the middle of her back, and it kept moving south.

“Kitty,” I called to get her attention.

Sitting up, she swatted Trent’s hand away. Jumping off his lap, she turned to face him. “I told you not to call me that and stop feeling me up,” she spat, laying in on him.

“It wasn’t me—” Trent tried to say.

“Save it. I thought you were the gentlemen of the group. Clearly I was wrong.”

I couldn’t hold in the thunderous laugh that busted out of me.

“And you,” she said, turning her rage on me.

I went to stand up, but the bimbo on my lap wouldn’t move. So whispering in her ear, I told her exactly what I knew she’d been waiting to hear. “Go get me another drink, then we’ll leave this place and head back to mine.”

Sucking in her bottom lip, she copped a feel. Finding me halfway put a fire in her eyes that matched her hair. “All right, I’ll be right back,” she said breathily.

She quickly stood and headed for the door. Little did she know that my “situation” had absolutely nothing to do with her. Caroline was still in front of Trent, when I was free to stand.

“What about me, Kitty?” I challenged.

Her cheeks were flushed from the alcohol but her temper made them redder.

“Don’t you ever call me out like that again! And stop calling me Kitty!”

“Okay, Kitty,” I said, stretching my back.

Oh shit! Her mane of blonde curls barreled toward me. I had a microsecond to react. Her shoe got caught on the uneven pavement and she was falling to the ground, fast. Taking two huge steps, I reached out and grabbed her up in my arms before she face planted. She was heavier than she looked, but I almost expected that. She had a nasty punch, and muscle like that isn’t light.

Her legs were draped over my arm, her arms tightly around my neck. I looked down at her. The blue in her eyes was deep and rich in color. I needed to just sleep with her to get her out of my system. Once that happened, I’d move on to the next one. *I can’t be hung up on one girl, that’s not what I do.* Maybe once I got that redhead home, I’d be in a better mood. Fucking always put me in a better mood.

“I’m so tired,” she grumbled in my chest. “Put me down so I can go to bed, you big jerk.”

Her eyes were closed and I could swear I heard her snore.

“Come on, Kitty, I’ll take you home,” I said, watching her as she tried her hardest to keep her eyes open.

The guys were all preoccupied with the ten or so other girls that were joining us on the patio. I took advantage, snuck back inside, and carried her up the stairs to her and B’s living quarters. Her bedroom door was slightly open as I ap-

proached it. Kicking it with my foot, I opened it all the way. The door bounced off the wall behind it and closed slightly. Cringing, I glanced down, but Caroline was still passed out in my arms. Yup, she was definitely snoring.

I took her over to the bed and gently laid her down. Deep blue eyes locked on mine as I went to move my hand from behind her neck. As she searched my face, a beam of a smile came across hers. I would have loved to know what was going on in that mind of hers.

Lost in her features, I released my hand from her neck. I had to touch her. I had to know how soft her skin was. I ran a shaking finger down the side of her face. I'd never been so nervous to touch a woman before. I was in knots. I hadn't noticed before, but she had small freckles that ran across the bridge of her nose and under her eyes.

If I wasn't straining against my jeans before, I sure as hell was now. Her hand reached up over my neck. Her fingers glided over my Adams apple and down my exposed skin. Her lips twisted with a gleam of passion. *Fuck yeah, she wanted it as bad as I did.* I climbed on the bed and positioned myself perfectly over her body. I felt like putty as she kept moving her hand up and down my arm.

Oh God, I groaned inwardly. *What the hell is she doing?* Arching off the bed she brushed her breasts against my chest. I tried my damndest to keep a straight face, but I knew my eyes rolled to the back of my head as her hand curled around my belt. Yanking me closer to her, she closed her eyes and sighed just loud enough for me to hear. Her legs moved under mine, and that sweet hand of hers fisted my belt tighter—

Pain struck me hard and fast. I jumped, or more like fell off of her and the bed. I clutched at my balls and curled into the fetal position. *The bitch kneed me in the fucking balls!* I tried to stand but kept doubling over in pain. *Oh, man, that's not right!*

"Jesus Christ, Kitty!" I cried, clutching my throbbing crotch. Just to be safe I took a few steps back.

She stood from the bed and yelled down at me as I knelt on the floor. “I told you, to never step foot in this room again,” Standing a little straighter, I bit my lip as another wave of pain shot from my balls. “I was just helping you, since you can’t drink with the big boys,” I groaned.

“I was just fine, and you really expect me to believe you over top of me, feeling up my face is helping me? You were trying to take advantage of me. Thankfully, I came to my senses before you could infect me with your whore-dipped dick.”

“Whatever, won’t happen again. I’ll make sure to let you face plant on the asphalt next time.” Backing up, I held my side as a wave of nausea came over me. I really hated getting kneed in the balls.

“I’ll take my chances with the asphalt,” she said, placing her hands on her hips.

“Fine, maybe it will fix that face of yours.”

Sucking in a breath, she fought with her hair, pulling it back into a ponytail. “That’s it!” she shrieked.

The next thing I knew she was running me at full speed.

CHAPTER 11

Caroline

I'm going to kill him. There's no questioning it, the headlines will read, woman kills absurdly hot lead singer of popular hometown band. What was he thinking trying to seduce me with his good looks, amazing smell, and gentle hands? I wasn't falling for it—scratch that, I wasn't falling for it anymore!

He held his hands out in front of him, bracing himself for a collision. I kept running, at him. I was swinging my arms violently. He grabbed them and held them above my head. So I resorted to other means of beating him. I went to knee him again, but he saw it coming that time. Pulling my arms up, I jumped to kick him, but wrapped my legs around his hips instead.

“Will you stop it?” he said, adjusting his grip on my wrists. “Get off me!” he yelled, trying to wiggle from the tight grasp I had on his waist. I crossed my feet, pinning myself even closer to him.

Losing his balance he stumbled.

“Let my hands go, so I can strangle you!” I said through gritted teeth.

“I don't think so, Kitty,” he yelled back.

We kept moving around the room, struggling to overpower the other. That is, until we began to fall. He had tripped over the rug, and we were now falling backward. The plush mattress broke our fall, but neither one of us let up. My legs were still around his waist and his hands were still clutching my wrists.

My feet were sore under both our weight, so I uncrossed them but kept them tight so he couldn't wiggle free. He went to sit up but I pushed him back down, trying to free my hands again. I wiggled my fingers, the closer I came to his neck. I was determined that I going to hurt him.

"You're such a jackass—let me go, so I can strangle you," I said struggling against him as I gained a few more centimeters toward my target.

Stretching his hands up, he pulled them over his head, making me have to lean over him. Inches separated us.

"No! You kneed me in the balls. I'm not letting go till you apologize." His voice was even and stern. The pompous ass then flashed that stupid grin of his.

"You were taking advantage of me. I had to do something to get you to back the fuck off!"

Tugging my arms, he was able to pin me closer to him. "Apologize!"

"No!"

It was only then that I felt the tension between us. Not the angry, fighting tension. I had felt that all along, since I first met him, eight hours ago. This was different. This was feral, heavy, sexual tension. It was as if he felt it the same moment I did, because he let go of my hands and gripped the back of my neck, the exact moment I loosed my legs and ground my hips into his. His face came up off the bed, his lips crashed onto mine, or maybe I crashed onto his, either way it was fucking amazing.

He sat up, hand still holding my neck while the other wrapped around my hips, pulling me even tighter into him. Taking a hand full of his hair, I pull his head back, dragging my fingers along his exposed neck and face. All the while

his hand griped my ass tighter. His velvet tongue snuck between my lips, and for the love of all that's right, I let him assault my mouth. He tasted too good not to let him in.

My body took over. I had no control as I arched into him, for real this time. Loving the way my breasts flattened against his hard chest, I pushed harder. Yup, my brain had lost all control as we admittedly gave in to desire. So when he began to pull away, leaving soft little kisses on my lips, I had a moment of realization.

What the hell were we doing? I am repulsed by this guy, he is a womanizer. I was so dense that I hadn't realized I was being used. I was exactly where he wanted me. *Hell if I was going to let him continue to mess with my head!* I jumped up off his lap, and he carefully took his hands from me. I stood at the foot of my bed where he was sitting, wrapped my arms around my midsection, and shook my head no.

I know there was a blaze behind my eyes when I was finally able to look at him. "Get out!"

I made sure my words were icy, with no sign of banter in them. He didn't say anything back, he just stood in front of my bed.

"This was a mistake, and one I intend to never let happen again."

He took a step toward me as I took one away from him. "You're a fucking tease," he said, pointing to me.

"And you're an asshole. Now that we have that cleared up, get the fuck out of my room." I pointed at the door and stepped out of his way as he stormed out. I heard the door to our living quarters slam shut.

I can't believe I just let that happen. I had been here less than twelve hours and this place had me wishing the summer away, so I could get the hell out of here. I was going to have to take extra precautions around Kane. He was clearly more clever than I expected. I didn't easily get caught up like that. I usually kept my wits about me, but there was something about him that sacred me and made me feel things. I wasn't ready to feel anything. Previous guys only had me thinking

about sex and nothing else. When Kane and I kissed, I felt a future that I had sworn off when my mother—

Nope, not going there. I don't do happily ever after. I do right now, a hook up here and there, but not the future. When I kissed him, I saw it all, marriage, white picket fence, kids, a dog. I didn't want that life for myself, not since Mom.

CHAPTER 12

Kane

I slammed the door closed, stomping my way down the stairs. I couldn't believe that tease. She was a real piece of work. I was ready to finish what *she* had started, get her out of my system, cross her off the list, and worry about the consequences later. I was even willing to put *my* ego aside, just to get her out of my mind.

There was no way one girl should have had all that clout over me. Standing in the doorway that led to the covered patio/outdoor bar, the red head I was slated to take home and examine had two beers in her hand, nervously looking around for me.

The crowd had grown by at least twenty. I wasn't the least bit surprised. We usually got about a half hour before someone found us and told their friend, who told their friend, and before you knew it, there was fifty-plus people milling around. The women would all be fighting for our attention, while whatever men were hanging around were waiting for our leftovers.

"She realized your dick is the size of a two-year-old's?" Reece asked, jumping on my back.

Shaking him off, I pushed him back against the wall, not really in the mood to put up with his fucking antics.

“Well, don’t hold out on me, bro, how was she?” he asked, straightening from the wall.

“A tease,” I said, crossing my arms and continuing to look out at the patio.

“Maybe she’s just not into you, maybe she prefers a man with style and devilishly handsome good looks.”

Inhaling deeply, I turned my body toward him. “Whatever, dude. She’s not worth it. That redhead over there better be ready, because I’m going to screw the shit out of her.”

“Damn, Kitty has you all sorts of messed up.” Clapping his hand on my shoulder, he squeezed it, his way of showing compassion.

Nodding, I turned to look at him. “If you’re going to try, make sure you wear a cup.”

With that, I left him standing there, mulling over what I had just said. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw him finally get it—holding his hand over his balls as he scrunched his face, and then shook his head before jogging after me.

An hour later, I found B and let him know that I wasn’t going to stay to help out tonight. I told him I wasn’t feeling up to it, but I’d come back tomorrow afternoon and help out before they opened.

“Is Caroline okay?” he asked, looking around the patio. “I don’t see her.”

“She was tired and went up to bed an hour or so ago, haven’t seen her since.” As much as I wanted to let B know his daughter was a fucking tease and ball buster, I held back. He was ecstatic she was here and I wasn’t going to ruin that for him.

I wasn’t sure what happened between the two of them four years ago, before he came here, and I really didn’t care, but B was like a second father to us guys, and I wasn’t going to hurt his feelings. If it wasn’t for him, we wouldn’t have had a place to play or the huge cult following we had.

“I’ll be down here around noon to unlock the door for you, that too early?” he asked, before taking a swig of beer.

“Nah, noon is good, I’ll see you then,” I said before, heading for the parking lot. My conquest was already sitting in the passenger’s seat waiting for me, when I got there.



It was eleven and I was fully awake. What am I saying? I never went to sleep. After finding out the carpet and curtains didn’t match, I rolled over and tried to fall asleep, but it wasn’t happening. I grabbed my acoustic baby and headed downstairs to sit on the huge porch that encompassed our house. The guys and I rented a five-bedroom farmhouse from a couple who had moved Down South. Rent was cheap and the privacy was even better.

We had struck a deal with the couple that we’d fix up the house, if they’d cut the rent in half. We’d usually work on it in between construction jobs that my uncle had us doing. We had even done B’s whole upstairs for him, three months ago. He had anticipated having his daughter visit for the summer, so we demolished the upstairs, made the living area minuscule and her bedroom huge, adding the large bathroom and closet.

We all specialized in something different. I did most of the woodwork with JJ, Aiden was good at all the electrical, Trent had a knack for plumbing, and Reece was our demo guy. Together we were the total package—not only could we sing your panties off, we could also fix your house while we did it.

I was on my second cup of coffee and hundredth re-run of last night. Although I enjoyed exploring the interior decorations of the woman who was still sleeping in my bed, I wasn’t into it as much as I usually was, and that was all Caroline James’s fault. Glancing outside, I noticed a van with a taxi sign on top of it. The next thing I see is the redhead, two blondes, and a brunette walking past.

They didn't say anything to me as they did. They just headed to the door to leave.

JJ came down the hall next. Grabbing a cup of coffee, he joined me at the table. "I'm so glad we have off this morning. I don't think I could lift a nail," he said, gulping down his coffee.

Nodding in agreement, I sat there silent.

"Kane, what's going on?" he asked.

"Your cousin, that's what's going on. She's found a way to fuck up my head, playing hard to get."

Chuckling, JJ took another gulp of coffee. "That bad? Why not sweet talk your way in? It's worked before for you."

"I'm done with her. I just have to get out of my own head. I guess I can't win them all. Plus, I don't want to make things weird with B. She's only staying for the summer then moving on." I was trying to convince myself of everything I just said and it might have been working, a little.

The next to join us at the table was Aiden, followed by Reece. "So...carpet...curtains?" Reece asked, wiggling his eyebrows.

"Nope, not a match, but a pretty good lay," I added, standing from the table.

"Gentleman, you're now looking at the very proud, very exhausted, only male involved in a foursome, which happened after you assholes passed out last night, before boning the ladies *you* brought home. Thank you!" Trent said, as he strutted into the kitchen.

Reece called his bluff from the other side of the table. "You're lying,"

"Not even a bit. Next time, make sure you fuckers take your ladies to your room before you pass out."

"Nice," I said, before setting my cup in the sink.

Grabbing my keys, I headed for the back door.

"Where the hell are you going?" Reece asked.

"BJ's. I told B that I'd help him out before they open tonight."

“If you see Kitty, grab her ass for me,” he called while grabbing the air.

“I don’t think so. That girl’s got issues, and I don’t want to get involved with them.”

“I said grab her ass, not play psychologist,” Reece replied.

“I’m not going within an arm’s length of her. I got bruises, blue balls, and I’d really like to keep my face from getting smacked. So, I’m not going anywhere near that feral kitty.”

Turning from their stunned faces, because I had never let a woman get to me like that, I left.

CHAPTER 13

Caroline

So there was one good thing about not getting the job at J&K—sleeping in. Rolling over, I glanced at the clock, feeling well rested. That was the first night I had slept that soundly since I started my internship. The alcohol might have had something to do with the sound slumber I had just enjoyed.

I had totally missed the whole morning—*Guess there's no point in making breakfast.* Glancing at the small kitchen, I headed straight for the refrigerator. Nothing. There wasn't even ketchup, just vitamin water and OJ. How was my father surviving off of vitamin water and OJ? Then it hit me, the kitchen in the back of the bar. Slipping on my flip flops, I headed down stairs in a tight tank top, and my comfy flannel PJ pants that hung low on my hips, making them extra comfy. *Another perk of not working at J&K, comfy clothes, all day!*

I walked into the back kitchen to find my father prepping food for the night. Even though it was a bar, my father offered some really good bar food.

“Hey, Dad,” I said as I walked around to the prep station.

He was cutting potatoes into fries, a huge tub of already cut potatoes sat at on the floor next to the table. “Hey, sleepyhead. You hungry?” he asked.

“Starving,” I replied.

Dropping what he was doing, he went to the huge industrial fridge and pulled out lunchmeat and cheese. Taking a loaf of bread off the shelf, he walked back to the prep station and proceeded to make me a sandwich. It was the best sandwich I had ever had. The moment he put it in front of me, I quickly scarfed it down.

I sat back on the stool and held my delightfully full stomach. “That was so good, Dad, thank you,”

“How are you doing, honey? You like your room? Are you finding everything you need?” he asked with a twinge of nervousness to his voice.

I knew my father wanted me to be happy, and he really wanted to make me stay. I was finding it hard to tell him I wasn’t planning on staying longer than summer. So I chickened out. He had no clue I was hell bent on leaving. He thought I was going to work here, love it, and never want to leave. I didn’t have the heart to tell him because, as much as he wanted me to be happy, I wanted him to be just as happy. If I told him I was counting down the days till I left, he’d be crushed.

“Everything is great, Dad, I love my room, you did a great job—” I was going to go on about how much I liked the bar and how nice everyone was, but—

“I’m glad you like it, Kitty. It was a bitch laying that lovely hardwood floor that your father just had to have in there.”

I turned around to see Kane standing behind me, a bucket of cleaning supplies in one hand and a mop in the other.

I don’t know what shocked me more, the fact that he had actually cleaned something or the fact that he was in my room before I was. Smiling that stupid grin of his, he winked at me then moved to place the cleaning stuff in a nearby closet.

“Bathrooms are done B. You need help with anything else?” he asked, a few feet from us.

I wanted to ignore it, but I could feel the tension between us. It was intense and dripping with anger, with only a hint of sexual desire. And that might have just been me because—*Shit, he looks sexy as hell*. He was in mesh shorts and a white wife-beater, which showed off his muscular arms that I was starting to really enjoy looking at.

My eyes drifted on their own, running up his body, as if I’d never let them look at a man before. His arms crossed, making his chest puff up and the muscles in his arms bulge in a delightful way. For a split second, I forgot why I hated the man. I forgot why I shouldn’t be running toward him, to be engulfed in those mesmerizing arms. Pulling my mind out of a daydream and back to reality, I made myself remember that not even twenty minutes after we had...whatever we had...he was feeling up and kissing some redhead that kept running her hand over the balls I’d kneed back into his body.

“Caroline, I forgot to tell you, the boys—JJ, Trent, Aiden, Reece, and Kane—they’re all contractors. They rebuilt your room and the living area. I had them working like dogs for the past three months.” My father chuckled to himself, no doubt remembering all the shenanigans of having four rowdy musicians working on his house.

I turned from my father to eye Kane up again. That stupid grin was plastered even bigger on his face.

“Didn’t they do an awesome job?” Dad continued, seemingly oblivious to the tension. “Hold on—let me run upstairs, I took a bunch of before pictures. You won’t believe what it looked like before they got a hold of it.” Without another word, my father exited from the kitchen and went in search of the photos.

Rocking on his feet, Kane turned to leave the kitchen as well. *Yeah, he should leave, I don’t have anything to say to him, and he sure didn’t have anything to say to me*. I think we said it all the night before. So why couldn’t I help the

stupid pit that was in my stomach as I watched him leave. *Oh, this is ridiculous.*

“I saw your night got interesting. That redhead give you what you wanted?” The moment the words left my lips, I wanted to run and hide, I should have just let it go, let *him* go.

Stopping in his tracks, he threw his head back and laughed loudly. “Let’s just say, she knew the right way to handle my balls,” he said, turning back to me.

“You deserved it,” I called back. I moved anxiously on the stool, his brisk walk across the room was putting me seriously on edge.

“Why do you even care? You made it perfectly clear last night that you want nothing to do with this or my balls,” he said, gesturing at his body.

I stood from the stool, “I don’t care,” I clipped back. He was still an arm’s length away and as I was standing there, I caught a whiff of his cologne—*Amazing*. “Why do you sleep with so many women, can’t find one that can stand to be in your presence for more than one night?” I asked, crossing my arms.

“Kitty, drop it. You want me to leave you alone, fine, but it works both ways,” he said, maintaining his distance.

“I don’t want you to leave me alone—” *Aw dammit, not like that.* “Listen, I’m going to be here. I live upstairs, and we’re going to run into each other. I’ll try to be civil, but we can’t let what happened last night happen again. For some reason, my father loves you boys, and if we’re constantly fighting, then it’s going to put stress on him, and that’s the last thing I want.”

I meant that, all of it. I knew he was bad news and the way I felt last night while we kissed was terrifying, but we had to coexist. My father loved those boys like they were his long lost sons, or so he’d told me over lunch.

“I agree. But you have to realize, women love me. You can’t walk around jealous of them then take it out on my poor defenseless body. I bruise easily,” he said, smiling.

“What a baby,” I said, as I closed the distance between us so I could punch his arm.

Rubbing his arm, he scrunched up his face in pain. “What the fuck, Kitty? I just said I bruise.”

“Found them!” my father yelled, walking back into the kitchen.

He had an album of photos under his arm. Setting it down on the work station, I started flipping through them, Kane by my side. He talked me through all that they had done to get my room ready for me. I caught myself leaning in closer to him, taking in his unique smell. His voice drifted to my ear as he talked, almost lulling me to a state of clam, peacefulness. As long as I kept things to myself and kept up a hard exterior, I thought, I was going to make it through the summer.

Turning the page to the next set of pictures, I did a double take. It was not pictures of my transformed bedroom; it was pictures from my childhood. The first was just me, maybe three years old, my blonde crazy curls in pigtails. I was sitting on top of a slide, ready to go down. The next was me on a swing. There was one of my father and me outside of the only home I ever knew. The last picture on the page was my mother.

I stared at it. I hadn't looked at a picture of her since I had moved away, four years ago. My way of coping was to pretend she never existed. If she wasn't in my memory, then it didn't hurt. So I took on the painful task of unremembering every moment with her. I was mad at her. *I'm still mad at her.*

CHAPTER 14

Kane

I expected to run into Caroline. I had planned on keeping my distance. I did not expect to find her in her PJs in the back kitchen. I came around the corner to see her sitting on a stool, talking to her father. She had her mane of curls down, falling on her back, almost touching the bottom of her shirt. Her flannel pants were low on her waist. The dimples that were just above her ass were in full sight. Her tank top was tight and, even though I was standing behind her, I could tell it was above her navel.

I nearly dropped to my knees when she stood up from the stool, and I got my first full on glimpse of her. Her tank top was thin and, as she stood up, her breasts bounced just enough. *Fuck, I'm hard.* Her nipples showed through the sheer shirt and I nearly fainted. I had to cross my arms to keep my hands from reaching to feel how hard and strained they were against the fabric.

I was good. I kept my distance—arm's length, like I had told myself—but as we spoke and resolved how we were going to coexist, she took that step and punched me! I guess if I wasn't going to be able to have her, I was going to have to settle for what I could. I agreed with her, that staying mad at one another was going to put stress on B. He was eventually

going to figure it out, that we had issues, and that was the last thing I wanted to do, stress him out.

I wasn't going to stop being who I was, and she was going to have to keep her opinions to herself. If she wasn't going to give it to me, then I was going somewhere else. I had one hell of a libido, and I made sure to keep it happy.

In the middle of explaining how we transformed the whole second floor, she practically froze. Instead of a picture of Aiden messing with some wires, which was what I expected to be next, it was pictures from her childhood, her past. B never spoke about his past, only of Caroline. No one ever asked him about the mother or why he left. B could be very standoffish when he wanted to. He was a tall man with wide shoulders. Since he had moved here he had lost a considerable amount of excess fat and started lifting weights. For someone who was knocking on fifty, he was in great shape, and the ladies loved him as much as us, although he attracted a more mature audience.

"Dad, I'm going to go shower and get ready for my training. Kara said she'd meet me at the bar at two, so I'm going to head upstairs."

B simply nodded. A sad look washed across his face, the same time as it did on Caroline's. Clearly something was up, and I had a feeling it had to do with her mother.

"Kane," Kitty said, turning to look up at me. "Thank you for making my room as amazing as you did. Don't let your head get too big, or I'm never saying anything nice about you again."

"I'll try to keep it contained," I replied, leaning back against the table, crossing my arms again so I didn't reach out for her taut nipples.

"I guess I'll see you the next time you play here."

"Oh, you mean in two hours when we practice." I paused for a moment and let that sink in.

"You practice here every day, don't you?" she asked, smiling back.

“Get used to it, Kitty, I practically live here. See you in a few hours,” I said smugly, before she sighed and walked out the door. “What was that about B?” I asked once she’d walked out of the room.

“Nothing, she’s just—she hasn’t dealt with it yet,” he said, closing the photo album.

“Hasn’t dealt with what?” I asked, digging a little deeper than I ever had with him.

“It’s nothing, Kane, just let her be. She might put on a good front, but she’s got some serious things to deal with and, until she does, she’s never going to be truly happy.”

I stared across at him, not wanting to intrude anymore, so I dropped it. I sat on the edge of the stage, my baby on my lap. I started strumming the tune I had started last night on the porch. It was a new song, slow and serious. I didn’t have words to it, but the melody flowed enticingly around me, and I couldn’t seem to stop playing it over and over again. While I played, I couldn’t get the image of Caroline out of my head, not the one of her breasts, or the dimples above her ass. It was the image of her looking up at me, before she kneed me in the balls. She could deny it all she wanted, but that look was real. No one had ever looked at me that way before, like she could see all of me.

I had my own reasons for staying single and most of them were selfish and egotistical. To put it plainly, I wanted the freedom to love ’em and leave ’em, to come and go as I pleased. You can’t do that with a stage five clinger, trust me, I’ve tried. Kitty though—I had a feeling, the reason she had a stone wall up had more to do with her mother, than not being attracted to me.

The guys arrived right when Kara was starting to train Caroline. Since we had the day off, we took advantage and put in a good long practice. We worked on a horde of new songs, but I kept that one to myself. I wasn’t ready to share it, just like I wasn’t willing to share her. Not like I had a choice in the matter, but I’d do my damndest to keep her from anyone else, at least until I got her out of my system.

Three hours in, Kara had us pretending to be customers. We each sat at a different table, placing orders and giving our little Kitty one hell of a time. If she could get through serving us, she'd have no problem in the future.

Reece shrugged. "I said, I wanted this medium, it's too over done."

"I don't care anymore, Reece! I'm not taking it back again! Just eat your fucking food and shut up," she yelled back down at him, smacking his red mohawked head for added humph.

I was almost crying, because I was laughing so hard.

"Caroline, you can't do that. What if he was a real customer?" Kara called from behind the bar, trying to hold in her own chuckles.

"Well, he's not. He's a pain in my ass," she yelled back, turning to Kara and slamming her hands down on her hips.

"You're damn right, I'm a pain in the ass," Reece said as he tried to swat at hers.

With sonic speed, she turned around and took his food from him.

"You're not eating now. I'm kicking you out. Leave," she said, walking away from his table and toward mine.

She was headed in my direction and I tried really hard to control myself. If she caught me still laughing, I had a feeling it was going to end in a new black and blue bruise.

"What are you laughing at?" she asked, glairing down at me. "Nothing. Can I get another beer? Mine's gone," I said, holding up my empty beer bottle.

"No! We're out of beer, and I'm done playing around. I get it. Bring on the real customers that actually have some manners," she said, snatching the empty beer bottle from my hand.

I watched along with the rest of the guys as her fine ass walked away and into the kitchen.

"Kane, what the hell? I need her to practice," Kara called from behind the bar.

“It wasn’t me. I just asked for another beer. Reece is the one who pissed her off,” I pleaded in my own defense.

“You’re the ring leader, so you automatically get blamed,” Kara said, before leaving the bar to go after Caroline.

CHAPTER 15

Caroline

My first night was a piece of cake. The guys had stayed, but since they weren't slated to play, the bar was not at all like it was the previous night. I found my way around and things were going perfect. The guys were giving me a hard time, but I eventually got a little revenge.

A group of women walked in, clearly having a girl's night. They sat down and I proceeded to get their drink order and appetizers. I couldn't help but notice that every time I walked by, they would be whispering and giggling about the guys. I stood back, leaning against the bar, watching the woman openly observe ONS as they sat around a table drinking and having a good time.

I kept looking from one table to the other, when Kane caught me. Leaning back on his chair, so he was away from the table, he beckoned me with a finger and a devilish grin. I shook my head and mouthed the word "No." His face fell, his mouth twisted, and he really looked like he was going to cry. His usual grin turned upside down, his eyes got all big and round. *He's ridiculous.*

I stood from the bar and made my way over to their table. Stopping in front of him, I sat back on my hip and

crossed my arms. “What do you want?” I asked, looking down at him.

“Kitty, the guys and I wanted to ask you something.”

Rolling my eyes, I switched hips to show my frustration. “What pray-tell do you want to ask me? And I swear to god, Kane, if you ask me to have an orgy with you all, I’m going to punch you in the face.” I held my fist up for added flare.

“Calm down, calm down. We weren’t going to ask you that, although...”

“Kane,” I seethed, taking a step closer to him and pulling my fist up.

“Whoa, calm down, Kitty,” he said, holding his hands up.

“What’s your type Kitty, what makes you purr?” Reece asked from the other side of me.

Whipping my head toward him, I felt my jaw drop. “You’ll never know, Reece, because it sure as hell isn’t you!”

The door to the bar opened just then and we all turned to see a man walk in. My eyes stayed on the person a little longer than the guys’ did. It was Nate from the other night. He stood by the door while Emily, another girl who worked at the bar, grabbed him a menu and took him to a seat in my section.

The wicked smile speared across my face as I watched him pull the chair out and sit down. Catching my eye, he held his hand up and gave a little smile and wave. He was in casual clothes, jeans and a T-shirt with a leather jacket. His hair was slightly messy but still off his face. He was every bit my type, my go to when I was living in New York.

Rotating back to the table of playboy rock stars, I smiled down at them. They were oblivious, except Kane. He was attentively watching me watch Nate.

“That right there boys, is my type—a man.” Shrugging my shoulders, I cheerfully smiled at them. “Anything else?”

“Nate Rodgers, is your type?” Kane asked in disbelief.

“Yeah, but don’t worry, one day when you grow up, you all might become men too. Reece, you might become a woman, if you keep wearing those tight-ass pants.”

“That’s harsh, Kitty. Do we have to cut your claws?” Reece asked.

“Yeah, come on, Kitty, you don’t have to be mean to us all. I haven’t even made a play for you,” Aiden added.

“I only speak the truth boys.” I went to walk away but Kane reached for my hand, pulling me back to the table.

“Don’t lie,” he breathed, standing from his chair and getting in my face. “That’s not really you’re type. You keep that wall up if you want, but I know you felt something last night and Nate Rodgers didn’t have a damn thing to do with that.”

I thought that we had squashed this, this morning.
“Kane, we talked about this. Last night was—”

“It was real,” he said, before I could finish.

“No, it wasn’t. I have to go,” I said, trying to back away.

“Caroline, take the wall down,” was all he said before letting me turn to leave.

I glanced back once I got to the bar. But Kane wasn’t looking. He was laughing and smiling with his friends.

Why did he have to do that? It was bad enough I had to pretend I was in a straightjacket so I didn’t reach out and grab a hand full of that hair of his, or caress his tatted-up, cut arms. What I did feel, for a moment last night with him, was enough for me to scare myself straight. Nate was my type because, he was simple, average, easy to let go. If I kept up what I was doing last night with Kane, it would have gotten difficult, because he’s not average and I didn’t trust myself not to let go. So the best thing to do was exactly what I did. Put that wall up and keep him at bay.

I walked over to the table of women. “I couldn’t help but over hear you girls,” I said, kneeling down by the table.

The five women turned their heads my way. They weren’t the prettiest bunch, but they seemed nice. I smiled

wickedly at the guys, as they watched me talk to the women. Their faces scrunched in confusion before I turned back.

“The guys over, they were wondering if you would join them? They’ve had their eyes on you girls all night.”

All five women stared at me, a look of disbelief on their faces.

“How do you know that?” the girl with the round face and glasses asked.

“I’m friends with them. I was just talking to them, and they’d really like to meet you ladies,” I said, smiling.

The women looked at one another before standing from the table. They grabbed their drinks and followed me over.

The guys were all talking and didn’t notice the horde of women coming their way. I stood in front of Kane and tapped his shoulder. Rotating around in his chair, he looked up at me then behind me to the five women, who these guys would never give the time of day to.

“Kane, guys, here are the girls,” I said with a huge smile. Their faces were priceless. “I was just telling the girls how much you were begging me to bring them over here. Ladies, these guys might be studs on the stage, but in real life, they get a little shy around women.” I glanced down to see Kane shaking his head and laughing. I held his shoulder and pinched the muscle tightly. His smile fell as he withered in pain. I then reached over to Reece and did the same thing. He didn’t say ouch, but his mouth opened wide in pain. I leaned over in between their heads and spoke softly. “You fuckers better be nice to these women. They are your fans too. If I see you being mean or rude to any one of them, I’m going to hunt you down and put your balls in a vice grip. Kitty has her claws out, so you better behave, you got me?”

They all nodded to me and I think Trent even clutched his balls. *Good my point was made.*

Smacking their backs, I stood and faced the women. “They’re all yours, ladies, enjoy your night. ONS is paying your tab.”

CHAPTER 16

Kane

I can't believe she just did that. Elbows on the table, I rubbed my eyes then ran my fingers back through my hair. Our Kitty was clever, there was no doubting that. We all shook our heads and tried to make the best of it. I, for one, wasn't going to mess with these women. The idea of Kitty with my balls in a vice grip was enough to make me do almost anything, including entreating these women. We all stood from the table and grabbed a chair for them.

Once we were all settled around two tables, they began asking us questions. I felt like we were being interrogated.

"We're really big fans," one said nervously. She was sitting next to me and Reece was on my other side.

"I can see that," Reece said. I knew exactly what he meant by that, and I was hoping like hell that these women didn't catch on. I turned to him, eyes wide with warning before I stepped on his foot. "Damn it, Kane, watch your fucking feet," Reece yelled.

Just then, Caroline walked back over. Standing between Reece and me again, she grabbed our shoulders. I tried really hard not to make a pained face. Reece did the same.

"Is there a problem? Everything going okay?" she asked through a gritted smile.

“We’re fine, Kitty,” JJ said, coming to Reece’s and my rescue.

“Good! You ladies be nice. These guys are family,” she added, winking at JJ.

I didn’t know why, but hearing her say that made me smile.

We had kept our word, we were as proper as we could be. These women were fans, the real kind. They loved our music, they weren’t just here to jump us or become one of our conquests. Most of them were married. One was even six months pregnant. What we thought was going to be torture, ended up being a good time. Go figure. Kitty’s plan backfired. But we weren’t going to let her know that. We were grateful to meet with fans who actually appreciated us for our music and not just how we could please them in bed.

I caught Caroline chatting with Nate. It would be Nate. He graduated a year before us and was jealous as hell that we’d get so much tail. I didn’t see what she saw in him. I sure as hell didn’t believe that he was her type. He was boring and complacent—he was basically the complete opposite of me. *Whatever, my Monday night was most likely waiting on our front porch. I’d get over Kitty one way or another.*



A week had turned into a month. Not much had changed. We played every Friday night at BJ’s, picked up a few other gigs. We worked construction during the day, and we practiced as often as we could. The only thing that was different was I’d get a fucking hard on every time I’d see Caroline. *Seriously, someone is going to start noticing.*

Our banter was going strong and the practical jokes were getting borderline dangerous—for us, that is. It started with Reece. He was making a thrusting motion behind Caroline as she walked by, but the dumb ass forgot that there was a mirror and she had seen the whole thing. Kitty immediately

turned around and kicked him in the shin, hard. The next night we had to play, and he was missing beats because he was in so much pain.

Next was JJ. He had found a photo of Caroline when they were little, in the bathtub, together. He showed us all. Now, JJ will think twice before showing any other photos like that, because she went to his mom and got a picture of him when he was twelve in a zip up PJ, a horrible haircut, and full head gear. She blew the picture up and hung it on the wall near where he stood, so everyone would see while he played.

Aiden had finally gotten the balls to make a move on Kitty. He was trying to sweet talk her at the bar one night while she was making drinks. I don't know what was said and he swore never to tell us, but her face went from smiling to serial killer in a split second. Reaching below the bar, she emerged with the soda hose and proceeded to spray him in the face. Two days later, he had a nasty eye infection. Red and swollen. He didn't get laid for a week after that. She was so proud of herself.

Trent was lucky *he* didn't lose a nipple. One night after our show, we were all sitting around out back. Kitty had plopped down on Trent's lap, which had become routine. I hated it. *What the hell was wrong with my lap?* It had to be the big bad biker/protector vibe he put off. Women went fucking nuts for that.

Resting her feet, from running around all night, she would snuggle up and rest her head on his shoulder.

I didn't know why, but he always got away with feeling her up. Either she would be too tired to notice or, hell, maybe she liked it. This one particular night, he took it a bit too far and paid for it. She swatted his hand away, hit his shoulder, and when he was still laughing about it, she scrunched her face up and went right for his nipple, pinching it hard and then twisting with ferocity. He screeched like a girl, jumped up, but she wouldn't release him. Kitty had her claws in him and she wasn't letting go.

“I like you Trent,” she had said. “But if you touch me like that again, you are going to lose this!” she said, twisting his left nipple a little more.

Of course, my pranks were the worst and every day I added at least one new bruise to my sore body. I ran the gambit. I had put a fake snake in her bed, that gained me a bruise on the left arm. I had jumped out of the closet in the back while she was cleaning up one night, which got me a punch in the gut. One of my favorites was when I told her B needed to speak with her in the walk in freezer. I watched her walk in then closed and locked the door behind her. She was in there for a good ten minutes. When I let her out, her teeth were chattering while she was swinging her arms at me. The only reason she got me right in the jaw was because I was hunched over, laughing so hard.

Now, she wasn't a saint either. She was just as nasty with us. She had ordered thirty pizzas one night and sent them to our house. Two hundred and some odd dollars later, we had pizza for a week and a half. Then there was the group of guys who were under the impression that we swung their way. Our Kitty had managed to make sure no women were allowed on the patio, thus we were surrounded by dudes with disturbing ideas about us. That was a long and very uncomfortable night.

The worst happened last night. We were just getting ready to go on. Kitty was standing in her usual corner just before the door to the open bar. I was trying to ignore her because she had practically broken my hand. It didn't matter that she had bent my hand back for trying to smack her ass. When she grabbed me by the arm and hulled me back so I was flush against her, I was more than surprised.

“Kane,” she breathed, running her fucking, soft hands all up and down my shirtless arm.

Swallowing the huge lump in my throat I looked down at her.

“I want to try something with you. When you're done playing, I'm really embarrassed to admit it, but I can't hold

back any more.” She kept running her hand up and down my arm, then she bit her lip nervously.

Fuck! I prayed that she didn’t see the raging hard on I was sporting. That would have totally given me away. I needed to play cool, like I didn’t care, but who the fuck was I trying to kid? “What do you have in mind, Kitty?” I asked leaning into her, her body was flush with mine, and fuck if I couldn’t feel her nipples through her thin shirt. *Shit!* I looked down, and she wasn’t even wearing a fucking bra.

“I want it to be special, just us,” she said, chewing on her finger.

Holy shit balls! I was ready to cancel the show, tell the guys to fuck off, and rush her up to her room.

“After,” was all she said as she pushed me back and pointed up to the stage.

I kept it just to the songs, no drinks, no flirty banter with the crowd, I just wanted it over. The guys kept giving me looks, but I didn’t care, I still had chub just thinking about all the naughty things I was going to do to my little kitty. When we finished, I raced straight out the back, only to find Kara. She handed me a note, I opened it and felt my jaw go slack as I read the words that were so beautifully written. *Meet me down by the river. I’ll be in the water, waiting...naked...*

There just so happened to be a large river that ran behind Main Street, It was great to wade in and float down and Caroline James was naked in it, waiting for me. She had finally taken that fucking wall down and was ready to give in.

I was standing on the edge of the water after walking up and down the edge trying to find her, and then I spotted her clothes, all of them! I searched the water. Lucky for me, the moon was bright, which made it painfully obvious where she was. Coming up from under the water, she pushed her hair out of her face.

“Kane, hurry up and get out here, I don’t know how much longer I can wait.”

I couldn’t speak. I just stripped as fast as I could. As I pulled off my boxers and tossed them into the pile of clothes,

I realized just how much I liked seeing our clothes mixed up on the ground together.

I looked back out to the water when Caroline yelled “Now!”

I watched as she stood up in a bathing suit from the water that was at her thighs. That’s when a huge flood light turned on illuminating the whole side of the river. It’s then, that I noticed all the people standing around laughing. *That sneaky little bitch!* Everyone from the bar, the guys, B, women of all ages, stood around admiring me in all my glory. Usually, I wouldn’t mind. But as I glanced around with a huge smile on my face my eyes landed on my mom! *She fucking called my mom!*

I ran into the water at full speed. “You’re going to pay for this Kitty!” I yelled as I made my way in the cold water. When I caught up to her, I pushed her head under the water. “If you wanted to see the package that bad, Kitty, you should have just asked,” I said when she reemerged from under the water.

“Wasn’t that impressive,” she called and then pushed me down in the water.

“Oh, Kitty, when will you just admit, you want me?”

“Keep dreaming, Kane,” she said as she swam away.

CHAPTER 17

Caroline

I was sitting on my balcony, drinking a beer. It was close to three in the afternoon, and I was killing time before I had to help Dad prep for the night. There was another band coming to play. The guys were friends with them and were helping them gain a bigger audience. *I guess these rock guys stick together.* The boys had promoted them last night, telling the audience that they'd be here to watch and that everyone should come and join them.

I sat, thinking about the previous night. I still couldn't believe I pulled it off. After the shock wore off that Kane was buck-ass naked, everyone stripped to their underwear and jumped into the river. It ended up being a really fun time. When I was planning it, I didn't think too far in advance. I had seen Kane—all of Kane and it was making things—difficult. I'd never let on that it was, but now, I didn't think I'd be able to look at him with a straight face, because all I'd see was that glorious package of his, that I had straight-up lied to his face about.

Sitting up a little from my chair, I heard, then saw, Kane's red pickup truck pull up. His truck was a beautiful red color, just like his precious guitar that he called baby. It had chrome in all the right places, it was high off the ground with big tires, and it looked hot. I didn't see him as a truck-

kind-of guy. I saw him more as an older muscle car guy at first. I thought it went better with the whole rocker thing. Suddenly, my mind wandered and I got an image of me in cowboy boots and daisy dukes, jumping out of the truck and into his arms. Shaking my head quickly, I got the picture out of my mind before I could elaborate on it.

It was getting hotter by the day and, as he jumped out of his truck, I nearly dropped my beer on my lap. He was a sweaty mess, no shirt, cargo shorts, backward hat, and glistening body. *Fuck, Caroline, get it together.* He stood next to his truck, his arms hanging over the bed. The other guys pulled in next. Trent was also driving his truck, which was black like his bass. Aiden, Reese, and Trent all got out of his truck, looking just as yummy as Kane. None of them had shirts on. Their tatted-up bodies had a glorious mix of dirt and sweat coating their muscular frames. This was clearly the best perk of me being here. Them not talking to me, and me just getting to watch them in all their sexy glory. I wouldn't be surprised if women hired them to fix their houses, just so they could get this view every day.

JJ was the last to pull up. He did have a muscle car—a blue 1969 Dodge Challenger. It was a sexy beast. I had gotten to ride in it twice since I had moved in. Once to the grocery store and once to his mom's house for dinner. As the boys would say, it made me purr like the kitten they thought I was. As much as I hated it in the beginning, that stupid name had grown on me. Looking back, if you would have told me I'd be working in my father's bar, be surrounded by a hunky pack of rock stars who referred to me as their mascot Kitty, I'd have laughed in your face. *Yet here I am, and I don't hate it—that much.*

I couldn't help myself. "Don't you guys think you should go clean up before you make your groupies sit on your laps tonight? You fucking reek! I can smell you all the way up here!"

All five heads turned my way. Reece raised his hand and saluted me with the middle finger.

“Oh shut up, drink your beer, and enjoy the view,” Kane said, while flexing his arms, in a bodybuilder way.

Oh, why did he have to do that? I stood from my chair and leaned over the railing. “Why are you guys even here?” I asked.

“We’re meeting our friends from Fallen, plus we got to pack our stuff up so they can set up for tonight’s show.” Aiden replied, while re-doing his shoulder-length black hair into a man bun atop his head.

I knew nothing about this band Fallen, but the crowd last night seemed to know exactly who they were. I guess I’d be meeting them soon.

“I’m coming up to use your bathroom,” Kane said, as he walked from his truck.

“I don’t think so. Use the one in the bar. I don’t need your smelly ass in my house. It’s bad enough its wafting up here,” I said this as he kept walking under the patio and finally out of sight. *That asshole!* I stood there for a second, eyeing the rest of the guys in guilty pleasure, drank the rest of my beer, then left the balcony. *I’ll be damned if he was going to use my bathroom, I don’t need his ass anywhere near my toilet.*

I strode across my room and ran smack into Kane, sweaty, dirty, and fucking sexy as hell.

“I don’t think so Kane,” I said, pointing a finger at his chest.

“Kitty, move, I helped put this bathroom together, I’ve used it before, and I’m going to use it now!”

Ew, he had used it before! Like recently?

“Yeah, let that sink in. While you’re down there serving drinks all night, I come up here and use your bathroom. I can really relax in there. It must be the lavender candles that you have.”

Clenching my fists at my sides, I ground my jaw. “Get out of my room.”

He stood there looming over me, his hat still on backward holding his mess of curls back. His raw scent tickled

my senses and I had to do everything I could to keep my hands at my sides. He didn't have a lot of tattoos, but the ones he did have were delightful to look at. He had some colorful design over his left peck, which led all the way over to his shoulder, and down to his elbow. He didn't say anything, just turned from me and headed toward *my* bathroom. I was shell shocked, not only that he was actually going to use my bathroom, but at the tattoo that ran across his shoulder blades.

That wonderful scent that was coming off of him had disappeared, replaced by something foul. *That fucker farted in my room! Hell if I'm going to let him blow my bathroom up!* I ran straight at him and jumped on his back. I slipped on his slick damp skin but that didn't stop me, it only slowed me down, I was out for blood. Clearly, I had taken him off guard. He stumbled forward to gain his balance back and as he did, I laced my arms around his neck and my legs around his waist, so I wouldn't slip again. "You are not going to take a shit in my bathroom, Kane!"

He stood still, his arms dropping to his sides. His head hung down and he was shaking, while I clung to his back.

"Woman, don't think I won't go in there with you on my back to get my business done." I quickly jumped off his back. Rotating toward me, he cocked his head. "You can't keep your hands off me, can you?" He stood there, crossing his arms and looking all sexy.

"You're insane. Whatever. Use the bathroom," I said, throwing my hands up in defeat. Right now I just wanted him to get it over with and leave. He was too fucking sexy standing there and I didn't know how much longer I could hold out.

"Oh, I'm not insane. You saw something you liked last night in that river and now you want more," he said, taking a step toward me. "I *know* I saw something I liked. You just got to get out of your head and let me in."

"I don't have to do shit, Kane. I'm not in my head. I just don't like you," I said back, my hands on my hips.

“You see, I don’t believe you. I believe that you’re doing everything in your power not to reach out and get another taste. I know this, because I’m in the same boat. I don’t know what it is about you. Maybe it’s because you’re holding out on me, but fuck if I don’t want to shove you up against that wall and have my way with you.”

I hadn’t noticed, but I was backing up and hit the wall behind me. Kane was toe to toe with me, hovering over me as he spoke.

I knew he had ideas that involved getting in my pants, but this seemed a little different. I don’t like different. Different is dangerous. His lips came millimeters away from mine. I should have pushed back. My brain knew that, but my body was frozen. When I didn’t move, he took that as go ahead. *Damn it!* I reached up, grabbed the back of his neck, and pulled him the rest of the way so our lips finally touched. His hat fell off his head and hit the floor as my hands ran up the back of his head. It wasn’t a nice kiss—it was a fucking amazing kiss.

CHAPTER 18

Kane

S*hit, she tastes good.* It had been a long month since the last time I kissed her. I had tried to use other women to get over that scrumptious taste, but they never seem to be as good as her. I fisted her hair at the back of her neck, pushing my body into hers, farther against the wall. Her hand left my neck and came up my face, tossing my hat off. She fisted my hair, pulling me closer to her. I usually hated when women played with my hair, but fuck if it didn't send goose bumps down my arms.

I was lost in her, and I was loving it. That is, until I got pushed back.

“Kane, I can't do this, we can't do this,” she said, holding her hand over her mouth, as if to keep from kissing me again.

She looked close to tears and I didn't have a clue why. *It felt right with her. Why does she keep pushing me away?*

“Caroline, what's the problem?” I asked, squatting a little so I could get eye to eye with her.

She looked up at me, tears filling her eyes, but not spilling over. “My dad—I work here. It's just—I can't,” she said.

I didn't believe her. “B won't give a shit. You know that. You're a grown-ass woman, you can do what you want.

Who cares if you work here? All the better, I said, in a sad attempt to make a joke.

“I don’t like you.”

“Are you asking me or telling me, because it sounds like you’re trying to convince *yourself*.” I stood straight, running my hands through my sweaty hair

“Just use the bathroom,” she said, tossing her hands up as she turned away from me.

“Caroline, I don’t get it. You kiss me like you never want to let go then push me away and say you don’t like it. That’s fucked up.”

Her hair fanned out as she spun back around. “What do you want me to say Kane? I don’t want to be another notch on your belt. I let this go further, it might be great, or hell, you might be horrible—”

I quickly cut her off. “I’m not horrible. For the record, I’ve been told I’m amazing.”

“Doesn’t matter, Kane, I’m not going to be that girl. You’re not going to sleep with me today and then someone else the next. I *don’t* do that, you *do*, so it’s never going to happen. Now use the bathroom and get the hell out.”

I stared down at her deep blue eyes. *Nope, still don’t believe that.* “You’re going to crack and tell me what the hell is going on, eventually, because that shit you just said doesn’t make any sense. You’ve had one night stands, I know it. I also know you watch my every move. I know this because I watch yours. You’re a game changer, Kitty. I’m not against cutting it down to just you, if that’s really your issue, but I know it’s not.”

Shock came across her face and mine the moment those words left my lips. *I can’t believe I just said I’d give up my amazing sex life to sleep with her.*

“Stop! Just shut up, Kane, you don’t mean that,” she said, shaking her head.

I stood there, looking at the most beautiful girl I had ever seen, and I did. I meant it. *Holy shit!* I was falling hard for

Kitty, and not merely in a sexual way. “I do. I will fucking give it up for you.”

The tears she had kept in her eyes finally spilled over. She shook her head no, the same time I was nodding yes.

“No! No, you don’t. Kane, you and I can’t be together, ever. I’m done talking about this. I slipped up, and it won’t happen again. I won’t let it happen again.”

She sounded like she was talking to herself and not me.

“Caroline, you do get what I’m telling you, right? I’m saying that I will stop sleeping with other women, to be with you. Holy crap, I can’t believe I just said that out loud.” I scratched my head, still amazed that I felt this strongly about her.

“I get it, Kane, but it doesn’t matter. It’s not you. It’s...well, it is you. I like you. I like hanging out with you, I like our banter, but I can’t do more than that with you.”

She straightened up, wiped away the few tears that were still under her eyes, and I knew that I wasn’t going to make any progress now. She had that fucking wall back up and, apparently, she was not going to let me over it anytime soon. So I took a step back from her, putting a few feet between us. “I’ll do it, Caroline. I’ll do it because for the first time in...well, ever, I don’t want to stick my dick in anyone unless it’s you. That kind of pisses me off, now that I think about it. You fucked me up, big time,” I said, pointing to her.

“Save it, Kane. I’m sure you’ll be balls deep in some girl tonight, and I know for damn sure it won’t be me!”

Popping her hip to the side she crossed her arms again, while throwing me a dirty look.

“I swear to you, Kitty, if you have ruined sex for me, I’m...I’m going to...”

“What, Kane, what are you going to do to me? Lock me the freezer again?”

Fuck her! I kept walking until I had her backed up against the wall again. “I’m not going to stop next time. I’m going to make sure you know all that you’re missing. Your little ‘No, Kane, I can’t,’ won’t mean shit, because I have a

feeling you really want to say ‘Yes, Kane, don’t listen to me and fucking ram me hard!’”

I didn’t touch her, I didn’t kiss her, I didn’t let her have another word. I just turned around, grabbed my hat from the floor, and walked into the bathroom, slamming the door behind me. When I came back out, she was nowhere to be seen. I left her room and headed down to the bar. The guys and me had to move our stuff to the back, so that we could help Fallen set up. I went out the back and grabbed my guitar case from the cab of my truck. The guys were still standing around having a beer.

“Kane, man, you all right?” JJ asked, coming to stand next to me as I pulled the case out all the way.

“Your fucking cousin is ruing me,” I said, getting in his face.

“What the fuck! I have nothing to do with her. She’s a breed all her own. Must get it from her mom’s side,” JJ said, pushing me back.

That was when it hit me—her mom. This all had to do with her mom. The way she’d been acting, something was making her hold back from me, and I had a feeling it was her mom, but how could her dead mom keep her from fucking me? I knew I didn’t have the best track record with moms, but I couldn’t even begin to figure out how to schmooze a dead one.

“I’m sorry, man,” I said, clapping his shoulder.

“It’s fine, bro. I’d just leave her alone. There’s going to be new tail here tonight, and if Kitty isn’t giving it up to you, may as well find someone who will.”



Fallen had arrived. The four piece band was good. They weren’t as good as us, but they were good. They had their own following from the city and made sure to bring the best of the bunch with them. Which included their lead singer

Chloe. I had a tendency to wander down that all-too-familiar path every time we hung out. She was a knock out, and unlike our fans, the band had a good deal of men following them just because of her. Chloe and her twin brother Collin had started the group. They were good on their own, but with the help of Hunter and Levi, they were amazing.

Caroline had made herself scarce since our incident in her room. It was nearly time for Fallen to go on, and I hadn't seen her all night. I knew she was working tonight. One of the other girls was off for a wedding, so B needed her to be here. I scanned the room and even walked into the pool hall, but she was nowhere.

I ignored and kept my distance from, the long-legged, dark-haired, tatted-up beauty that was Chloe. As stupid and fucking love sick as it sounded, I didn't want Caroline to see me with her because, I knew Chloe, and she'd be all over me. I couldn't hide forever, though.

"Kane, sexy-ass Lawson. Where the hell have you been hiding all day? You trying to avoid me?" Chloe's sultry voice, swirled around my ear, as her hands ran up my chest from behind.

I turned in her hands, and we ended up nose to nose. She was an Amazon and fuck if those green eyes weren't begging for it.

"I've been busy," I said back, keeping my hands at my sides.

"Not as busy as you're going to be later on tonight. I didn't take the hour drive out here just to sing."

When she tried to bite at my lip, I thought about backing up, pushing her away. Then I decided fuck it. If Caroline was going to be a bitch about things, I may as well try to move on. So I let her take my bottom lip between her teeth, then I let her suck on it, because *I'm a man, after all*.

"Chloe, come on. Stop sucking face with Kane and get onstage," Collin, her twin brother said, walking up behind her, he grabbed her arm, and pulled her toward the stage.

Saved by the brother. Never thought I hear myself say something like that. I walked up to the table where the guys were sitting. It was crowded and people kept clamoring around us. I sat down and tried to act casual. I had just came into a conversation, so I sat back and listened.

“I don’t get it. What does he have, a golden cock or something?” Reece asked. “I can’t believe we just walked by and let it happen, I feel like we should have stopped it,” Aiden added.

“I haven’t punched anyone in a while. Maybe I should go back out there,” Trent said, cracking his knuckles.

“What are you guys talking about?” I finally asked, since I couldn’t for the life of me figure it out.

“Dude, it’s Kitty,” Reece said.

“What about her?”

“When we came in from outside, we...well, we’re pretty sure she was fucking Nate Rodg—”

JJ couldn’t even finish his sentence before I was up and out of my chair. The music had started and people were dancing. I made my way around them, determined to get out back and fucking punch that asshole in the face. If I couldn’t have Kitty, then no one was. I got all the way to the door when I ran into Caroline.

“Jesus, Kane! You scared the shit out of me,” she said, clutching at her chest.

“Nate Rodgers! You’re shitting me right?” I watched as her jovial smile was replaced with irritation. “Not four hours ago, you tell me you can’t even kiss me, and I got to hear it from the guys that they saw you fucking Nate Rodgers out back!”

Grabbing my arm, she pulled me back outside.

Once there she dropped my arm. “Jesus, Kitty.” I cringed as I kept walking. I needed to put some space between us. I was frustrated as fuck! I spun back around and saw her standing there like she didn’t know what the hell was going on. “Did you? Did you fuck him?”

I'd walked all the way to the other side of the patio, but I still saw the disgust and anger on her face before she stomped her feet in my direction. "No, Kane. Not that it's any of your business, but no I didn't *fuck* him. Will you quiet down?"

Relief washed over me. *Why did I care so much? I shouldn't care this much.*

Nate was a regular, but ever since the first night he came and talked with Caroline, he was always hanging around, waiting for her to come talk, looming around out back. I guess I underestimated him.

"Good."

"Good? Kane, I don't know what you think this is, but if I want to fuck Nate as you so blatantly put it, I'm going to fuck Nate. I'm human, I get horny, and if he's willing, it's going to happen. There isn't a damn thing you can do about it to stop me. You don't see me running after you every night, while you suck face with every Heather, Jane, and Sally."

She had a point.

"A little heads up would be nice. I just told you I'd give up all that for you. You think I wouldn't care if someone was fucking you in a parking lot? You're fucking insane. I'm fucking insane for ever thinking you were worth it. Fuck who you want, Kitty, 'cause I sure am."

I was furious. Nope, I was beyond furious, if there even was such a thing.

"Kane, stop being so dramatic."

I had walked away from her, even farther, to the edge of the parking lot that backed up to the woods.

"You okay, Kitty?" Trent asked, walking up next to her.

I turned around to see not only Trent, but the rest of the guys surrounding her. She didn't look at them, her eyes were fixed on mine, and, for a split second, I saw the girl that I had laid down in her bed that first night. The girl who could see me, see through the rock star, the playboy, the asshole. She was seeing me, Kane Lawson.

CHAPTER 19

Caroline

I see him, right now I see Kane Lawson. Not the wanna be rock star, the playboy or the pain in my ass. Just like that first night when he carried me to bed, I saw him, nervous and kind. Tonight he was honoring my virtue, as absurd as that sounded. He was being vulnerable for the second time tonight. It had taken everything in me to walk away and say the things I had said up in my room. Thanks to his smart-ass mouth, I was able to get back in the right frame of mind. The frame of mind that avoided the type of feelings that Kane was bringing to the surface. Hearing him say he'd give up his lifestyle for me, that's not what I wanted, but was it romantic as hell? *Yes. Did he have me rethinking everything? Fuck, yes.* But I didn't want him to be remorseful of having to give up a part of himself. That's what happened with my parents, and I would not make the same mistakes.

I was not turning into her. I was not going to let that happen. I cared too much about my dad and myself to let that happen. She was weak, and I'd be damned if I was going to walk down that path. I was a strong, independent woman. I'd keep fighting these feeling I had for Kane, because I knew that, in the end, neither one of us was going to be happy. I just needed to keep telling myself that.

“Kitty?” Trent said, pulling me out of my own thoughts. I turned and looked up into his brown eyes, as he held on to my shoulder. “You okay?” he asked again.

“She’s fine,” Kane said, walking up behind us. “She just had a lapse in judgment, realized that Nate wasn’t the man she thought he was. Game on, boys, Kitty’s frisky and looking for a tomcat to play with.”

There it was, typical asshole Kane.

“Kane’s right, Trent,” I said, looking up at him, “Tonight’s your lucky night. I’m giving out kisses for free.” I grabbed a fist full of his shirt and pulled his large frame down, pressing my lips against his. I gave him one hell of a kiss, a kiss I knew he’d been dreaming about.

The loud hoots and hollers came from all the guys, except Kane. I wanted there to be something behind that kiss, just like I wanted there to be something behind the kiss I had with Nate, but there was nothing. This was usually good. This meant I could shag ’em and leave ’em. Sure, it was a nice kiss, but there wasn’t a spark, or sense of future, like the one I had with Kane. It was just a kiss. I was glad, but this only made things worse, because kissing Kane and having the feelings I did, just justified that I needed to stay away, and deep down I didn’t want to stay away. I was going to have to endure lack-luster kisses for the rest of my life. *Fuck you, Kane Lawson!*

“Well,” I said, after pulling back from Trent and fixing my hair by tossing it around. “I have to get back to work. See you guys later.” Before I turned to walk back to the bar, I smiled and winked at Kane, only to see that wicked grin of his spread across his face as he shook his head, chuckling. *Good, he doesn’t hate me.*

I could live with our banter, but I’d be lying if I said it wouldn’t bother me if he hated me.

“Dude, I saw her tongue in your mouth!” I heard Reece say, as I walked back through the door.

As much as they were a pain in my ass, I loved One Night Stand.



Another month went by and summer was here in full force. It was the Fourth of July weekend and the county fair was in full swing. I was currently helping my dad carry boxes to the tent that was set up for the bar, away from the bar. Friday night and as always the boys were slated to play, but not at BJ's. The fair had a huge stage. While my father and a couple of the other girls helped unpack, the boys were busy setting up for their big concert. They were the closing act to the fair and the whole town was on edge, getting ready for the hundreds—hell, maybe even thousands of people who would be coming to see them. Roads had been blocked and extra security had been called in. I was told by my father that last year they only got two songs off before people started going crazy. Hence, all the security and refurbished stage.

Things had gone back to normal, as normal as they could get. Since I had kissed Trent, I had also made the mistake of kissing Aiden and god help me my lips touched Reece's too that night. So I might have only kissed Reece to piss Kane off because he kept deliberately palming Chloe's ass, and I knew he was doing it on purpose, because he wouldn't even touch her unless I was looking. Either way, I hadn't been able to live it down since.

I was keeping my distance from Kane and he was doing the same. I made sure not to put myself in a situation where we were left alone, simply because I didn't trust myself.

Things with Nate took a step up, after I had kissed him the night Fallen had come to play at the bar. He was sweet and I didn't have the heart to tell him it wasn't going to go anywhere, but he was a good kisser, and if I couldn't have Kane, I guessed I'd have to settle for Nate. He was meeting me later on in the evening.

I had stopped moving boxes and leaned over the impromptu bar we had set up. Resting my elbows on the lami-

nate bar and propping my head up on my hands, I guiltily watched the boys practice for tonight.

Kane had jeans on, with a black tee, and his hair was a sexy mess. His guitar was slung over his body, the beautiful red color glistened when the sun hit it. He was going to break so many hearts once they made it big, and I was going to be able to say that I had spent a whole summer with him. My future friends wouldn't believe me, but I'd know the truth.

"I told you, they'd grow on you," my father said, leaning next to me.

"Yeah, they're pretty great," I said, smiling at him.

"I know it's none of my business, but I see the way he looks at you," My father added, nodding at Kane.

He can't be serious. "Dad, I—it's not like that," I said, trying to play it off.

"Caroline, I'm not dumb. I know you have commitment issues. You've never introduced me to any of your boyfriends, and you never talk about a future, getting married, or having kids. I know you don't want to be like your mother. You can still have all that if—"

I cut him off quickly. I didn't want to hear this.

"Dad, I'm fine, that's not the kind of future I want. Not everyone wants the big house, white picket fence, and 2.5 kids." I hated lying to him, I did want those things. I was just terrified I'd end up like her. He was absolutely right.

That man up on stage was the first person to ever make me really want those things since my mother died. Catching my eye, he kept his on me as his fingers skillfully worked the strings on his guitar. We were far away from the stage, but I could see the way his muscles moved in his arms, as if he was standing right in front of me.

"Kane's a good guy. I wouldn't be upset if you two—"

"Dad!" I said, breaking eye contact with Kane. "You're really giving me your blessing to get it on with Kane, the same Kane that you watch leave every other night with a different girl. You been drinking top shelf again before work?"

A loud, haughty laugh left my father as he patted my back. “Oh, Caroline, haven’t you noticed, he hasn’t left with anyone in a long time? I know because I have to kick the girls out of the bar when he leaves without them.”

I didn’t believe it. There was no way he’d kept it in his pants that long. Not Kane, the self-proclaimed playboy, who had a different girl for every day of the week. I glanced back up at the stage as he began singing one of their slow songs. Holding the microphone in one hand, while the other held the stand, he looked at me again then closed his eyes as he sang.

Why does he have to be so sexy up there?

Kissing my wild hair my dad whispered, “Give him a chance.”

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About the Author



M.E. Gordon, was born and raised in Maryland, where she still resides with her husband. She is a stay at home mom to four children, three boys and one very, spoiled, little girl, all under the age of five. Growing up Gordon was an avid journal writer. She wrote her first romance novel at the age of fourteen, and it was pretty bad, but over the years and through all the kids, she honed her craft. When Gordon doesn't have her Mom hat on, you can find her reading, working on her next story, or watching guilty-pleasure television.