



# Capturing Clint

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**Category:** Erotic, Romance

**Description:** Clint let Chrissy, the adorable nerd, slip through his fingers while in college. Ten years later, after a chance encounter, Chrissy will use her sexy confidence to ensure that doesn't happen again. Clint is more than interested but doesn't feel worthy, and it'll be up to Chrissy to show him how good they can be together.

**Total Pages (Source):** 20

## Page 1

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Clint sat quietly in the corner of the Campus Café watching his best friend, Beth, talking with her newest friend, Chrissy. She'd been called in as part of a student design team that would be revamping the Café. It was a common occurrence for Beth to take a particular student under her wing and fulfill that parental role, as she was doing with Chrissy. She'd been a sophomore transfer from Colorado, and even though the two women had seven years between them, with Beth at age twenty-seven and Chrissy at twenty, they became fast friends. Chrissy definitely seemed mentally mature beyond her years, but physically and socially, she was still awkward and shy in a cute kinda way.

Not that Clint paid much attention to Christine 'Chrissy' Harrison. No, he had his own studies to contend with, and with one more term to go before graduating college, he couldn't afford any distractions.

Distractions like her sparkling green eyes behind those too-big glasses on her heart-shaped face. Or her flowing brown hair that reminded him of chocolate fondue. Or the way her Kewpie doll lips puckered in surprise right before letting loose with the most uninhibited laugh that never failed to make Clint smile.

Not to mention her commendable services of tutoring upper-classmen or volunteering at the hospital Beth happened to tell him about.

Yeah, Clint didn't need any diversions when he was trying to accomplish what no one else in his family had before—graduate from college. So here he sat, studying for the upcoming finals before winter break, trying to focus on his material instead of the activity between Chrissy and Beth. Roger, the manager, had entrusted Beth to oversee the project, and she was taking charge like a pro. Being assistant manager of the Café

as well as taking a full-time class load, Clint was extremely proud of her.

Their friendship ran deep, like siblings, and thankfully there wasn't the slightest bit of sexual interest to muck it up.

Beth was sexy in her own right, but the two of them just knew their relationship belonged squarely in the friend zone. They had bonded quickly during their freshman year due to being a handful of years older than their classmates, feeling more like parental figures than peers. Not that four or five years age difference should make the gap seem huge, but with the maturity level of many these days, it sometimes seemed like an entire generation span.

Clint couldn't keep his thoughts from returning to Chrissy, and he wondered if he was being a pervert with his silent obsession. He was trying to wrap his mind around their seven year age difference. It shouldn't seem like a big deal, given her level of maturity, but the fact she couldn't legally drink alcohol made him feel like he was lusting after a child.

She's no child, Clint scoffed. She's a consenting adult.

One who exhibited child-like excitement as she pointed to something on her laptop. Or gestured here and there with her arm as she roamed the Café, causing her sweater to ride up, and giving Clint a peek at her toned abdomen—

Holy smokes, was that a belly button piercing?

His eyes wouldn't, couldn't stray from the sparkling gem glinting from her mid-section. He was captivated by the play of light reflecting from the stones as well as the shift of her trim waist that led to the perfect flare of her hips encased in skinny jeans.

Only when Beth slid in front of him did his eyes journey elsewhere to see the smirk on her face.

“Heya, boy-o! Whatcha doing?” She grinned, turning her head around to look at Chrissy then back to him before grinning even more. She flopped down on the small couch, leaned in close, and whispered, “Just ask her out. You know you want to.” She leaned back with a smug expression on her mischievous little face.

Clint tried scowling at her but ended up chuckling when she threw a pouty scowl his way. “What I want is to study for my finals so I can pass these damn classes.”

“Uh, huh. Clint, you’re the smartest guy I know, and you’ve never had a problem with accomplishing your tasks. I have no doubt you’re already ready for those tests, and you could use some loosening up. Just ask Chrissy out. Take her to a movie, or ice skating, or—”

“No, Beth, I can’t.” He shook his head. “I mean, I’m graduating in the spring, and she’s—well, who knows what her plans are, or if she’s even going to stay in Idaho. She could decide to return to Denver and never look back.”

“So? You’ve got five months to figure it out. Why can’t you just have some fun while—”

“Excuse me, Beth?”

Chrissy’s timid voice pulled Clint’s gaze in her direction. She stood a few feet away with her laptop clutched to her chest like a shield. Her uncertain gaze glanced between him and Beth as she gave a nervous smile, keeping her lips clamped shut so as not to reveal the braces he was told she despised.

All Clint could see was a delicate bud just waiting to blossom.

Jesus! He inwardly groaned.

“Hey, Chrissy, have a seat.” Beth repositioned herself onto the arm of the couch and gestured with a hand between herself and Clint.

“Oh, no, no that’s okay,” Chrissy stammered as her face flushed. “I, uh, just wanted to let you know we’re all done with our assessment, and, uh, we’ll get the finished design back to you and Roger in a few days.” She gave Clint a quick glance before looking back to Beth. “I, um, I have to go, so, I’ll see you later?”

Beth stood, going to Chrissy’s side. “You sure you don’t want to hang around? I’ll be done in about thirty, so we can all go grab a bite to eat.” Beth smiled as she looked between Clint and the bewildered Chrissy. “Sit and keep Clint company while I finish up. I’ll make it fifteen, then we’re outta here.” She gave a wink.

Before Chrissy could protest anymore, Beth guided her over and pushed her to sit. Right next to Clint. He sat up straighter and tried to give her some room, but she practically fell off the couch in her attempt to move mere inches away from him.

Well, okay.

Clint tried not to frown, but couldn’t help feeling a little disappointed at her distance. Well, she was shy, and tense, and was probably nervous, but did she have to act like she couldn’t stand to be next to him?

“I’m sorry,” she started, her voice soft and lyrical. “You look like you’re studying, so you probably want to be left alone.” Chrissy kept her eyes averted from him as she spoke. “I-I can leave you alone. I have things to do as well.”

When she made the move to rise, Clint held her arm. “No,” he said quickly. When her surprised gaze snapped to his hand touching her then looked up to his face, Clint

jerked his arm away. He certainly didn't want to frighten her. "I mean, stay, please. Surely you can join us for a burger or something, right? You have to eat."

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Her nervous giggle made Clint smile instead of turning him off like when most girls made that sound. She looked to him again and gave a slight nod. "I am hungry."

"Good. We'll go over to Big Jud's. If you like burgers, you'll love theirs."

Her only response was a nod as an awkward silence fell between them. Chrissy held herself rigid, not moving a muscle. Was she just nervous, or did she not like him? Clint hoped that wasn't the case because he desperately wanted to engage in conversation in order to get to know more about her, despite what he told Beth.

"So, what are your grand plans for transforming the Café?"

Chrissy jumped a little as if she hadn't expected Clint to talk to her. "Oh, well, I," she began to mumble as she placed her laptop down on her lap. "I think the entire place definitely needs a total transformation. It's pretty outdated, don't you think?"

"I do. So what kind of magic do you plan to perform?"

She gave another little laugh as she powered up her device, pulling up sketches to show to him. Suddenly, she became excited and animated as she talked about her ideas. She proceeded to point out this and that, explaining how the cost would be effective and some such, but all Clint could concentrate on was her exuberance. Her face lit up and she became a completely different person, exploding from her shell.

"Don't you think?" Chrissy asked.

Clint focused on her eyes she trained on him, awaiting an answer. The vibrant green

mesmerized him, making it impossible to think of nothing else but what they'd look like fluttering closed should he lean in to kiss those perfect lips. He mentally shook himself and made an effort to glance at the designs before looking back at her.

"I think it'll be terrific," he said, his voice a little husky.

"Me too. I can't wait to get started, I—"

"All right, kiddos, ready to go?" Beth interrupted. She had her coat on and held out another to Chrissy.

Clint watched as Chrissy shut her device and quickly stood, retreating back to her shy self. "Ready," she said quietly. She placed her laptop down in order to shrug on her coat. Clint got another quick peek of her belly as she shifted, noticing the three multi-colored stones dancing across her skin. He groaned again then gathered his items and stood, suggesting he drive to the burger joint he had in mind.

"Sounds great. Let's go." The look Beth gave him told him she was all too aware of what was going through his mind as he practically ogled Chrissy's mid-drift.

An hour later, after enjoying great food and even greater conversation with Beth and Chrissy, he had driven them back to Beth's apartment. Chrissy had no problem opening up when Beth was in their presence, but now that Beth had made an excuse about needing to make a call, leaving Clint and Chrissy alone, she clammed right up. And try as he might to continue to engage, her clipped responses to his conversation led him to believe it was time to call it a night.

"Well, I better get going. More studying to do." He turned to Chrissy. "Do you need a ride to your place?"

"Oh, no, I'm going to discuss the renovation more with Beth. She'll give me a ride.



Um, good luck with finals,” she said, hardly looking at him. “I’ll tell Beth you said good night. I doubt she’s going to reemerge from her room.”

Wow, that’s the most she’s said in my presence.

“Probably not. Thanks, Chrissy. And thanks for joining us. I had a great time.”

Her eyes widened as she said, “You did?”

He chuckled and took a step closer to her, pleased when she didn’t step back. “I did. Maybe we could do it again. Maybe, just the two of us?”

“Really?” she squeaked.

“Really,” he said softly as he began to lean in closer, wanting to feel the softness of her lips against his before tangling their tongues.

But Chrissy had other thoughts as she quickly side-stepped him, heading to open the door. “Um, okay, well, maybe. I guess you should be going. Plenty of studying to do. Lots to concentrate on. Me too. Studying, that is. So, good night, Clint.” She held open the door and barely cast him a glance, expecting him to leave.

Clint sighed and shook his head as he walked to the door. He paused next to her and said a gentle good night, to which he received only another nod. As soon as he was out the door, it clicked behind him, and he heard the turning of the deadbolt.

He didn’t know what to make of her actions. She had seemed interested, yet scared at the same time. Or was she turned off? Maybe she just didn’t like him. Or maybe she was just unsure of herself and couldn’t believe someone like him would be interested in her. Maybe she had no experience with having a boyfriend.

He found that hard to believe.

Clint was by no means conceited, thinking himself too good for anyone, and short of just saying 'hey, I like you, do you like me', he had no idea what to do next when it came to her. Maybe another talk with Beth would help, he begrudgingly thought. He'd give it a day or two and see what happened.

Until then, he'd concentrate on finals and try to keep the tempting Chrissy from taking over his thoughts.

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“I don’t know why you never had the urge to jump his bones and get it over with?”

Chrissy laughed as Beth gawked at her question, which was more like a statement.

The two friends were taking advantage of the downtime over winter break, electing to stay in the area instead of seeking out a warmer climate like many were doing. Tonight was girls-night-in at Beth’s, which included PJs and junk food, and Clint was the topic of discussion for the umpteenth time this week.

Chrissy knew Beth and Clint were close, and nothing remotely romantic existed between the two of them, so she wasn’t sure why she said what she did. Because, really, Chrissy wanted to be the one jumping Clint Jessup’s bones. As improbable as it seemed.

The signals he’d been giving Chrissy were odd, and she didn’t know what to make of them. She wasn’t used to guys like him—the studious, hot Idaho ranch boy—showing interest in girls like her—the shy, geeky intellect. Still didn’t stop her from crushing on him.

“Me?” Beth started. “I’m not the one he wants. Besides, I’d never want to ruin the one good relationship I have with a guy. He’s like my brother. Clint and I have been friends since our freshman year here. Hard to believe the college journey will end with one more term.” She finished on a sigh.

“Why so sad?”

“Well, nearly four years of college and I’m not sure I’ll do much more

thanmanage the Campus Café.”

Chrissy tsked. “It’s just a starting point. Think of all the possibilities out there!”

“Oh sure, little Miss Optimistic,” Beth teased. “I can only go up from here.”

“Beth, focus on what you want and go for it.”

“Right, like going for it with Clint, as you suggested.”

“Well, in your position, I can see why you wouldn’t, being like a brother and all. But mmm, mmm, he sure is yummy. Haven’t you been tempted? Even just a little?” Chrissy pinched her thumb and index finger together, barely a millimeter separating them.

“No, silly.” Beth chuckled. “Why haven’t you tried to go for it?” She animated with air quotes. “The man practically asked you out and you denied him!”

The two snacked on popcorn and M&Ms while an episode of GRIMM streamed on Beth’s computer. The topic of Clint came about again because Chrissy mentioned how much he looked like the actor David Guintoli who plays GRIMM’s Det. Nick Burkhardt.

“Right! Like Clint would ever look at someone like me and think, ‘I gotta have that!’ He was just being nice, I guess,” she mumbled. Because, really, she wasn’t a match for someone like him. Was she?

And it was self-deprecating thoughts like that that would get her nowhere.

Chrissy popped more candy in her mouth, which was hard-wired with braces, then adjusted her glasses that seemed to constantly slide down her petite nose. “I may

fantasize about him, but I'm realistic enough to know that I am not the kind of girl someone like him would fantasize back, about. I mean, he wouldn't return the fantasizing. Oh, you know what I mean."

Chrissy wrinkled her nose, not liking the sympathetic look on Beth's face. Beth had already told her that Clint was concentrating on his studies, as he was the first in his family to attend college, and he wasn't going to let anything get in the way of his carefully mapped out plan.

But then there were times when Beth had hinted at taking a chance.

"He certainly would. Jeez, Chrissy, he did ask you out and you crushed him."

"Pfft! Whatever. I'm sure he's got plenty of women wanting a piece of that. Not someone like me—"

"He would! You're cute, smart, funny—"

"Sure, you betcha. I'm a geek. I'm still in braces. I wear glasses that never seem to fit. I have no curves, unlike you." Chrissy pushed the bowl of popcorn away. "You're like... like a svelte Scarlett Johansson, compared to me, who's like... Well, like... Oh, I don't know." She threw her hands up in frustration. "Someone who's not beautiful, blonde, and curvy."

Chrissy barely got the words out of her mouth when she felt the spray of Beth's spewed soda all over her face. Both sat frozen for all of three seconds before they howled with laughter.

"Oh, Chrissy, I am so sorry." Beth quickly jumped up to grab a towel from the kitchen as she still giggled.

“I’m fine.” She removed her glasses, wiping her eyes with her hand.

“Here.” Beth handed her a damp towel. “Wipe it off before you get sticky.”

“Too late.” Chrissy took the towel anyway and wiped her face. She stopped when she heard a knock at the door and turned to Beth. She saw her friend’s puzzled look which surely mirrored her own.

“Who could that be? Hasn’t pretty much everyone left town already?” Having said that, Beth made her way to the door to look through the peephole. Her startled gaze quickly swung back to Chrissy. “Uh-oh,” she murmured.

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“What ‘uh-oh’? Who is it?” Chrissy whispered.

Beth whispered in return. “You may want to go to the bathroom to finish cleaning up. Maybe even change your shirt.”

Chrissy unfolded herself from the couch and approached as she continued to wipeatthe sticky soda running down her neck. “Beth, who—” She stopped mid-stride when she heard the voice from the other side of the door.

“Beth, come on, open up. I know you’re in there.”

Clint!

“Oh, cheese and rice!” Chrissy shouted in a whisper as she put her glasses back on. “What’s he doing here?”

“I don’t know!” Her friend replied just as silently.

“Is everything okay?” Clint asked from the other side of the door.

“Just a minute!” Beth said as she faced away from the door. She whispered again to Chrissy to getinthe bathroom and clean up.

“I’m going to hide in there until he leaves,” she mumbled while she silently ran down the hall. Barely getting the door shut before Beth greeted Clint, she tried not to hyperventilate as she washed off Beth’s soda shower.

“Jeez-oh-peezo, of all the rotten timing,” Chrissy began. “I am not leaving this bathroom no matter what! All because I can’t even face Clint Jessup.”

She stopped her movements to look at herself in the mirror. Sticky brown hair framed her face. Large emerald eyes stared back through streaky glasses. Pink lips that were a little too plump—the only feature on her body that was—pouted back at her. Her purple Tinkerbell pajama top was now speckled with spots.

“Christine Harrison, you’re a coward. He’s just a person.”

After she washed her face and cleaned her glasses, Chrissy ran a brush through her matted hair. “Albeit an older gorgeous man who makes me lose all train of thought whenever he’s around. Causing me to act like the many other immature, infatuated groupies who flock to the Café whenever he’s there.” She set the brush on the counter to stare at herself again. “But how to show him that’s not me?”

Maybe she should listen to Beth and give it a shot. But, would she be setting herself up for heartache? What if his interest was short-lived, and after succumbing to his charms, they were ripped away?

But, what if it led to something wonderful? What if she took a chance and it really paid off?

“Gah! Just go out there.”

Determined not to hide, even though she was no more certain than she was before, she pulled open the door, intent on facing Cl—

“Oh!” She started as she ran into the man consuming her thoughts.

“Chrissy, sorry,” he said as he held her arms to steady her. “You okay? I didn’t



expect you here.”

All Chrissy could do was stare into his hazel eyes. She felt the warmth of his touch through the long sleeves of her shirt. Her embarrassing, juvenile Tinkerbelle shirt. Under which she had no bra. And her nipples chose that moment to perk up.

Chrissy’s insides turned to pudding while a rosy blush covered her face. She watched as Clint raked his gaze down her body and back up again, lingering for a fraction longer on her chest, then her lips. She watched his eyes reconnect with hers. Watched as they darkened.

She stood wide-eyed and motionless.

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Clint continued to be mesmerized by Chrissy’s innocence. Something about her captured and held his attention for months. And recently, when she had refused his inept attempt at asking her out, he seemed more determined than ever to get to know her. Underneath that shy introvert, Clint saw glimpses of intelligence and humor, of beauty and compassion.

He even fumbled through a few more attempts at asking her out, only to have her avoid him afterward. Probably for the better, he thought. No sense in starting something just to have it end too quickly, because who knew where life would take him once he graduated.

But with his hands on her, he could feel her warmth through the thin fabric of her top. He could see her nipples strain against the material, almost begging for his attention. He couldn’t help but think about kissing those luscious lips that puckered so nicely. About the slide of his tongue into her sweet mouth. About discovering what other places on her body would be sweet.

Before his thoughts got out of control in an embarrassing fashion, he felt Beth's hand on his shoulder. He quickly turned, dropping his hands away from Chrissy.

“So,” Beth began, “what are you doing here?”

“Nice greeting.”

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She mockingly glared at him. “Well, I figured you’d be home by now. We weren’t expecting any company.”

“I can see that,” he said as he nodded at her Hello Kitty attire and messy ponytail. “Pajama party? And I wasn’t invited?”

“Like I said, I figured you’d be home by now, what, living only an hour away.” She crossed her arms almost indignantly. “It’s the first night of many planned for just us gals.”

Clint turned around to face Chrissy. “You aren’t heading home for the holidays?”

Her head barely lifted as she answered. “No, I, uh, my parents had plans I didn’t want to take part in, and I didn’t want them to change their plans for me. So, Beth invited me to stay the week with her.”

“Oh, that’s great. Well, I was just coming to see if Beth changed her mind about joining me and my family for the holidays, and, well, you’re welcome to come too if you’d like.”

Clint’s mind suddenly filled with images of them riding horses or playing in the snow at his family’s ranch. He was filled with the hope they may have a chance to get to know one another outside of the school atmosphere. Snow meant warm, cozy nights by a roaring fire. Which could lead to snuggling—

Chrissy’s eyes widened and she looked poised to answer, but Beth’s voice broke through first.

“Thanks, Clint, but we’re good here. Aren’t we, Chrissy?”

“Oh, yeah, we’re good,” she said, sounding dejected. She looked quickly at Clint giving a weak smile before excusing herself back into the bathroom.

Clint didn’t get a chance to say another word as the door softly shut. He stared at it for a moment before Beth spoke again.

“Hey, Clint, you should probably get a move on if you want to beat the storm that’s heading this way.”

He spun to face his friend. “Sure, yeah, I probably should.” He and Beth walked toward the door. “You sure you two don’t want to join me? You know there’s plenty of room. Mom and Sadie would be pleased as punch to have a few more ladies around.”

Sadie helped his mom run the household and take care of the ranch hands at the Jessup Ranch just over the hills from Boise.

“Uh-huh, I’m sure she’s not the only one who’d like to have a certain lady around.”

“Why whatever do you mean, Bethany Ann?”

Beth snickered at him calling her by her full name. “Just take this break to think if you really want to be starting something with Chrissy,” she spoke softly.

Clint drew back. “What do you mean? Weren’t you just telling me to ask her out?”

“Yes, yes I was. And I’m not saying you still can’t, I’m just saying be sure, because that young lady has got it bad for you, and as much as I love you, I don’t want to see her hurt.”

“Gee, okay, mom.”

“Clint,” Beth drew out. “I’m not saying you’d intentionally hurt her either, just ... dammit, she’s fragile, you know? And like you said, with you almost done with school, and with Chrissy having more time, you just never know where life will take you.”

“And that’s what life is all about, Beth. The journey.” Clint had to rush on before Beth could interrupt. “Listen, I get it, I do. Part of the reason I was heading over was to talk to you about my interest in her. Because I am—interested in her, that is.” He smiled at his friend. “And now that I know she’s interested in me, well, that gives me something to think on. How I want to approach her.”

“Great. Now take this break to figure that out while I do my best to boost her confidence and convince her to give you a try. She’s just not ready yet.”

“Wow, you really gotta sell me, don’t you?”

Beth laughed. “No, but she needs more confidence. You, however, have plenty. And I think she’s due to get those braces off soon, which will definitely help. Now git.” She playfully pushed Clint to the door.

Just as Beth opened it, Chrissy emerged. Clint turned in her direction and their gazes collided, and the last thing he wanted to do was walk through that door. He wanted to walk to the green-eyed beauty, scoop her in his arms, and kiss her senseless. He wanted to convince her to come to his family’s ranch so he could be the one building her confidence about giving them a shot.

“Clint, drive safe, okay?” Beth said.

He spun to face her and nodded before turning back to Chrissy. “Have a good

holiday, Chrissy. Be sure to keep this one outta trouble.” He winked and smiled while hooking his thumb over his shoulder at Beth.

And his heart nearly exploded at the sight of Chrissy’s blushing smile. Braces and all.

“I’ll do my best,” she answered.

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Clint nodded and then turned away to give his friend a quick hug. “Happy holidays, Beth.”

“Happy holidays, boy-o.”

He walked through the door, and once shut, he could only lean his forehead against the wood, wishing he wasn't on this side, listening to what was being said. He shifted his stance to accommodate the growing bulge in his pants.

“Dammit,” he muttered. After a few moments, hearing the quiet take over, Clint pushed away from Beth's door to make his way to his vehicle. During his drive home, thoughts of Chrissy filled his head, and a smile never left his face.

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“You okay?” Beth asked Chrissy. “You're like a statue standing there.”

“What the hell just happened?”

Beth's eyes widened as she stood a little straighter, her mouth forming an O. “You cussed. You never cuss!”

“Yeah, well, I've never been sized-up by the man of my dreams, either. I mean, other than in my dreams.”

“He got a quick peek of those perkylittle things, did he?” Beth twirled her finger at Chrissy's chest and winked.

“You had to throw in the little, didn’t you?” Chrissy’s lip twitched as the corner of her mouth lifted slightly.

Both broke out in laughter, grabbing on to one another.

“Well, one thing’s for sure, you’ve got some good fodder for some sexy dreams.”

“Like I needed any help. That man occupies half my dreams already.”

“This will fill in the other half until you see him again after the holidays,” Beth cooed as she led them both back to the couch.

“Yeah, about that. Why turn down his invite? Wouldn’t that be fun to spend the holiday at his ranch? Besides, I thought you wanted me to give him a chance?”

“And I do, my sweet,” Beth playfully said. “But I told Clint you needed your confidence boosted.”

“You. Said. What?” She would have jumped off the couch had her friend not caught her arms.

“Easy, now.”

“Beth?” Chrissy practically whined. “So now he knows I am interested in him?”

“I think he’s had an idea, but with you shutting him down, he wasn’t sure what to make of that and was going to reassess his attempt.”

“And you two are now in cahoots?”

“Well, he is my best friend, and you’re my newest best friend, so what could be better



than the two of you getting together?”

Chrissy snorted with laughter. “I only wish by some miracle in the next few weeks that I’d lose these braces and my eyes would self-correct.”

“Weren’t you saying the braces come off soon?”

“Two more months.”

“That’s not long at all. Chrissy, listen, you’re a beautiful person, and Clint sees that. Now, you just need to see that.” Beth waved her hand in front of Chrissy. “All this will soon change and you’ll be that much more beautiful.”

“Uh-huh,” she said skeptically.

“You’ll see,” Beth said confidently. “Now, about your confidence.”

The girls giggled as they resumed their planned night of GRIMM and junk food. And of course, they sprinkled the evening with talk about sexy Clint, and Beth’s plan for Chrissy to wow him after Christmas break.

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Unfortunately, that was not to be.

Chrissy had to leave unexpectedly during the break due to an illness with her mother. And although thoughts of Clint came and went over the years, it would be some time before they'd set eyes on one another again.

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Fast forward ten years...

Chrissy had been going over details of several clients with her assistant, Zac, while they strolled through the Bridgestone Museum of Art in Tokyo. Their trip proved to be very worthwhile. Not only had they conducted business with a local colleague of sorts, but they also secured items for several clients back in the States.

Chrissy was the driving force behind her business "Pristine by Christine" an architectural design studio in Denver, Colorado. And Zac was her not-so-silent business partner, seeing as he was the initial bankroll in their venture.

"Chrissy, sweetheart, time to kick butt."

"Zac, I don't want to kick butt," she whined. "I want to conduct business as professionally as possible and be done with this."

"Darling," Zac drawled. "You can never be done with this. It's your life."

Chrissy loved Zac's tenacity, his feisty attitude, and his playful spirit. They met at Metro State College in Denver after Chrissy returned home years ago from Boise. After taking two years off to help her family deal with her mother's cancer, she returned to school to get her degree in design. She and Zac bonded like nobody's business.

And it was nobody's business but theirs.

They grew very close and had even attempted a sexual encounter out of pure loneliness. But the attempt only proved to Zac what he'd really known most of his life—he was gay. Luckily, they could laugh about it now. Chrissy took on a sisterly role after that, keeping them focused on school and their eventual business partnership.

"I know," Chrissy said as she returned Zac's comment. "I'm just ready to take a break. We've worked nonstop for two weeks, and there's more to Japan than just business. I want to take advantage of that before it's time to go home."

"Agreed. Now, let's do this so the fun can begin." Zac wiggled his brows.

"My little Chihuahua," Chrissy teased, earning herself a pinch on the rear and a playful growl. Without shoes, she was a good five inches taller than Zac, standing at five-nine. Today, in her heels, the height difference was comical.

"Now, now, my Amazon warrior. Careful how you treat the help."

"Oh, Zac, stop. You know you're more than that to me."

"So, it wasn't just my money you were after?"

Chrissy chuckled. "Well, there was that."

They carried on, ready to meet their colleague. Zac led Chrissy into the room where they would conclude the sale of a piece of artwork. They noticed a gentleman there who clearly was not the man they were supposed to meet.

Chrissy admired his lean build, approving of the way his khakis molded to his behind. His glossy black hair was neatly trimmed, showing a tanned neckline. His forearms were tan as well, his hands resting casually in his pockets.

Chrissy watched the stranger turn upon hearing their arrival. She gave a slight gasp as their eyes met, which caused Zac to reach for her.

“What is it?” Zac looked at Chrissy, then back to the stranger who stood motionless.

Clint Jessup!Chrissy’s mind screamed, the recognition instantaneous after all these years.How can this be?

She watched his eyebrows lift in curiosity and wondered what he must be thinking. Evidently, he didn’t recognize her, given she had no glasses, no braces, wavy, layered hair, and a bit more curves. As her mind swirled, shemusteredthe strength not to faint right then and there.

“Hello,” he said cautiously. “I’m sorry, am I not supposed to be in here?”

Zac spoke up, as it seemed Chrissy was too stunned to do so. “You’re fine. We were just expecting someone else, a business associate of ours. He should be here any moment.”

“Good,” Clint returned. “I didn’t want to cause a stir.” He looked at the still-silent Chrissy. “Am I causing a stir?”

“You most certainly are,” she replied softly without thinking before quickly slapping

a handoverher mouth. She watched Clint's lips twitch in amusement.

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I am in trouble. What is he doing here?

“What are you doing here?” She spoke her thoughts before actually thinking it over. She then slapped her hand to her mouth again.

“Chrissy, what is the matter with you?” Zac softly demanded through clenched teeth.

She watched a brief look of curiosity cross Clint’s face before realization struck.

“Chrissy Harrison?”

Zac added his shocked expression to the mix. He looked from Clint to Chrissy, back to Clint again. “Whom, may I ask, are you?”

Both Chrissy and Clint answered simultaneously.

“Clint Jessup.”

“Oh. Oh!” Zac said, looking back to Chrissy.

Chrissy knew Zac now realized this was the Clint Jessup she had told him about years ago. She had confessed her giant crush on him, and the sadness she often felt at not reconnecting with him.

She continued to stare at Clint, unable to look away.

Ah jeez. Helplessly caught in his tractor beam again. Dangit! Haven’t I outgrown this

already?

Chrissy mentally shook herself. “I’m so sorry. This is such a surprise. It’s been, what, ten years?”

“About that,” Clint answered, shifting his stance. “I always wondered about you.”

“You did?” Chrissy nearly whispered.

“Of course. I always wondered how you and your family were,” Clint started. “Beth told me a little about why you returned home so suddenly. But contact between you two seemed to taper off.”

That had saddened Chrissy as well. For all the technological advances and ways to communicate and stay in touch, there was no excuse for not doing so. “Yes, well, life can get away from you,” she said softly

“Indeed it can,” Zac said primly.

Chrissy realized introductions hadn’t been made as she gave Zac a side-hug. “Clint, this is Zac, my business associate, and my friend.”

Zac leaned his head into Chrissy’s shoulder and playfully batted his eyelashes.

“Nice to meet you, Zac.” To that, Zac nodded. “And how is your family, Chrissy?”

She smiled, pleased he’d be concerned. “They’re great actually. Mom’s cancer has been in remission for years, and she’s been busy as ever with her volunteering. Dad has been retired from the Air Force since Mom’s initial treatment. They’re traveling quite a bit and loving life.”

“Good to hear.”

Chrissy waited for more from Clint, but he continued to stare as if in a daze. Just as she was going to ask about him, he spoke up and surprised her with his question. “Did you get Lasix surgery? No more glasses.”

“Um, no. I wear contacts. I can’t stomach the thought of laser surgery on my eyes.”

“Yet fingering her eyes every morning to place contacts isn’t bothersome,” Zac teased. “I’ve tried to convince her otherwise, but she won’t listen. I’ve known plenty who’ve had the procedure done and couldn’t be happier.”

“Yes, Zac, I know. I’m just not brave enough. Maybe one day.”

“And maybe one day I’ll marry Sandra Bullock.”

“Wouldn’t that upset Doug?” Chrissy laughed.

Chrissy noticed Clint watching their exchange with a puzzled look. “Doug is Zac’s partner. They’ve been together a few years. They joke about their go-to gal. For Zac it’s Sandra.”



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“And for Doug it’s Shakira. He says if he wasn’t with me, he’d go in a completely opposite direction with Latina spice.”

He and Chrissy broke out in laughter. “Oh, I hope this isn’t making you uncomfortable?” Zac asked of Clint.

“Not at all. A person should be free to love anyone of their choosing.”

“Oh, I am going to like you,” Zac all but cooed. “I think he’s a keeper, Chrissy.”

Chrissy chuckled nervously and thought, if he only knew...

“May I invite you to dinner?” Clint asked. “It’ll give us a chance to catch up.” He turned to Zac. “That is if you didn’t have other plans after your business here?”

“That would be lovely!” Chrissy quickly supplied before Zac could respond. “Why don’t we arrange to meet around five for an early dinner?”

“I’d like that. Zac, will you be joining us?”

Chrissy gave him the subtle look of Heck, No! One he knew all too well.

“Another time,” Zac said. “I need to finish up a few things and call Doug.”

Chrissy pulled a business card out of a hidden pocket in her skirt. She grabbed a pen Zac had and wrote on the card. “Here’s my cell and where we’re staying. We can meet in the lobby. Call if anything comes up.”

Clint raised an eyebrow, along with a corner of his mouth at her remark. “You’ll be the first to know.”

As their fingers made contact, she couldn’t mistake the zip she felt. A warm rush flooded her from head to toe, not only from his touch, but also the innuendo of her remark.

“Okay, well then,” Chrissy said, becoming flustered. “I’ll see you later.”

“I look forward to it,” Clint said. “Zac, nice to have met you.”

As Clint walked from the room, Chrissy still couldn’t believe what just happened.

“Are you okay?” Zac asked softly.

“I don’t know.” She turned to her friend. “Oh my God, Zac. After all these years, Clint Jessup.”

“Yes.”

“That’s all you have to say?”

“What else would you like me to say, darling?” Zac rubbed her arms for comfort.

“I don’t know,” she said again. “Oh my God, and I’m having dinner with him! What the heck?”

“Why are you freaking out? The man of your dreams has just walked back into your life! Time to rejoice.”

“Rejoice? I don’t even know if he’s available. He could be married for all I know. We

barely got a chance to talk. What if—”

“Chrissy, relax. Tonight, you’ll have a pleasant dinner, you’ll talk and catch up, and if the stars are in your favor, you just may have your fantasy fulfilled.” At that, he arced his arm while snapping his fingers, winking at her.

“What do you mean? You think I’m going to have sex with him tonight?” She all but screeched.

“You looked ready to climb him right here.”

“I think I’m going to be sick.” Chrissy bent at the waste, gulping for air.

Zac pulled her upright, looking sternly at her. “Chrissy, you are a smart, sophisticated woman. You are not going to fall apart.” He linked his arm with hers. “Come on. Let’s go get you ready for your date.”

“I have hours yet. What about the art?”

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“I’ll handle it. You, my dear, need some pampering. Andsheesh, a confidence booster! A trip to the spa, a new outfit, andVoila! I’m going to make sure you knock Mr. Jessup’s socks off. And that’s just for starters,” he said as he gently nudged her hip with his.

“Zac, I love you.”

“I know. Me too,” he replied as he kissed her hand.

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Clint arrived early at Chrissy’s hotel and went to the bar for a drink. He still couldn’t believe it. Christine Harrison, in Japan, after all these years.

She did indeed blossom into a gorgeous woman. There was still a hint of shyness and uncertainty about her which he found endearing. He looked forward to learning more about what’s been happening in her life. Andwhowas in her life, he thought.

After her abrupt departure during the Christmas break all those years ago, Clint clung to every word Beth had to report about Chrissy’s situation. Learning about her mother’s cancer made him sick to his stomach, and he had prayed for her family. He also knew whateverminisculehope he had of them getting together had evaporated at the time.

While finishing his degree and securing a job, communication between the two women lessened, and before long, Chrissy became a long-ago infatuation to Clint. He had secured a promising job with the Cattlemen’sAssociationand loved his work and

the strides he felt he was making.

Unfortunately, he also stupidly fell under the spell of another man's wife—a business associate, no less—engaging in an affair that nearly cost him his life, as well as those of others. Clint questioned so many aspects of his life afterward. Where had his integrity been, his loyalty? His scruples and discipline?

Incredibly enough, he continued to remain close friends with the business associate—a fact that humbled him beyond words.

So, now, on a leave of absence from his work, trying to figure out where his life was going, his thoughts were suddenly consumed by the sweet Chrissy from a lifetime ago. What grand adventures had she seen? What wondrous journey had her life taken, bringing her to Japan? His selfish reason to be here was simply because it was a place he had always wished to visit. And now with nothing but time on his hands...

As he lifted his glass for another sip of his drink, he looked toward the doorway and lost all reasonable thought. Before the liquid passed his lips, he slowly placed the glass on the bar, his focus on the vision in front of him.

Chrissy stood there in a form-fitting chocolate silk dress with gold edging. It stopped mid-thigh which allowed a nice view of her toned legs. Her hair was swept up in a loose knot as a few curls framed her face. Gold hoops hung from her ears and gold sandals adorned her petite feet.

Clint was drawn to her, like the proverbial moth to the flame.

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Chrissy knew she'd made an impression from the look on Clint's face. She just hoped she knew what she was getting herself into.

She watched Clint approach, his eyes never leaving hers. When he stopped only inches from her, she could feel his heat, and whatever wonderful cologne he had on smelled heavenly. She felt dizzy with excitement. And desire.

“I didn’t see you in the lobby,” Chrissy started, a bit breathless, “so I thought I’d check in here.” When Clint didn’t respond, Chrissy felt like she had to fill the silence. “Did you want to finish your drink? We could—”

“I’m suddenly not thirsty for my drink,” he said, his voice as smooth and rich as she thought the finest brandy to be. “You look exquisite.”

Chrissy thanked him for the compliment. “I thought we’d keep it easy and have dinner in the hotel’s restaurant. I’m told they have a wonderful menu.”

Clint nodded. “I’ll let you lead the way.”

Chrissy smiled and turned, heading back through the lobby toward the rear of the hotel. She felt Clint’s hand press against her lower back as he followed, and she thought for sure that touch alone would cause her to combust.

I really need to get a grip, she thought. We’ve barely begun our evening together.

They entered the restaurant and were seated immediately with Clint sliding in close to her. The waitress brought hot tea and sake along with the menus. As Chrissy perused the choices, she couldn’t help but notice Clint’s gaze never leaving her.

“Aren’t you going to read the menu so you know what you’re having for dinner?”

“What I’m hungry for isn’t on this menu,” he stated boldly.

Chrissy’s eyes widened while a quiet “Oh” left her lips.

“I apologize,” he said while he dipped his head a moment. When he looked back at her, his eyes were focused, determined. “I haven’t been able to stop thinking of you since this afternoon. I find it amazing we’ve run into each other halfway around the world after so many years.”

“I was just as surprised. And I have to admit, I’m trying not to embarrass myself with my nervousness.”

“Why are you nervous?” he asked as his hand reached out to caress the top of hers.

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Chrissy felt electric jolts with every pass of Clint's skin on hers. She closed her eyes as she enjoyed the warmth spreading up her arm. "I feel like the awkward college girl again crushing on you," she whispered. Her eyes flew open, a deep blush no doubt covering her face.

"Believe me, Christine Harrison, you're far from that awkward college girl. But I don't mind telling you I like the sound of you crushing on me." He playfully winked. "I find myself feeling more than a crush for you."

"You do?"

Before he could answer her the waitress returned, asking if they'd like to order. Chrissy listened as Clint took the liberty of ordering their meal. Once the waitress was gone, Clint continued.

"I liked you, Chrissy, and my lame attempts at asking you out obviously had no impact, as you refused or avoided me at all costs it seemed."

"I, well, I was so dumbfounded that someone like you would be interested in someone like me. I didn't have much experience with situations like that. Beth tried to convince me to give you a chance, but I just couldn't. We were going to talk more about it over break, and then, well, then I went home so suddenly."

Clint leaned in closer as he spoke. "And then life got away from us. But I'd really like to make up for lost time."

Chrissy trembled at his words, at his warm breath tickling her ear. If she turned her



head, her lips would connect with his. As if reading her mind, Clint placed his hand under her chin and slowly guided her face around to his.

When their lips brushed, she sighed. She closed her eyes and let him take the kiss as far as he wanted. She felt only the slightest increase in pressure as she tasted the lingering liquor on his breath. Angling her head, Chrissy suddenly wanted to take the kiss a little further herself. But before she could, she felt the absence of Clint's lips from hers as he groaned. She opened her eyes to see his intent stare filled with sorrow, and she immediately wanted to soothe him.

"What's wrong?" she asked quietly.

"I haven't even asked whether you're involved with anyone."

"I wouldn't be sitting here with you like this if I were. And what about you? Are you—"

Clint's lips were on hers again before she could utter another word. The only sound that came from her was a contented sigh as the kiss lingered. She then felt his lips trail warmth over her jaw and up to her ear. His tongue flicked out, licking her lobe before he pulled it into his mouth to gently suckle.

"Oh," she softly moaned. As much as she would have loved to see what else he could do to make her moan, she didn't think the restaurant was the appropriate place. Reluctantly she pulled back, clearing her throat.

"So, tell me what you ordered for our dinner?"

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Clint watched color brighten Chrissy's face as she fussed with the placement of her

napkin on her lap before taking a healthy drink of her sake. He knew he'd been bold acting as he did, but he just couldn't help it.

She made his heart race, made his blood burn hot, and made his cock take over the thinking for his brain. Not a good combination when seated in a public restaurant. If he wanted a second chance with her, he needed to slow down, be smart, and be a gentleman.

But he questioned whether he was worthy of any chance with her.

The waitress came by to replace their now-empty sake bottle as he explained the food that would start to arrive.

"I hope you're not opposed to trying a little bit of everything."

"Not at all," Chrissy answered. "I like to try new things. You know, broaden my horizons and all."

"So tell me about your studio."

Clint was entertained as Chrissy launched into an enthusiastic story about her business in Denver. Her drive and desire for the future she and Zac envisioned for their business was impressive.

"Wait," Clint interjected during one of Chrissy's stories involving a client. "You're responsible for the decorating of Bob Blackthorn's offices." He laughed, thinking of another business associate of his, and the tale the man told of his adventures in remodeling.

"You know Bob Blackthorn?" Chrissy asked as a shocked expression transformed her face.

“I do. Hard to believe our paths have never crossed since I spend the majority of my time in Denver for business.” He shook his head. “All this time, you were right under my nose and I didn’t know it.”

“Incredible. Elaborate,” she added with a smile.

Clint went on to talk about his work with the Cattlemen’s Association, leaving out any mention of the affair, of course. He also entertained her with retelling Bob’s version of the tale about the decorating of his offices, both at home as well as at the Association’s department. Apparently, Bob and Zac got on fabulously. His wife and Zac, not so much.

“Oh, that woman was a menace,” Chrissy added. “Bob’s patience for her was commendable. Luckily, she wasn’t a factor outside their home.” She turned to Clint. “Which makes me question, how in the world did I never run into you while doing his business office?”

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“Well, it is a rather large organization,” Clint fudged. He didn’t mention it was around the time his affair had taken a drastic turn, landing him in the hospital for a few days. And afterward, he had retreated to the ranch for a brief stay before taking off to ... anyplace else.

He quickly turned the subject to his family, telling of the unfortunate passing of his mother. Although not any better to discuss, it took her attention away from further questioning him about his work.

Clint was working hard to put the mistake of the affair in the past in order to repair himself. To better himself. To find a new life for himself.

But was he repaired? And did he even deserve to think he was ready to try again for happiness? Let alone entertain the idea that he may have a chance with Chrissy?

Ludicrous!

“I’m so sorry to hear about your mother,” Chrissy said as she reached for Clint’s hand.

Clint felt her compassion like an infusion filling his veins, warming his soul. He wanted to tap into that and pray for an endless supply. He brought her hand to his lips, kissing her knuckles. He watched her eyes dilate as her pulse quickened beneath his fingers.

“Let’s talk about more pleasant subjects,” Clint said.

Their food arrived and they both dove in with gusto. Clint noticed Chrissy taking liberties with the sake, watching as bottle after bottle was brought to the table.

Once their meal was complete, Clint suggested they take a walk around the spacious courtyard associated with the hotel. His underlying intent was to get her some fresh air and clear her head, as he could tell the drinks were getting to her.

He was quickly at her side as she stood, wobbling a bit.

“Am I going to embarrass myself? How much did I drink?”

“Truth?” Clint teased, causing her to giggle.

“That already tells me it was too much.”

He took her hand and told her to lean on him anytime she felt she needed to.

“I don’t usually drink. As you can see, I’m a light-weight. I’m sorry.”

“There’s no need to apologize,” he stated as they made their way outside, the cool, humid air quickly bringing goosebumps to Chrissy’s skin as it washed over them. “I’ll take care of you.”

“Mm hmm, I’ll just bet you could,” she murmured as she pressed closer to him. “It smells wonderful out here,” Chrissy said as she closed her eyes, inhaling deeply.

“All I smell is you, and yes, it’s wonderful.”

She chuckled. “You’re such a flirt.”

“Am I?” Clint asked innocently while he nuzzled her neck.

“But the gentleman in you is warring with himself.”

“Is he now?” Clint leaned back slightly and cocked an eyebrow, making her giggle more.

“He is indeed.” She nodded primly. “Continue to be the perfect gentleman,” she spoke slowly, enunciating each word perfectly. “Or go for it, which is—”

Clint couldn’t hold back any longer. To hell with being the gentleman, he thought. He covered her mouth with his, expecting to swallow her surprise. Instead, her passion rivaled his. And that sent him even further toward the edge.

With her inviting curves wrapped in silky material, he couldn’t stop his hands from their exploration as they ran down her body. He cupped her firm ass and nearly came from that contact alone.

Clint broke free from her lips to trail a path of nipping kisses down her neck. He heard her moan as her body shook beneath him.

“I’ve waited so long for this,” she sighed.

Clint lifted away from her, staring at her beautiful face. She opened her eyes to stare into his.

“What’s wrong?” she asked. Before Clint could think rationally and form an answer, Chrissy pulled back. “Oh my God, I’m so sorry. I’m so embarrassed.”

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“I’m the one who should apologize. You’re not in any state to be thinking clearly,” he said.

Her open-mouthed stare and the hurt in her eyes puzzled Clint. She took a step back. He started to speak but was cut off as Chrissy spoke first.

“I may have had a bit more to drink than I’m used to, but I can certainly think for myself.” Her fiery attitude increased notch by notch as she continued. “And if you think that by doing what you did, you were taking advantage of me, think again. I was a willing participant as well. But if you don’t want me, well then—”

Clint selfishly loved the shocked gasp of her inhale as he pulled her tight to his chest. “Make no mistake, I want you.”

“Well then take me,” she countered, issuing a challenge.

He closed his eyes, placing his forehead against hers as a soft breath escaped his lips. “I don’t know if I’m worthy of you, Chrissy.”

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All Chrissy could hear was desperation mixed with despair. Defeat.

What’s made him so vulnerable?

“Let me make that choice.” She heard herself say as she lifted her head to meet his eyes. “Don’t take that away from me now that we’ve found each other again.”

“I’ve made bad choices, hurt those I loved in the process. I couldn’t bear the thought of hurting you.”

“The only way you’d hurt me is by not letting go of the past. By not giving this a chance.”

She watched him struggle and saw the uncertainty in his eyes. Chrissy framed his face to softly kiss his lips.

“How long were you planning to stay in Japan?” Chrissy asked when she pulled away.

“I... I don’t know. I don’t really have a set schedule.”

“What about your work? Don’t you have to get back to it?”

Chrissy’s hands dropped away as Clint stepped back, shoving his hands in his pockets. “I took a leave of absence,” he replied.

She had to think quickly. She couldn’t lose what little ground she felt they were gaining.

“The business portion of my trip is complete,” Chrissy started. “I had hoped to stay at least a few more days to explore and enjoy some sites.” She closed the distance again, placing her hands on Clint’s shoulders. “Perhaps I could convince you to join me?”

She felt his hands at her waist as a small spark returned to his eyes. He grinned. “That wouldn’t take much. Are you sure?”

“Positive.” She laced her fingers with his and turned to resume their walk.



They strolled through the courtyard content with the silence. When Chrissy tried to stifle a yawn, Clint suggested he see her to her room.

“It has been quite the day,” she said as she leaned into him, hugging his arm.

“What floor are you on?” he asked as they made their way to the elevators.

“Twenty-seventh.”

They were the only ones in the car for the ride up, and as soon as the doors closed, Chrissy surprised Clint by latching onto his body and backing him against the wall.

He chuckled. “I thought you were tired?”

“I am. Tired of denying myself of you.” She fisted her hands in his shirt while she pressed her lips to his. She had never felt so bold, so daring. After all this time, she just hoped it proved to be the right move.

By the way Clint responded, she guessed she was on the right track. As his arms circled her she literally feasted on his mouth. Their tongues fought for control as they both alternately moaned and sighed. Chrissy had limited experience with men over the years, but that didn’t stop her from acting on lustful instinct when it came to this man.

With her conviction set, she would ensure they ended up together tonight.

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Luckily the ride didn't stop until it reached her floor. When the elevator doors opened Chrissy all but dragged Clint out of the car and down the hall to her door.

"Chrissy, I—"

"Don't say another word," she said, panting. "Don't be the gentleman right now." She searched her clutch for her room card and finally got the door open. "You said you wanted me."

"Godhelpme, I do."

"Then come get me."

Clint growled as Chrissy lured him. She walked backward into the room as he hurried after her, the door closing behind him. They were shut off from the world and the only thing that mattered was him and her. Together. Right now.

"Are you sure of what you're doing?" he asked.

"Absolutely." Her eyes never left his as she began to work on the delicate buttons along the side of her dress, releasing them one by one in a tantalizing fashion. As more of her skin was revealed, Chrissy's gaze traveled Clint's body, his lust evident by the strain of his growing erection against his pants.

"Looks like you might need some relief." She peeled back the dress and let it drop to the floor, standing in a barely-there thong and bra which left nothing to the imagination. Watching his appreciative gaze upon her body delighted Chrissy. She

noticed he lingered at her belly piercing, which was a simple diamond stud.

“The first time I saw your piercing, I was shocked.” Clint’s husky voice sent shivers across her skin. “And highly aroused.”

“Were you now?” Her words were meant to tease as were her next actions. Chrissy gently cupped her breasts and slowly worked her hands down her torso, stopping at the elastic of her thong as her hips shimmied from side to side.

Clint was in front of her in two long strides, stopping her hands from any further movement. He then reached up to unfasten the pins holding her hair in place, releasing the silky tresses. Her body became electrified as he ran his fingers through the strands, murmuring, “I knew it would feel soft. So soft.” He framed her face and rested his forehead against hers.

“Please tell me this is what you really want because I’m too close to losing it,” he gritted out.

“It is, Clint.”

“I want to take you slowly, savor you, but I don’t think I’m going to last.”

“Maybe I don’t want slow right now.” Chrissy lifted a hand to his face, running her thumb across his lower lip. “I don’t want to think too hard, I only want to feel.”

Her lips curved into a smile as Clint sucked her digit into his mouth causing wicked thoughts to invade her mind.

“I think you’re highly overdressed, Mr. Jessup.”

“I think you’re right.”

Clint walked Chrissy to the bed before taking one step back to rid himself of his clothes. There was no enticement, no show, only efficient movement as he quickly got naked while keeping his eyes on her. Just as she was about to undo her bra, Clint stopped her. "Let me." He reached around to fumble with the hooks, and once undone, began to peel the bra away, slowly, as if unwrapping a delicate package. Tossing the garment aside, his warm hands covered her flesh, squeezing and molding. "So beautiful." He tweaked her nipples until they pebbled beneath his fingers, causing a moan to escape her mouth as she pressed her body closer to his.

She felt perfectly cherished as he tenderly captured a peak. The repeated flicks of his tongue against the tightened bud sent a jolt each time down to her pussy. Chrissy speared her hands through his hair, holding him close as he lavished one breast then the other.

"Clint." His name fell from her lips like a plea as her body rocked against his.

He knelt on one knee as his mouth worked its way down her torso, his tongue dancing over her piercing before lingering at a hip. His fingers hooked the thin strap of her thong and worked the tiny piece of material down her legs. As Chrissy stepped out of the garment, she kept her legs in a wide stance as his eyes zeroed in on her smooth pussy.

"Damn, you're gorgeous," Clint rasped. "I can smell your arousal and it's driving me crazy. I'm so close to coming already." He didn't give her time to respond as he used his fingers to part her lips and lash out with his tongue to taste her.

"Oh, fudge," she moaned. Her fingers tightened against his scalp as she flexed her hips into his face. Chrissy sounded off with a moan, a gasp, as Clint sucked her clit, the sensitive tissue engorged and pulsing. Her legs shook as she drew closer and closer to her release. This only spurred him on as he tongued her harder, tightening his lips around her sex.

“Come for me, Chrissy, come on my tongue. I need to taste your cream.”

Returning his attention to his task, his fingers feathered her lips as his mouth worked ruthlessly against her flesh. Her orgasm triggered with one more pull and her scream echoed throughout the room. Her body danced wildly and her head fell back on her shoulders as Clint wrung as much pleasure from her as he could.

Suddenly, he was standing and capturing her mouth in a fierce kiss. She kissed just as fiercely as they couldn't get enough of touching one another. The sting of his teeth against her lip felt glorious and she nipped in return.

“I need to be inside you,” he growled.

“Yes.” She fisted his erection with one hand, squeezing it before running up and down its length. Her thumb smeared the moisture seeping from the tip across his bulbous head, causing Clint to jerk.

“I need a condom.”

Chrissy shook her head as she breathlessly said, “Pill.” He eyed her as she added, “Menstrual regulation.”

“Do you trust me?” he asked.

“I do.”

He hoisted her into his arms and carried her to the bed as she laughed into his neck before suckling. As he laid her back, positioning between her legs, she wrapped them around his backside, bringing their hips together. His cock brushed against her dripping pussy and she lifted her hips in invitation.

“Now, Clint. I need you now.”

With that, he fisted his own erection and drove into her, solidifying his own need. Both cried out as he seated himself fully, pulsing inside her body as she squeezed him.

“So fucking beautiful,” he rasped. He held himself still, and all Chrissy wanted was movement. When she tried to lift her hips, Clint held her steady, pressing his pelvis into her while he brought a hand to her sternum. “Not yet. Just let me enjoy this before it’s over too quickly.” His voice was thick with emotion as his eyes bored into her.

She gave a slight nod as she ran her nails across his muscled chest, squeezing her

internal muscles around him, enjoying the feel of his length filling her. Running a foot down his leg, she felt him shake with his need, his control extraordinary at not taking what he wanted. And Chrissy knew he wanted her as he pulsed inside her before slowly, ever so slowly rotating his hips with the start of the movement.

Their gazes held one another as he withdrew to the tip then inch by glorious inch filled her again, rubbing against her clit. Chrissy rose up to grind on him as her hands found purchase against his shoulders. She kneaded the muscle, loving his strength—the pure maleness of him.

Clint leaned in to kiss her, long and sensuously while he gave tiny thrusts of his hips. When he drew back and rose above her, his pace increased, and she met him with every demanding thrust of her own.

“You feel so damn perfect,” he said.

“So do you,” she countered.

“I want you to come hard for me.”

“Yes,” she whispered.

“Say it. Tell me you wanna come hard.”

“I want to come hard for you, Clint. I want to come harder than I’ve ever come before.”

His eyes took on a darker look as he thrust deeper, putting just the right amount of pressure on both her clit and some foreign spot within that no one had ever touched.

“Have you had many lovers, Chrissy?” he ground out. She could only shake her head

as he continued. “Because you can forget all about them. I’m going to make sure you know only me.”

“Only you, Clint.”

“Touch yourself. Make yourself come and squeeze me tight.” He pumped faster, harder, as sweat laced his brow and every inch where they were skin on skin.

His words induced a carnal force within Chrissy, wanting so much to please him. Wanting so much pleasure for herself as well. She reached between their bodies to finger her clit, her nails scratching his cock as he fed it to her body. Over and over again. Rubbing furiously, she felt the rise, the nearing of her orgasm as Clint chased his own. Their grunts and groans were interspersed with gasps as jolts of pleasure shocked their systems.

“Fuck, yeah, that’s it. It feel it. I feel you,” he ground out.

“Yes. Feel me,” Chrissy said.

Clint roared as his body jerked, slamming one more time, deep inside her as he came. Hard. Chrissy was relentless as she continued to rub her clit. When she finally exploded, her pussy convulsed around his cock as he coated her insides with the product of his endless climax.

Finally, his body collapsed and she welcomed his weight by wrapping her arms around his back. She tightened her legs around his ass, clinging to him. His arms circled her shoulders as his hands framed her head, threading through her hair to gently massage her scalp. He nuzzled her neck with kisses, causing her to squeal and her skin suddenly became chilled.

She ran her nails across his back to dig into his ass, now causing him to yelp. He rose



slightly, his face hovering above hers. As his eyes zeroed in on her lips, she wasted no time in lifting herself to meet his tempting mouth. She conducted a thorough exploration with her tongue, delighting in his moans of pleasure.

After the kiss went on for a few more moments, Clint pulled back. “You’re too good to be true,” he spoke against her lips.

“No, I’m not. I’m just a woman who finally got to love you.” Chrissy brought her hands around to frame his face when he tried to pull away. “Don’t, Clint. Don’t distance yourself now.”

“I’m ... not.”

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But he did.

He pulled away, disconnecting their bodies as he rolled to her side. Chrissy hated the silence but respected it. She waited for him to make the next move. All she could do was offer comfort, letting him know she was here for him. She curled into his side and was rewarded with his arm wrapping around her.

They fell asleep before either realized.

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Clint woke to the feel of soft flesh beneath his hands. Cracking open his eyes, it took a moment for them to adjust in the darkness to figure out Chrissy lay atop him. She managed to pull the edge of the bed cover over them, as they never made it beneath the sheets.

He stroked her warm skin and listened to her even breathing as he relived their encounter. Hands down the best sex of his life.

“I’m just a woman who finally got to love you.”

Her earlier words echoed in his head, and he cringed, once again wondering about where this would lead. Wondering what she’d think of him once she learned the truth. If she even needed to know the truth.

Was he making too much out of nothing? No. What he did was inexcusable. Doesn’t matter that the very man whose wife he’d had an affair with forgave him. Clint

couldn't forgive himself, no matter how much he was told to do so. To put the past behind him and move on.

But could he trust his feelings or those of another? Could he open his heart to feeling again? Tobeworthy of another's affections?

He felt like such a pansy-ass for his thoughts.

Chrissy shifted on top of him, her perky breasts pressing into his chest as her hot sex lined up perfectly with his growing erection.

Yeah, no matter what his brain said, his body couldn't deny what he wanted. Her.

He traced his fingers across the warm flesh of her back, down to her buttocks, teasing the crease. As her body squirmed more, she sighed with what seemed like contentment, one hand toying in his hair while the other caressed a path down his side. Chrissy lifted her pelvis to gently fist his rock-hard cock, running along its length to squeeze the head.

"Seems you can't get enough of me," she said quietly.

"Seems you're right."

While his hands continued to explore her back, her tempting ass, Chrissy shifted her legs and pushed up to straddle his lap. His erection was sandwiched between the lips of her pussy as she slid back and forth, slicking him with the wetness seeping from her body. She braced her hands on his chest as her hair fell forward across her shoulders, obscuring those perky breasts of hers.

Clint looked up at her face and saw her eyes glow in the darkness. He slid his hands between her hair and her body to cup her tits as she ground against him, making him

impossibly harder, aching. A teasing smile reshaped her mouth.

“Soon, I want that sassy mouth on my cock.”

She smiled even broader as she started to move down his body. “Is now too soon?”

Before Clint could stop her, she slid low, circled his length with her hand, and directed it to her welcoming mouth. She swallowed him up, her heat engulfing him. As she held him at the base, her teeth, tongue, and lips worked magic as she sucked, scraped, and licked to her heart’s content.

He couldn’t control his thrusts as he practically fucked her mouth, but Chrissy didn’t relent, bringing him so close, so quickly to his peak.

“Jesus, fuck, that feels so good.” He couldn’t stop his fingers from tightening in her hair, applying the slightest amount of pressure to her head to keep her at her task as he bucked.

“Mm hmm,” she moaned, not bothering to stop her attention, not bothered by his command.

Clint groaned, gasping for breath as he tried to tell her he was ready to come.

“Do it.”

“No, not like this.” His attempt to pull out of her mouth was fruitless as she doubled her efforts, sucking harder and working faster on his cock. “Chrissy,” he wailed. He bucked wildly, shooting jets of his cum down her throat. And she took it all. He could barely focus on her beautiful face as she licked him clean once his release subsided. His hands fell to his sides as his body went limp, and Chrissy sat up with a satisfied smile on her face. She pushed her hair over her shoulders, stretching her arms over

her head as she licked her lips and arched her back.

“God, you’re gorgeous.” With a sudden renewed energy, Clint reached out for her and she linked her hands with his. “Now it’s my turn to take care of you.” He pulled her forward. “Get that pussy on my face.”

Her strangled gasp was a sweet sound. While he shimmied down some, she positioned her sex over him, and he wasted no time in striking. Hooking her legs, he brought her wet center right over his mouth and feasted. He sucked and licked, giving her all the attention she deserved. Her juices flowed freely and he lapped at them greedily, pulling on her clit as it pulsed on his tongue.

Chrissy fell forward to place her hands on the wall as she rotated her hips, grinding on his face. Clint wanted to lift her and spear her core with his fingers, wanted to feel her tighten around him, but knew she was close to breaking. She shook uncontrollably as he took her over the edge, her scream once again filling the room.

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Clint was shocked to feel his cock harden. Needing nothing more than to bury himself inside her, he lifted her off and rolled with her as he set her on her hands and knees. Curling himself around her, he guided his straining cock inside her still quaking pussy. One thrust and he was crushing his balls to her ass.

“Oh, fuck!” Chrissy moaned as she buried her face against the bed.

Clint could only let out a strangled laugh as he pumped inside her, realizing that was the very first time he’d heard her cuss. He battered her, driving her to the brink again as he staked his claim. Reaching around, he pinched her clit, igniting another orgasm that had her clenching tightly around him, spurring on his own climax.

“Yes, yes,” she cried as she pressed her ass into his body, matching his thrusts.

“So good, dammit, so good,” Clint ground out, not letting up until they both collapsed. He shifted to the side so as not to crush her. She found his arms and held tight to him as tiny shudders continued to rock their bodies.

“Holy, jeez,” she said, sounding out of breath.

Clint whispered in her ear. “I liked hearing you cuss instead. It’s hot.”

Chrissy snorted with laughter. They lay curled up with one another for a moment before she tried to move.

“Where you going?”

“I need to pee,” she answered. “And I might as well shower.”

“Hot date?” he teased.

“Yeah, someone’s taking me to breakfast.” She rolled, and the dawning day shed just enough light for him to see her bright eyes.

“I thought we could order room service. You really don’t want to leave this comfort, do you?”

“Mmm, that does sound like a better option. And no clothes required.” She wiggled her brows and gave him a quick kiss before pulling away. “Still going to shower and pee. You order and I’ll get the shower ready.”

Clint watched her retreating backside as she moved to the bathroom, her shapely ass wiggling nicely atop her even shapelier legs. Once she disappeared from view, Clint looked at the ceiling and raked his hand across his face.

“Holy, fuck,” he muttered. There was no way he’d ever get her out of his system now.

Clint sat up and took stock of the room. Eyeing the phone, he called for room service before joining Chrissy in the bathroom. With an open shower design, he walked around the dividing wall to see her standing beneath the spray of multiple jets. With her eyes closed and her head back, she ran her hands through her hair, over and over again.

“God, you’re beautiful,” he said, his tone low and husky. She wasn’t startled as she opened her eyes to watch him.

“And you’re gorgeous,” she returned, making a slow perusal of his body from head to

toe and back to his face. “Come on.” She held out her hand to him.

Clint stepped into the spray, circling her body with his arms before capturing her mouth. He gave her a languid kiss, pouring all his emotions into the action. Chrissy moaned and sighed as the kiss continued for what seemed like forever. Finally, he broke away and just stared at her.

“You really are too good to be true,” he said. And when she tried to shake off the compliment, Clint stopped her. “You are. I don’t know if I deserve you, but I’m damned sure gonna give it my best shot.” When her brows furrowed and she was once again poised to speak, Clint cut her off. “Let’s shower and eat. Then we’ll talk.”

Chrissy simply nodded as Clint released her, and they made quick work of cleaning themselves. Surprisingly enough, without any play. There’d be plenty of time for that later, Clint thought.

At least he hoped.

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After showering, Chrissy and Clint put on robes provided by the hotel while they ate their breakfast. She still tingled nicely in many places as she relived the previous evening in her mind. It had been so much more than she thought possible, and she wouldn’t change a second of it.

Chrissy knew there was something troubling Clint, and at some point, they’d talk, but she was going to enjoy every moment of her time with him. And pray that whatever he had to say could be dealt with, and their relationship would continue once back in Denver.

Relationship?



She realized that's exactly what she wanted. Her last 'boyfriend' had been nearly a year ago, and even then, he was just a fun guy to hang out with. Sure they'd been intimate after a few months of dating, but it wasn't anything earth-shattering.

Nothing at all had ever come close to what she shared with Clint. She felt as if nothing ever would.

Whatever he had to talk about, she'd listen, analyze, process, and figure out how, or if she needed to incorporate the knowledge into her planning for their future.

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“What’s going through that pretty head of yours?” Clint asked.

“Oh, nothing.”

“Yeah? Your devilish smile says otherwise.”

He finished a bite of his eggs and raised his coffee cup to his lips. Chrissy loved the intensity of his hazel eyes as they watched her. She loved his unkempt hair looking nicely tousled, knowing her fingers had combed through the strands only moments before.

“Really? And what does my devilish smile say?” she asked, lifting her own cup of coffee to her mouth, savoring the sweetened elixir. She’d already finished her small portion of eggs, bacon, and fruit, surprisingly full. She thought she’d have a bigger appetite after the night’s activity. Chrissy was just thankful she didn’t have a hangover or lingering headache from all the sake she’d consumed.

Clint cocked his head. “I haven’t quite figured that out.”

“Well, when you do, I’ll let you know.”

Clint laughed as he placed his cup on the table. “Chrissy, you’re such a pleasant surprise.”

“How so?” She couldn’t stand not to touch him, to not be close to him. She stood and walked to him, parting her robe below the belt in order to straddle his lap. When he welcomed her into his arms, she was ecstatic.

Chrissy wound her hands around his neck as he settled on her hips, his hypnotic eyes boring into her.

“I realize in ten years, a lot can happen. I remember your shyness, your uncertainty. But also your beauty and innocent spirit. You captivated me then and you continue to do so now. Maybe more so because of the woman you’ve become.”

“You sure know how to flatter a gal.” She playfully batted her lashes causing Clint to laugh.

“I only speak the truth.” His hands massaged her flesh through the robe and she couldn’t help but wish they were skin to skin. “You’ve become a gorgeous woman who isn’t afraid of what she wants.” He leaned in closer to nuzzle her neck. “As I found out last night.”

As he pressed his lips to her skin, Chrissy hummed. “Well, last night is only the beginning. You’re gonna find out a lot more about me. Especially if you keep this up.” She tangled her fingers in his hair to guide his head back, seeking his lips. When they connected, a slow simmer of a kiss played out that soon had Chrissy whimpering, needing more.

Her hands began to roam down his front to part the robe, settling on his hot skin. She swept across his sculpted pecs, down his well-defined abs, seeking his cock. God, she couldn’t get enough of this man!

Clint’s hands were suddenly holding her wrists, stopping her from further temptation. When she gave him a playful pout, he only chuckled as he folded his robe to cover his parts. “Time to talk.”

“Boring, but all right.” She gave him a quick nip. “Would you prefer I dislodge myself from your tempting lap?”

He chuckled again. “That might help my concentration.”

As Chrissy took her seat, she settled in to hear what Clint had to purge. And purge he did.

“I fucked up, Chrissy.”

She stared wide-eyed at him with his choice of words but listened intently as he went on to divulge the humiliating affair he’d had. He revealed his weakness for the woman of a business associate, a friend—one with whom he still remained friends. He spoke of her deception in initiating the affair, not because she felt she was in a loveless marriage and truly loved Clint, as she had pretended. No, because she not only wanted revenge on whom she believed to be a neglectful husband, but also to worm her way closer to Clint’s brother. The man she claimed to truly love after having a brief encounter with years earlier.

Chrissy somehow followed the convoluted story, hearing most of all the regret and shame Clint felt for himself.

“How can I ever feel worthy of your love after my actions?”

“Clint, your actions have nothing to do with us. You truly believed this woman was in a loveless marriage, you thought you fell in love with her, and thought you could rescue her.”

“But I betrayed a friend. A man I could almost call a brother. A man who trusted me.”

“A man who forgave you. Who asked that you forgive yourself. You were used. Your caring, loving nature was twisted and used against you. If you think you can sit there and wonder how I can love you, it’s because of your ability to love and care.”

Chrissy watched Clint's eyes now widen at the mention of her loving him. "Yes, Clint Jessup, I love you." She stood and walked to him, kneeling down at his feet and grabbing his hands to hold in hers. "I love you. Know that I'd never deceive you. And I know you'd never knowingly or willingly hurt me. It's time to move on. It's time to put your past and your doubts aside, and trust in what we can build with one another."

Clint lifted her hands to his mouth, kissing each and every knuckle before pulling her to her feet. He wrapped his arms around her waist and held her close, burying his head against her belly.

"I love you," he whispered. "I don't want my love to taint your goodness."

Chrissy couldn't help but snort. "Oh my goodness, I'm not a saint."

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Clint looked up at her and smiled. “Close enough.”

She leaned down to kiss him. “I’ll be your angel and your devil, and you can love both equally.”

“I’ll spend every day proving my worth for—”

Chrissy pressed her fingers against his lips, halting his words. “No, we’ll spend every day together loving one another, cherishing one another, and making each other better. How’s that?”

“Perfect.”

They started immediately.

Epilogue

...the following summer

“Clint, where are you?”

“Be right there!” he yelled from downstairs. He’d gone to the kitchen to whip up lunch while Chrissy and Zac were putting the finishing touches on the nursery in their renovated farmhouse.

Within two months of returning to the States from Japan, Clint and Chrissy bought property, planned the remodeling, and arranged a low-key wedding in Denver, much

to the disappointment of Zac, who wanted a lavish affair. But Chrissy put her foot down and insisted on intimate and classy, with close family and friends. Clint had even surprised her by taking the time to track down Beth and making it possible for her to attend. Chrissy had been thrilled, and the women promised to never lose contact again.

Turned out Bethany Ann Drake had secured herself a position in Paris, working for UNESCO—the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, for their International Institute for Educational Planning.

Yeah, quite a mouthful! But Beth couldn't be happier, and Chrissy was over the moon to finally reconnect with her friend. Beth had been one of the first to be informed about Chrissy's pregnancy, promising to visit in the fall when the baby was due.

So now, with less than three months until the expected delivery, Chrissy and Zac were oohing and aahing over their project while Clint just sat back and watched the transformation.

His life couldn't feel more complete than it did. Clint felt truly blessed to have Chrissy's love, and now, to be welcoming another into their lives, with the impending birth of their baby. Clint had also returned to work, resuming his crusade to unite cattlemen's groups across the nation, for the benefit of the entire nation.

He loaded up the tray, careful of the pitcher of sweet tea, and climbed to the second story, to the room decorated in soft shades of lavender, mint, and pink. As he stood in the doorway, his gaze immediately zeroed in on his beautiful wife and the swelling of her belly. Months ago, she had taken out her piercing when she thought the bulge would cause it to burst right through her skin. Clint had only laughed, telling her she was the most gorgeous pregnant woman he'd ever laid eyes on, and no doubt, could resume wearing the gem shortly after delivering.

“Finally, refreshments,” Zac said. “Thank you, handsome.” He snagged the pitcher and began to pour the tea, handing the first glass to Chrissy.

“Thanks,” she said, taking a healthy drink. She was holding up well to the unseasonable heat the summer had produced. Thank goodness for air conditioning! “What do you think?” she asked, spreading her arm about the room.

The walls were painted, the furniture in place and the baby’s name was scripted above the crib—TaniMarie.

Clint set the tray down on the changing table and went to Chrissy’s side, holding her close. “It’s like I always say—perfect.” He kissed her temple and enjoyed the blaze in her green eyes.

“Always, huh?”

“Yes. Now, go eat. You’ve been working non-stop for hours and you need a break.”

“Exactly,” Zac agreed. “Here, have a sandwich.”

Chrissy nibbled on her food while she rubbed her mound.

“She been active?” Clint asked.

“Ho, boy, has she. A regular karate champion today.”

Clint and Zac laughed while Chrissy gave them a mocking glare. “Just you wait. When she’s wailing in the middle of the night, I’m going to push you out of bed to fetch her.”

“I’m at your beck and call, my love.”



“You two, so sweet,” Zac cooed. He quickly finished off his sandwich and unceremoniously guzzled his drink. “Now, I hate to eat and run, but I must eat and run. I’ve got another client to check in on, and then Doug and I are off for the weekend.”

“Oh, have fun! And stay cool. California is still plenty warm.”

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“Oh, we plan to. The beach beckons.” The two were spending a long weekend in San Diego, where Doug would take part in an artist’s show, as he was a painter with family ties to the city.

“And stay north of the border. I’m not rescuing you from a Tijuana jail,” Chrissy teased.

“Believe me, I have no desire to venture south.” Zac approached Chrissy and gave her a kiss. He then gave a quick hug to Clint before saying his goodbyes and leaving.

Clint took the opportunity to gather Chrissy in his arms, nuzzling her neck as it was only one of his favorite things to do. “Well, Mrs. Jessup, whatever shall we do with our time?”

“This is a rare moment when we find ourselves alone, isn’t it?”

Clint chuckled, thinking how true that was. Since the flurry of activity, due to the wedding, renovation, and baby excitement, it wasn’t often they had a moment alone. He planned to make good use of their time.

He scooped Chrissy up in his arms, causing her to squeal then laugh as he proceeded to carry her to their bedroom. Carefully, he set her on her feet and began to peel the clothes from both their bodies.

“Mmm, I like where this is going.”

“You’re really going to like what comes next.” Clint backed toward the bed, pulling

her with him, and once he was on his back, helped her maneuver on top of him.

“Oh, and what might that be?” She teased her sex across his erection.

“Me.”

Chrissy threw her head back and laughed as Clint palmed her swollen breasts. He pinched her sensitive nipples, earning a hiss as her pussy gushed across his cock.

“You get more and more beautiful every day.”

“And you get more and more full of it.” She leaned down to kiss him, lingering while she teased his mouth with her tongue. She drew away with a smile that dazzled him.

“Someone’s gonna be full of it.” He punctuated the words with the thrust of his hips into her heat. “And it ain’t gonna be me.”

“Promises, promises.” She fisted him and aligned his cock with her opening, taking him in slowly. When he was seated to the hilt, she threw her head back and moaned while grinding on him. “Mmm, that feels so good.”

“You feel so good. And here’s another promise.” When he stopped his words, Chrissy opened her eyes and found his gaze. “To love you every day of my life, from now until eternity.”

“Oh, Clint. I love you so much.” She leaned down to kiss him again, her rounded belly pressing into his abdomen.

Clint spoke against her lips as he broke the kiss. “And I love you, Christine Jessup.”

He linked their hands and began to move, working their bodies in sync. Faster and faster he pumped as she rode him, rubbing herself against his body until they both

ignited. She convulsed around him as he emptied himself inside her. When their quaking began to subside, he rolled them to their sides, silly grins adorning their faces.

“So nice to have some time to ourselves,” Chrissy murmured as she snuggled her head under Clint’s chin.

With his arms wrapped around her, he caressed her soft skin as their feet tangled. “We’ll make every moment count because our alone time will soon be a thing of the past.”

“And I’ll welcome her with open arms.”

“As will I. Sleep, love.” Clint kissed Chrissy’s forehead.

Her eyes were closed as she nodded, quickly falling asleep.

Clint held her close, more thankful than ever to have her love in his life. He planned to make her never regret capturing his heart those many years ago and now, owning it.

The End