



# Filthy and Fierce

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**Category:** Erotic, Romance, Adult

**Description:** He's a filthy, fierce cowboy.

I'm his best friend's daughter.

And the only thing more forbidden than his hands on me... is how much I want them there.

He says I'm off limits.

But now I'm back in our small town, all grown up and aching for the one man I shouldn't want.

My dad thinks throwing me into ranch work will scare me off for good.

He's wrong.

Because the more I'm around Dixon Chase, with his rough hands and dirty mouth, the more I want to stay.

He says he can't touch me.

That I deserve better.

But once he gives in, there's no going back.

We were supposed to be a secret, something temporary.

But how do I give up something that feels this real?

**Total Pages (Source):** 26

# Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:06 am*

## CHAPTER 1

### DIXON

I'm nursing a beer in one hand and have a woman's thigh in my other one. She's sitting in my lap, and if this was ten years ago—hell, last year, I would already have her in the back room and be balls deep inside her. Instead, I'm sitting here, trying to figure out how to get her off my lap without embarrassing her.

She's a buckle bunny and is always hanging out at the Whiskey Whistler after a rodeo. She's one of probably ten women that follow the circuit, and she's known for being up for anything. Hell, she's probably slept with a few of the guys here. Not that I'm shaming her or anything. I've been there, done that.

But I'm not interested.

I don't know if it's my age or boredom, but I'm not interested in what she's offering. She's shifting back and forth on me, and I'm not sure what she's hoping for, but whatever it is, my dick is not interested either.

She leans toward me, pressing her fake, too-perfect breasts in my face. The bar is loud, and she has to practically holler into my ear for me to hear what she's saying. "You wanna get out of here, cowboy?"

"No." The word comes out quick and without any hesitancy.

She rears back, surprised, and I'm trying to be polite about it and soften the denial

with a smile, but she takes that as I'm interested instead of the fact I said no and meant it. Fuck.

I take my hand off her hip and put it on the couch beside me. Maybe she'll get bored and get up.

A few people walk over and congratulate me on my win tonight, and after a few fist-bumps, I'm getting frustrated. "Honey, can you get up?"

She smiles real big at me. "Get off? Did you just ask me if I wanted to get off?"

A guy standing next to me laughs, and I grit my teeth. This is not my scene anymore. I'm not sure what the hell I'm doing here. I'm thirty-five years old. I should be at home with a wife and kid about now, but instead, I've spent the last fifteen years rodeoing and fucking around.

I'm about to lift the woman from my lap when something draws my attention to the front door. As soon as I spot Faith Allen walking in with her head held high like she owns the damn place, I know my life is never going to be the same.

She has on tight blue jeans, tall black boots, and a shirt that is molded to every damn curve she has. She is sin in cowgirl boots.

I drag in a breath and swallow. Hard.

She's rolling a suitcase with another bag on top of it, telling me she just got into town.

I shouldn't be looking at her. Hell, no one in here should be looking at her. She's too young for most of the men in this crowd. I try to calculate it in my head, and she has to be around twenty-three now. Yeah, too damn young and too off-limits for you, I

remind myself.

She's my mentor's daughter. Hell, Charlie is more than a mentor; he's been like a father to me, and there's no way I should be looking at his daughter the way I am right now.

Every man in the place is looking at her, and I can just imagine what they're thinking. I'm not going to get out of this bar tonight without throwing a punch. Because as Charlie's daughter, I'm going to protect her. Hell, because she's Faith, I'm going to protect her.

She's a lot different from the girl that followed me around her daddy's ranch, asking me a thousand questions. I knew she had a crush on me then, but she was eighteen, and I had no interest in dating a child.

She's an adult now. The thought comes before I can stop it, but I quickly tamp it down. Nope, she's still too young, and it's not going to happen.

Every man in the bar is looking at her but somehow, somehow, she finds me. By the smile on her face, she's happy to see me, but very quickly it disappears.

"Oh, you wanna take me up on my offer?" I forgot about the woman on my lap, and she's pressing her ass into my cock that is thickening in my jeans. Fuck. She literally thinks I'm hard for her. I'm no longer worried about niceties. I lift the woman by the waist and set her in the seat next to me.

I stand up, smoothing my Wranglers down my thighs to hide my reaction to seeing Faith. I move to stand with a group of cowboys but keep my sights on the woman that is literally making me second-guess my morals, what's right and wrong and where the hell am I going to sleep tonight. If she's staying with her dad, I'm sleeping in the bunkhouse.

Dustin Clay pounds me on the back. “Congratulations on your win today!”

I shrug, not taking my eyes off Faith. “Thanks, but you’ll get it next time.”

Dustin is my biggest competitor in the bulldogging division, and we usually trade off wins at each event.

Sutton Trent barks out a laugh. “Please, you guys have it easy. You jump on a little steer and wrestle it to the ground. I have to ride a bull for eight seconds.”

I listen to Dustin and Sutton argue about which event requires more skill as I watch Faith across the bar. She’s moved to a table, and she has a friend with her, but there’s also three cowboys that are vying for her attention.

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:06 am*

I take my hat off and run my hand through my hair as Faith watches me. She recognized me as soon as she saw me, and she also knows that I'm not going to just stand by and let some cowboy hit on her.

She probably thinks I'm protecting her because of who her father is, and she may be partly right, but there's a bigger part of me that in no way wants to see some other man putting his hands on her. I'm not going to stand by and just let it happen. So with bated breath, I watch the three cowboys, and if one of them makes a move, I'm going to be the one to go and teach him a lesson. The lesson is called keeping your hands off someone that is not yours.

The second thing I'm going to do is find out how long she's staying. Hopefully, not long because I only have so much willpower, and just looking at Faith across the room makes me want to break her in every filthy way I can.

## CHAPTER 2

### FAITH

I knew Dixon Chase would be at the Whiskey Whistler.

I didn't know that he'd have a buckle bunny sitting in his lap when I got here.

Of course, I can't blame the woman. If I had the chance, I'd be in the same spot he just moved her from.

I'm trying to pay attention to the three guys talking to me and Lucy, but I can't seem

to focus because Dixon is watching me. It's nothing new; he's always watched me, but there's something about it now that makes me want to walk over to him and beg him to take me right here in the bar.

"Hello. Earth to Faith. Come in, Faith."

I jerk my eyes from the thick cowboy with black eyes across the room and look at my friend. "Lucy, I'm sorry. I was daydreaming."

She smirks at me knowingly. "Oh, I know exactly what you were doing, but Chris here was asking you what your plans are while you're in town."

I bite my lip and try to come up with some excuse of why I'm not going to be going out with Chris. Or hell, any of the three cowboys standing in front of me, for that matter. I'm not interested in them. The only cowboy I'd go out with is sitting across the bar and probably wishing I'd leave so I wouldn't be cramping his style. "I haven't seen my dad since I left town five years ago, so I'm going to be hanging out at the ranch and spending time with him."

The cowboy doesn't take the hint. "I'd love to see your dad's ranch. Charlie Allen is a legend and?—"

The guy goes on, listing all the awards my father has won through the years, but I'm not paying any attention because Dixon Chase is walking toward me. He has his hat on low so I can't see his eyes, but I know he's looking at me. My body feels as if it's on fire, my nipples are poking against my thin shirt, and there's a slickness between my legs that wasn't there before. My body betrays me in every way when it comes to Dixon. It was like this when I was eighteen and ever since then anytime I watched him on television. There's just something about him that I'm drawn to, and no cowboy compares to him.

It's not until he's almost to where I'm sitting that I realize I'm holding my breath. I let it out in a big whoosh just as he stops next to me.

I inhale, and the scent of him takes a hold of me. He smells like leather, sunshine, and pure Dixon Chase. I'm addicted to the smell of him, but before I can embarrass myself and lean in to sniff him, he grunts, "What are you doing here?"

I roll my eyes. So this is how he's going to play it. Fine. I can give it right back. "I'm sorry, I didn't know I had to tell you what I'm doing."

He juts a big fat thumb into his chest. "Well, you do. Just call me your keeper. Now, does your dad know you're home?"

I clasp my hands together in front of me. "I didn't tell him I was coming."

He opens his mouth and then closes it before turning to Lucy. "Hey, Lucy." She's all smiles as she looks between us. I'm sure she's enjoying the show. She's always made cracks about how I'm attracted to Dixon and told me I had daddy issues since he's so much older than me, but I never let it faze me.

When Dixon turns his gaze to the three cowboys, he snarls. "Do you mind? Take a walk."

"But..." the cowboy that was asking me out starts, but his friends seem to be the brains of the operation because they grab their buddy. "Sure thing. See ya."

They walk away, and I'm glaring at Dixon. "What the fuck was that?"

He's on me so quick that all I can do is gasp. His hand is holding my chin, his body is pressed against mine, and his voice is thick and husky. "Don't talk like that, princess."



I jerk from his hold, my breath coming in as little pants as I take a step back from him. Lucy mumbles something about going to dance or something, so I'm alone with Dixon as he glares at me. I put a hand on my hip. "You can't tell me what to do, Dixon. You're not my keeper, you're sure as hell not my dad, and you're not the boss of me."

His whole body is pulled taut as he stares at me. "If men hear you talk like that, they only think of one thing, Faith."

Shocked, I rear back. "Oh yeah, so what? Fuck? Just because they think something doesn't mean I'm just going to bend over and take it. I can talk however I want to talk, and people can think whatever the hell they want to think."

He's staring at me, and my body is practically vibrating with desire. He looks like he's a man barely hanging on, and that's when I decide to be brave. I take a step toward him, put my hands on his chest, and blink up at him. "Unless you're talking about you. Does hearing me say fuck turn you on, Dixon? Is that what this is about?"

He growls, and his hands go to my waist. His big, thick fingers dig into my skin, and there's no stopping the moan that leaves my lips. We're staring at each other, his eyes on my lips, and for the first time ever, Dixon's guard is lowered enough to where I can see that he wants me. He's usually a wall, never showing any kind of emotion, and for just a second, he lets the shield between us slide. I go to my tiptoes. "What do you think, Dixon? You want to take me for a ride?"

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:06 am*

He leans down, and he's going to kiss me. I'm so sure of it, I go on my tiptoes, and our lips are inches apart. We're sharing the same air, and I can almost taste the beer he's been drinking. When he doesn't move any closer, I whimper, almost begging for his lips. "Dixon?"

He inhales and lets it out, low and slow. He's barely holding on, and I'm just standing here, body vibrating, waiting for him to give in.

Just when I think he's about to, he jerks backward, breaking the connection that was burning between us.

"Does your dad know you're home?"

I shake my head. "You already asked me that, and no, he doesn't. I didn't tell him."

"Surprise?" he asks.

I shake my head. "No, it's not a surprise. I knew if I told him I was coming home, he'd try and talk me out of it."

His forehead creases, but he doesn't say anything else. He points to the bags next to my feet. "These yours?" He doesn't wait for me to answer. He puts my bag over his shoulder and then grips the handle of the suitcase and picks it up. "Let's go."

I let my head fall back. Truth is, I should fight him on this. He can't just go around thinking he can tell me what to do and I'm going to do it, but my body is still recovering from the almost-kiss. Damn, I can just imagine what would happen if he

actually did kiss me. I don't know if I could survive it.

I follow behind him, seeing the curious looks from everyone around us. As soon as we're outside, I catch up to him. "What if I'm not ready to leave?"

He lifts the suitcase into the back of his truck. "Tough. I'm ready to leave, so that means you gotta go too."

I block his path. "I wasn't kidding back there, Dixon. You're not my keeper."

He leans down and looks me in the eye. "Princess, as long as you're here, I'm your keeper. Wanna know what that means? I'll be keeping the cowboys away from you and keeping you safe. You don't like it, then leave town."

Instead of waiting for him, I jerk open the passenger side of his truck. "Oh you would love that, wouldn't you? What is it with men that I lo—" I catch myself before I give something away I can't take back. "Men that I like that want me gone? I mean, am I that much of a pain to be around or what?"

I don't wait for an answer. I get into the truck and slam the door because I'm done dealing with Dixon Chase and his hot and cold. I had high hopes when I came home, but I'm quickly learning that I should have just stayed away because so far Dixon's not happy to see me, and I'm pretty sure my dad is not going to be either.

## CHAPTER 3

### DIXON

Do not touch her. Do not touch her.

That's the mantra that I keep telling myself as I drive us through town. We get to the

outskirts before I try to talk to her. “So what’s up with the trip to Whiskey Run? Missing small town life where everyone knows your business, need a little roughing it, or?—”

She cuts me off. “My father’s ranch is state of the art in ranching standards. There’s nothing rough about it.”

I grip the steering wheel. “Fine. Why are you here?”

She turns in her seat, and I don’t have to look at her to know she’s glaring at me. But this is better than her tempting me with her filthy mouth. “I’m sorry, do I need a reason to come and see my dad?”

I shrug. “You haven’t been here in five years. You out of money?”

As soon as I say the words, I wish I could take them back. I know Faith is not like that, but I’ve tried everything to figure out why she never comes to see Charlie. Not Christmas, Father’s Day, nothing. I’ve asked him about it, but he just smiles and says she’s living her life.

She sits up a little taller next to me. “I’ll have you know that I haven’t taken a dime from my father since I left here. I received scholarships for college and my dorm, and I worked part-time jobs to pay for living expenses, so yeah, Mr. Know It All, I am not out of money, and I’m offended that you think so little of me.”

I shake my head. I don’t know what it is, but it’s like I’m just trying to piss her off. Without looking at her, I apologize. “I’m sorry, Faith. I shouldn’t have said what I said.”

She has her arms crossed over her chest, and she doesn’t even acknowledge my apology. It’s like I can’t stop pissing her off.

The rest of the ride is silent. When I pull onto the Allen Ranch, Faith leans forward to look out the window. She's taking it all in, and there's been a lot of changes since she's been gone. She must be keeping up with it all if she knows her father's ranch is state of the art. The need to apologize again is overwhelming, but I don't. Maybe it will be better if she's a little mad at me because there's no way I can take more of what she was giving me at the bar. I can only be so strong.

I park up at the main house, and I want her to stay in her seat so I can walk around to help her out, but she's already out before I can get to her. "What kind of men you been dating?"

She stumbles, and I loop an arm around her waist to stop her from falling. With her ass tucked against my thighs, I have an instant reaction to her touch. I have to force her away from me and release my hold on her once she gets her footing. Needing to put some distance between us, I grab the suitcase from the back of the truck and then grab her bag, putting it over my shoulder.

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:06 am*

She huffs out a breath. “What did you mean by that?”

She’s offended by my comment, and I want to kick myself for opening my mouth. I hate to think of her dating some asshole, but I really hate to think about her dating some guy that doesn’t even open the door for her. “I mean, when you’re with me, you wait in the truck for me to open the door for you.”

She laughs, and I can’t help but smile at the sweet sound. But just as quickly as she starts, she stops and shakes her head. “You sure are Mr. Macho, aren’t you?” She acts like she’s banging her chest with her fist. “Me man, you woman, I’m in control, you do as I say.”

I should just keep my mouth shut, but I can’t seem to help myself. “Now I know you’re dating the wrong men because the man is never in control, honey.”

She stops in my path, and I have to stop or else I’m going to run right into her. She crosses her arms over her chest. “Really? You don’t seem like the kind of guy that gives up control much.”

I lean down and look her in the eye as if that’s going to make her understand what I’m saying. “Princess, you have the pussy. You’re always in control.”

She gasps, and before she can say anything, I step around her and gruffly tell her, “Come on.”

She follows behind me, and I want to kick myself for being an ass to her. She doesn’t deserve it, and this is not like me. Yeah, I’m a grumpy son of a bitch, but I’m never

just an outright asshole. As I set her bags on the porch, I do the one thing I need to do. I take my hat off and hold it to my chest. “I owe you an apology, Faith. I’ve been an asshole?—”

She cuts me off, tilting her head to the side to look at me. “Why is that?”

I close my mouth. Of course, she’s going to call me out instead of just taking the apology. She’s going to want to dissect it to pieces. Trying to stay calm, I answer her. “Honestly? I don’t know. I shouldn’t have accused you of showing up just for money, I shouldn’t be telling you how to talk and... and...”

She rolls her hand in front of her as if she’s telling me to go on. “And you shouldn’t be running off some cowboy that just wants to talk to me.”

My jaw tightens. “Oh, he wanted to do more than just talk to you.”

She laughs and shakes her head. “You don’t know that.”

I stuff my hat back on top of my head and then gesture to her body with my hand. “Yeah, I do know that. You show up at a bar, looking like you do, there’s only one thing on a man’s mind, and it ain’t talking.”

She puts her hands on her shapely hips. “You should have stopped at the apology, Dixon Chase.”

I blow out a breath. Hell, I need to get the fuck out of here. “Right, well, I’m sorry. The door’s unlocked. See ya.”

I turn and take the steps down the porch when she calls my name. “Where are you going? Don’t you live in the main house?”

I clench my eyes shut and open them before turning to look at her. “I’m going to stay in the bunkhouse.”

She walks down the steps and stops next to me. “Because I’m here?”

“Don’t read too much into it. I’m going to give you some time with your dad. I’ll see you.”

She wants to argue with me, but I don’t stick around for her to tell me how ridiculous I’m being. Hell, I know it’s ridiculous. I should be able to sleep in a room down the hall from her and not think twice about it, but I don’t trust myself.

As I stomp away from the house, I try to get Faith out of my head. I’m sure she’s going to be here a few days, then she’ll go back into the city, and things will go back to normal. But even thinking that, I know I’m lying to myself. Because after spending an hour with her, I’m hooked. From this point on, I’m going to wonder where she’s at, who she’s with, and what she’s doing. I’ll be worried if she’s happy, if she’s sad, if she’s safe, and I’ll wonder if she’s thinking of me.

Yeah, this is not good. The sooner Faith gets back to her life in the city, the better off she’ll be. If she sticks around here for any amount of time, I’m not going to be able to resist her.

## CHAPTER 4

### FAITH

Me showing up unannounced went as well as expected. Sure enough, my dad was happy to see me. He hugged me, we caught up, and then not even an hour later, he asked me when I was leaving. He didn’t take it well when I told him I was staying indefinitely.



And now here I am, standing on the porch, looking out at the land and trying to figure out a way to talk my dad into letting me stay.

I did what he asked. I went to college and got a degree. But now I'm ready to come home.

The screen door slams, and my dad walks up next to me. "What's your plans today, honey? You have some friends to catch up with while you're in town?"

I lean on the banister and look down at the cowboys near the barn. I'm waiting for a glance of Dixon, but I've yet to see him. "I saw Lucy last night. The rest of my friends are either working or away at school."

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:06 am*

He stands next to me. “Have you thought about going back to school and getting your graduate degree?”

Hell, he really doesn’t want me here. “No, Dad. I’m done with school.” I suck in a breath. I might as well just put it out there. “I want to learn ranching.”

He practically spits out his coffee. “What did you just say?” But before I can answer, he’s shaking his head. “No. No way. I sent you to school so you could see what’s out there, Faith. You don’t have to learn how to ranch.”

I blink up at him to try and stop myself from crying. Can he not see that I just want to spend some time with my dad at my home? “I want to learn, Dad. Look, I’m here, and I’m not the type to just sit around and do nothing. Put me to work.”

He opens his mouth to argue with me but closes it. “Fine, you want to learn ranching. Let’s go.”

He sets his mug on the banister of the porch and then stomps off down toward the barn. I have to jog to catch up with him, and when I finally do, I’m half out of breath. A few of the cowboys are watching me, but they don’t say anything. My dad walks past them, and once he’s inside the barn, he stops at the office. “Hey,” he says. The frustration is heavy in his voice, and I wince knowing I’m the reason for it.

Dixon avoids looking at me. “Hey, Charlie, what can I do for you?”

My dad points at me. “Well, my daughter wants to learn ranching.”

If my dad didn't like the idea, Dixon downright hates it by the way he scowls. He still doesn't look at me, though. "She does, does she?"

My dad nods. "Yep, so I'm going to leave her with you and?—"

Dixon shoots up from his seat. "But, sir, I?—"

My dad doesn't let him finish. "I have that sale today, and I can't just leave her with Carl or Eddie."

Dixon puts his hands on his hips. "No, you can't do that."

My dad nods his head. "Right. Well, it's up to you to show her the ropes."

He can't be more clear that he doesn't want to do this, but even I know he's not going to deny my father. "What do you want her to do?"

My dad chuckles. "Well, she thinks she wants to learn ranching, so we'll start her off with the basics. Have her muck stalls."

I roll my eyes. It's obvious what my dad is trying to do, and it's not going to work. I know how to muck stalls, and it's not going to scare me off from ranching. I handle the news in stride, but Dixon does not. He's shaking his head. "No way. I'm not going to have her muck stalls."

My dad rears back in surprise, and I'm sure this is the first time that Dixon has ever told him no on something. Before they can go at it, I position myself between them. "Sure, I can muck stalls, and then after that, I'll groom the horses, check fences, rotate the livestock, and every other thing you want me to do. I did it all growing up, Dad. None of this is new to me."

He wants to say something, but he bites his tongue. “Okay, I have to go. Good luck,” he tells Dixon before walking out of the office.

Dixon and I are left alone, and he turns away from me. He is not happy with the circumstances, and the last thing I want is to be stuck with someone that doesn’t want me around. “All right, well, I’m going to go muck stalls.”

He spins on his foot and raises his voice. “You’re not mucking stalls.”

Here he goes again, trying to tell me what to do. “Like I said last night, you’re not the boss of me, and you’re not going to tell me what I can and can’t do.” I shove my thumb over my shoulder. “I’m going to go muck stalls.”

He doesn’t try to stop me this time, and I’m able to breathe a little easier as I walk away. I grab the fork off the wall and start at the first stall. I’ve only been working a few minutes when I hear a sound behind me. When I turn, I see Dixon standing there with a fork in his hand. I point at him. “What are you doing with that?”

He shrugs. “If you’re determined to muck stalls, there’s no way I’m going to let you do it yourself.”

I point outside. “Well, send a ranch hand in here.”

He points a finger at himself. “What do you think I am?”

“The ranch manager.”

He chuckles. “And what? You don’t think I can muck stalls because I manage the ranch?”

This time I do roll my eyes. “I don’t think you should have to. Look, just go back in

the office. I know you have a rodeo coming up soon, and you don't need to be in here doing this kind of work."

"Faith, stop, I'm helping you."

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:06 am*

I point at him. “Just go get Carl or Eddie to come in here?—”

He cuts me off. “You really think I’m going to leave you alone with another man?”

I swallow. The chemistry from last night still has a hold on me this morning. I tried to convince myself that it was nothing and I was imagining things, but the way Dixon’s looking at me, I know that’s not the case.

I tilt my head to the side. “So you’re going to muck stalls because you don’t trust me not to fuck someone?—”

He holds his hand up and grits his teeth. “Stop.”

“But—” I start. I never was one to know when to shut up.

“Faith, I’m telling you to stop right there or I’m going to shove something in your mouth to keep you from spewing that bullshit.”

Stunned, I stop talking as he stabs the fork into the hay. He’s on edge, and I turn my back, but I can’t stop smiling because whether Dixon wants to admit it or not, he wants me. Now I’ve just got a figure out how to make him give in to it.

## CHAPTER 5

### DIXON

We get finished with the first stall, and I’m sweating through my T-shirt.

I'm working double-time, and I'm not sure if it's because I'm trying to exert some energy or if I'm trying to keep Faith from working too hard.

I watch her bend over, and her tank top does nothing to conceal her high, firm breasts as she works. I grunt and look away. Hell, I didn't want her working with Carl or Eddie in here because I knew they'd be ogling her, so I sure as hell shouldn't be doing it.

"What was that?" she asks.

Instead of answering her, I ignore her. I figure that's the best route to take. The less interaction we have, the better off I'll be.

Silently, we move to the next stall, and without thinking, I pull off my T-shirt and hang it on a nail. As soon as I look at her, I realize my mistake.

I almost reach for my shirt to put back on but decide against it.

She's leaning on the fork, mouth hanging open as she stares at me. Yeah, I guess two can play at this game.

"You don't play fair, Dixon Chase."

I stab the fork into the hay, and with all the innocence I can muster, I ask, "What do you mean?"

She points at me, waving her finger up and down. "That. That's not fair."

I look down at my bare chest. There's no way this turns her on. I'm a barrel of a man. There's no six-pack here. Husky, stocky, beefy, sturdy. Those are words to describe me, and I don't have the body that a woman goes crazy over. I mean, don't get me

wrong. I have no problem getting laid when I want to, but it's more because I'm able and willing instead of because some woman just wants to have me. But Faith is looking at me like no one has ever looked at me before.

I point at myself. "Please, don't act like this does it for you."

She rears back, surprised. "Are you kidding me right now?"

I roll my eyes. "Get back to work."

She does as I tell her, and we work side by side. I get a little more than half done and turn around to see her progress, and my eyes pop out of my head. "Faith."

She keeps working. "Yeah?"

All the liquid has left my mouth. "You're in a bra."

This time she does stop. "I'm in a sports bra."

I groan. "Put your shirt back on."



## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:06 am*

She scrunches up her nose. “It’s soaked. It sure is hot in here.”

“Put. Your. Shirt. On,” I tell her.

She puts a hand on her hip. “I swear I’ve had enough of you telling me what to do.”

I take a step toward her, which is my first mistake. “Put your shirt on, Faith.”

She juts her chin at me defiantly. “No.”

I’m gripping the fork with one hand, and my other hand is in a fist. My whole body is pulled taut, and I know I should walk away, but as soon as I think about Carl, or Eddie, or any of the other hands seeing her like this, it has me seeing red. I toss the fork against the wall and stalk toward her.

She’s not scared at all. Hell, if anything, her eyes light up and her smile gets bigger. This is what she wants. She wants me to make her do something. I don’t stop until we’re standing toe to toe. “Put your shirt on, Faith.”

She leans her head back so she can look at me. “No.”

I growl. A literal fuckin’ growl leaves my mouth. My chest rumbles, and I have the intense need to bang my fist on my chest. What is it about this woman that makes me crazy and out of control? “Faith Allen, put your shirt on.”

“No,” she says without hesitating.

Fuck me, this woman is killing me. I reach for her shirt that is hanging on a nail, and she backs away from me. “I’m not putting that on. It’s wet.” She points at me. “And you don’t have a shirt on.”

I inhale, deep and long, trying to contain myself. I hold the shirt out to her. “Put the shirt on or I’m putting it on you myself.”

Her eyes widen. “Dixon, my sports bra covers more of me than a bathing suit does. You’re being ridiculous.”

I have her cornered up against the wall now, and I know I need to stop and walk away, but like a fool, I stay rooted to my spot. “Faith?—”

Before I can get another word out, she puts her hands flat against my abdomen. On contact, we both suck in a breath, and my body jolts. I stare at her hands touching me, and I’m frozen in spot, unable to move.

She slides her hands up my bare chest, across my pecks, and when her palms graze my erect nipples, I groan. It’s a guttural groan that starts in my chest and rumbles on release. Her touch is too much for me to handle, and I know I should stop her, but she’s not done yet. She slides her hands back the other way, and I suck in a breath as if I’ve been punched in the stomach.

Her voice is soft. “You like that?”

With her shirt still in my hand, I bring my hands up to stop her. My cock is hard, and it wouldn’t take much more of her touch for me to have her bent over, taking me in, deep and hard. “Faith.” I say her name as a warning, but she doesn’t take it as one.

She smiles and leans into me. Her breasts flatten against me, and I have to suck in a breath. She’s trying to distract me, and she’s doing a hell of a job at it. “What are you

doing?”

She presses her lower body against me, and there's no way she doesn't feel the thick rod of my desire. I should push my hips back and break contact, but I do the opposite. My hips lurch forward, and my hands go to her hips to hold her to me. Damn, she feels so good. I hiss her name. “Faith.”

She slides her hands up, and they hook around my neck. She fits against me as if she was made for me. I lean into her, pushing her back into the wall, and the grimace on her face letting me know I'm being too rough stops me from taking her right here and now. I try and back away, but she lifts her leg and hooks it around my waist. It's almost comical that a little thing like her thinks she can possibly stop me, but I let her hold me to her. “You're my best friend's daughter. He's like a father to me.”

She blinks. “He's not here, Dixon. It's only me and you.”

For just a second, I wonder if I could do it. Can I go against Charlie and take his daughter in the stall of the barn? No, I can't. “It's not happening.”

Her eyes widen, and her mouth drops. It takes her a second to hide her reaction, but when she does, she lets go of me, grabbing her shirt from my hand. “If you don't want me, just say it, Dixon. You don't have to use my father as an excuse.”

I should just let it go, but I'm not smart enough. I grab the shirt from her hands and hold it up to her. She lets me put it over her head and helps me get her arms through the sleeves. The fact she's going along with this tells me that I've broken her spirit. How the fuck she can believe I don't want her is beyond me, but that's not going to stand with me. As soon as I have her covered, I take a step back. “I do want you, Faith. I want you more than I've ever wanted a woman in my life.”

She gasps, and I should let it go, but I bury myself a little deeper. “I fucked my hand

last night just thinking of you. I woke up with a hard-on this morning wondering what it would be like to have your perfect, puffy lips wrapped around my dick. Standing next to you, working side by side with you, and not being inside you is a hell that I don't think I will survive. So yeah, Faith, I want you."

I don't know why I thought she would just let it go, but she doesn't. She walks over to me and presses her hand to the bulge between my thighs. She squeezes me softly. "You can have me, Dixon. Any and every way you want me, I'm yours."

It takes everything inside me not to take her up on her offer. I step out of her reach and walk to the door of the stall. "If I let Carl come in here, will you promise me you'll keep your shirt on?"

She shrugs. "You're the only man I want to see me without a shirt."

I shake my head. "I'm trying to be strong here, Faith."

## Page 8

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:06 am*

She shrugs. “I know, but I’m here to stay, Dixon. How long exactly do you think you’re going to be able to resist what is happening between us?” I open my mouth to deny it, but she stops me. “And don’t say there’s nothing between us. Hell, I felt it from across the bar last night when you had your buckle bunny on your lap.”

I don’t know why it’s important, but I rush to tell her, “She isn’t my buckle bunny.”

She tilts her head to the side. “So you just let random chicks sit on your lap then?”

I think back on my past, and yes, I was that man but not anymore. I can’t imagine letting another woman touch me now. “Not anymore.”

With that, I walk away. It’s either that or confess everything I want to do to her and end up making her mine.

## CHAPTER 6

### FAITH

It’s been a week since I walked back into Whiskey Run. A week of my dad asking me every day when I’m leaving and a week of Dixon doing everything he possibly can to avoid me. He’s nice enough, but if he’s left alone in a room with me, he’s walking away. If my dad tells him to let me ride into town with him, then Dixon is having a ranch hand ride with us like he’s some damn chaperone or something.

It’s gotten ridiculous, and it’s going to end now.

My dad is already stowed in his room watching his television shows, so I walk out of the house, right out the front door and down to the barn. I found out a few nights ago that Dixon has been sleeping on the couch in the office instead of the bunkhouse, and I refuse to run him out of his bed one more night. If he refuses to come inside the house while I'm there, then I'll stay in the office so he can finally get some sleep.

I walk to the barn, shotgun in hand. As soon as I get inside the barn, I set the gun against the wall next to the office door and then knock. I don't have to wait long before it's jerked open and Dixon is standing in front of me shirtless with the button of his jeans undone. He's so handsome that I stutter over the words. "Hey, can I talk to you?"

He leans against the open door. "What do you want, Faith?"

I roll my eyes and tuck my arms over my chest. Mostly because I don't have a bra on and I don't need to embarrass myself with him seeing me aroused just by looking at him. "I feel bad that you're sleeping in the barn when your room is at the main house."

He just stares at me, so I continue. "Anyway, I'm going to stay out here so you can at least get one good night's sleep." I hold my hand up to stop him and push past him into the office, pointing at the couch. "And don't act like you're not hurting. I've seen you holding your back. Heck, you're taller than the dang couch, Dixon. There's no way it's comfortable."

He twirls his finger around the room. "And what? You think I'm going to leave you out here to sleep in the barn where there is no central heat and air and no lock on the door? If you think that, you don't know me very well."

I sit down on the edge of the couch. "Well, then come inside. This is ridiculous, and you know it."

He just stares at me. I should have known he's not going to give in. "So this is how it's going to be then?"

He grits his teeth but says nothing.

I stand and take a step toward him. "Dixon..."

He puts his hands up and backs away from me. I laugh because he's being ridiculous. He's twice my size, and he's acting as if he's scared of me. "What is your problem? Why are you backing away from me?"

He nods toward the door. "Go back to the house, Faith."

I stand my ground. "No."

His breath shudders as his body trembles. "I'm telling you, go back up to the house."

I tilt my head. I was prepared for an argument, but I wasn't prepared for this. He's acting crazy, and he thinks he can just push me away and I'll go, but I'm done doing things his way. My father may not want me around, but he sure has taught me a lot through the years, and one of those things is that if I want something, I have to go after it. Well, I want Dixon, and even though I'll probably only get one night out of it, hell, it would be worth it.

I walk to the couch and stand next to it. I pat the cushion. "You think we both can fit?"

His mouth drops open, and his eyes go black.

I suck in a breath, and before I can change my mind, I grab the hem of my shirt and pull it over my head.

Dixon's voice drops a whole octave. "Fuck," he hisses.

I slip off my sandals, shimmy out of my shorts and underwear, and then stand up, pulling my shoulders up and arching my back as I look at Dixon. I didn't think it would happen this way, but it's obvious if I want this, I'm going to have to be the one to make it happen.

I walk over to him and press my hand to his waist. His eyes are glued to mine as I start talking. "I want you, Dixon. I know that this will only be one night. I understand that nothing can come of this, but we can't keep going like we are. If we can just get this out of our systems, we can move past it."



## Page 9

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:06 am*

He's gripping his hands at his sides. "You think we can fuck and then I'm not going to want you anymore?"

I shrug. I know I'm going to want more, but heck, Dixon has way more willpower than I do, so yeah, I'm sure he can do this and then forget about me. I lift my chin up. "Yes."

He nods his head. "And you want me to fuck you in the barn?"

I look around the office. At least it's the cleanest room in the barn. "Yeah."

"And for one night, I can do whatever I want to with you and then tomorrow, we both walk away?"

I struggle with this one. I swallow but nod my head. "Yeah. You game, cowboy? Or do I need to get dressed?"

When he doesn't answer me, my bravado lessens a little, and I turn to go and pick up my clothes. For just a second I let myself be embarrassed, but it fades quickly because he's hooking his arm around my waist and pulling me snug against him. His cock is hard, pressing into my ass, and I push back because I want more.

His breath is hot on my cheek as he talks low and thick into my ear. "I'm game, Faith. But remember when you can barely walk tomorrow that you told me I could do whatever I want to you."

I reach my hands back and grip his big thighs, holding him to me. But that's not

enough for him. “Say the words, Faith. Say I can have you.”

I turn in his arms, pressing my bare breasts to his hair-covered chest. “You can have me, Dixon.”

His lips slam to mine, and the kiss is all-consuming. It’s a gnashing of teeth, lips, and tongue. It’s like the tide has been released, and we’re trying to survive it. I go to my tiptoes because I need to be closer, I need more of him. He lifts me up and jostles me in his arms as he pulls his cock free.

It’s all happening so fast, but I wouldn’t want it to happen any other way. He lifts me up, and his manhood slides along the slickness of my folds. He breaks off the kiss, and his eyes are dilated and he sounds desperate. “Fuck, please tell me you’re on the pill or something.”

“I’m on the pill,” I admit. I don’t go into detail that I’ve been on the pill since I was a teenager to help with my periods. He doesn’t need to know all that.

His relief is evident. “I’m going in bare.”

It’s like he’s challenging me, but there’s no way I’m going to fight him on this. There’s one thing I know about Dixon Chase, and that is he’s going to protect me no matter what, so I don’t even have to ask him if he’s clean or anything. “I don’t want anything between us.”

He lets his head fall back and groans. It’s like he’s barely hanging on.

His fingers dig into my hips, and he lifts me up. As I feel the tip of his manhood press against my core, I put a hand to his chest. “Be easy.”

His eyes snap to mine, and I want to hide the truth from him, but he must see the

trepidation on my face. His shoulders tense under my palms, and he's searching my face. He doesn't have to ask me because he can see the truth on my face. He tries to put me away from him, but I wrap my legs around him. His cock is right there where I need him. "Dixon, don't stop, please. I want this."

He turns me around and leans me against the wall. One hand comes to my cheek. "Are you a virgin, Faith?"

I only know how to be honest with him, and I want him to know the truth. The whole truth. "When I was eighteen and I left here, I wanted you like I've never wanted anyone in my life. I haven't looked at another man or wanted another man since that day."

He blows out a breath. He has sweat on his brow, and his muscles are bulging; he's practically vibrating against me, trying to hold himself back. He starts to shake his head. "Faith..."

I reach between us and wrap my hand around his engorged manhood. His tip is seeping, and I smear it down the length of him before stroking him once and then positioning him at my entrance. "I want you, Dixon, and I want you to be my first."

He groans and leans his forehead against mine. He's gasping for breath but is able to mumble, "I don't want to hurt you. I can't hurt you."

I lean back and slowly impale myself on him. His eyes get big. I can feel myself stretching around him, adjusting to his size, but there's no stopping me. It's only when I'm fully seated on him that I take in a shuddered breath. We stare at each other, and he groans before reaching between us. His fingers go to my swollen clit, and I pulse on contact. He works his finger around me, and the sensation jolts through my system. He starts to move, in and out, slow deep thrusts, and I wince at first because I'm so full, so stretched, but the pain quickly turns to pleasure, and when it

does, there's no stopping it.

“Fuck, your tight pussy feels so good, princess. That's right, squeeze me. Fuck, baby, you're going to suck my balls dry.”

“Argh.” I groan as the orgasm hits me hard and fast. He pulsates inside me, groaning as he releases himself.

We're both panting, holding on to one another, and as I rest my head against his neck, I realize that I don't ever want to let go.

## CHAPTER 7

DIXON

I'm still balls deep inside her.

## Page 10

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:07 am*

I don't want to pull out, but I know I need to.

I carry her over to the couch and lay her down as I pull out of her.

I can feel her eyes on me as I walk to the bathroom off the office. I grab a washcloth, and while I wait for the water to warm up in the sink, I look at myself in the mirror. Quickly, I look away because the guilt on my face is too much for me to handle right now. After cleaning myself up, I wet another cloth and walk back into the room, and Faith has her shirt on and is pulling up her underwear. "What do you think you're doing?"

She blinks. "Uh, we were done, so?—"

I cut her off. "You said I had tonight. Tonight isn't over."

Her mouth drops. "We're doing that... again?"

I lay her back on the couch and pull her panties back off. As I clean her up, inspecting her swollen, red pussy, I ask her, "You're sore, aren't you?"

She gestures to my cock. "Well, you try fitting that thing inside you and see how you feel afterwards."

I lean down and press a kiss to her mound. She jumps on contact.

After disposing of the cloth, I sit down on the couch and pull her onto my lap.

She lies gently on top of me. “What now?”

I run my hand down her back. “I need a little time to recuperate.”

She sighs and lays her head on my chest. I wait for the awkwardness to set in, but it doesn't, and I don't want to think about how good it feels to lie like this with her. “How long are you staying in Whiskey Run, Faith?”

She groans. “Are you going to try and run me off too? I'm not leaving, Dixon. I'm staying right here.” She lifts her head to look at me. “I mean, not right here. I promise I know what this is. I'm not going to start following you around or anything.”

I lean my head back and let myself go there. I think about what it would be like if I could claim Faith as mine. Normally a thought like that would make me break out in hives, but right now, it's giving me a warm and fuzzy feeling that I don't want to dissect. “I'm not worried about it.” Clearing my throat, I change the subject. “So what are you going to do with your fancy accounting degree?”

She moans. “Geez, that's another thing I should probably talk to my father about. I didn't get an accounting degree.”

I raise up. She's been gone for five years, and this whole time Charlie has thought she was getting a degree. If that's not the case, what has she been up to? “What have you been doing, Faith?”

She rolls onto her stomach and props herself up on my chest. “I have a degree in agribusiness.”

Surprised doesn't even begin to cover it. “Faith, that's amazing. Why wouldn't you tell your dad that you were getting a degree in agribusiness? He would have to appreciate that you would be able to help him here on the ranch.”

Her reply is instant and heartbreaking. “He doesn’t want me here on the ranch.”

I open my mouth to say that’s not true, but then I close it quickly. Charlie has always pushed her to do things away from the ranch. Hell, he wouldn’t even let her go to a close college to commute. He wanted her out, seeing the world. Maybe he has his reasons, but whatever they are, he’s hurting his daughter. I don’t know what to say to her. “You should tell your dad. He’d be proud of you.”

She murmurs something, and it’s obvious she doesn’t think so, but she doesn’t seem like she wants to talk about it. “So what about you, Dixon? What’s your plan? You going to work at the Allen Ranch and ride in the rodeo until you’re old and gray?”

I laugh. “Har, har. I’m not that old, but yeah, I love it here, and I want to stay on. Your dad has been...”

I let my voice trail off because it doesn’t feel right what I was about to say. She sits up. “It’s okay. I know he’s been your mentor and like a father to you. I’m glad you’ve had each other.”

I suck in a breath. “He gave me a few acres on the southside to build a house and raise a family.”

Her eyes widen, and she looks almost stricken. “But Faith, he also said that the ranch will be yours. He’s not giving me the ranch or anything. He did say if anything ever happened to him, he’d want me to stay and manage it to help you, but he wasn’t giving me your birthright.”

She shakes her head side to side. “So... you’re building a house... on the southside... and you’re getting married...”

She’s backed away from me to the far end of the couch. I almost feel ridiculous

having this conversation right now. She has her shirt on, and it's covering her body for the most part, but I'm still sitting here buck naked. I reach for her because I don't want to let her go, not even to sit on the other end of the couch. "I've started building the house, but no, I'm not getting married... not yet anyway."

I start to imagine Faith, with her red hair, big blue eyes, and curvy body in a white wedding dress, and my cock starts to come to life. I reach for her, tugging at her shirt. "Take this off." I gesture to my naked self. "You're a little overdressed."

She pulls at her shirt but doesn't take it off. "I'm not just going to sit around naked."



*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:07 am*

I hold my hand out to her. “Well, can you come over here so I can kiss you?”

She puts her hand in mine, but she doesn’t move in my direction, and the thought of her holding back from me overwhelms me a little. She tilts her head to the side. “You want to kiss me?”

Fuck, how does she not know what she does to me? She makes me want to lose all control. “I want you in my arms. I want to be able to kiss you, and I want to be able to touch you.” I suck in a breath and remind her of earlier. “You said I could have tonight. Well, the ranch starts moving around four in the morning, so I need to have you back in the big house before then.” I look at the clock on the wall. “That only gives me five hours to touch, kiss, and taste every part of your body.”

She crawls over to me and settles herself in my lap. She’s straddling me with her legs on each side of my hips, and my cock is positioned at her entrance. “No. It’s too soon, and I won’t hurt you, Faith. Let me show you all the other ways I can make love to you.”

It’s only after her eyes widen that I realize the words I used, but they couldn’t be more true. I knew when she came in here demanding I sleep up at the big house that my feelings for her ran wide and deep. “But first, give me your lips.”

She leans into me, and when our lips touch, I kiss her like I’ve wanted to since I saw her in the Whiskey Whistler. She moans and whimpers as I stroke my tongue along hers, and I hold her to me, knowing that I’m not going to want to let her go. Not now, not five hours from now, not ever.

## CHAPTER 8

### FAITH

I overslept. Which is not something you do on a ranch. I walked into my bedroom at four a.m., and I told myself I was going to sleep for an hour, but here it is, ten o'clock, and I feel like I could have slept another five hours.

As I'm walking down to the barn, I have tiny slivers of pain in every muscle of my body. Hell, some muscles I didn't know anything about until last night. But now, as I stretch my body as I walk, I can't seem to keep the smile off my face, and it stays there until I'm standing outside the barn, a little unsure how to proceed.

Dixon and I decided that one night was all this is going to be. It felt like more when he wouldn't let me leave, making excuses to kiss me just one more time.

Maybe he's had a change of heart. Maybe he'll decide one night isn't enough, and we can see if we can actually make a go of this... Whatever this is.

I stand outside the office, and I hear my father and Dixon talking about the rodeo this weekend.

I know I need to go in there because it will be embarrassing to be caught eavesdropping outside the door. I pull my shoulders back and wince because even that hurts. I force a smile onto my face and walk in the office, knocking on the open door as I go. "Hey, guys."

My dad comes over and side-hugs me. "Well, well, there she is. I guess you decided to sleep in today."

I nod, avoiding Dixon's gaze. "Yes, I didn't sleep very well last night."

Dixon coughs. “So everything is set up for the weekend. We’ll take both trucks and trailers, rooms are booked, and?—”

Charlie points at me. “What about you, honey? What’s your plan for the weekend? You thinking about going into the city to see some of your friends? I’m sure you’ve been missing them.”

My forehead creases. “Uh, no. I was actually hoping to go to the rodeo this weekend, but I mean, if you think I’ll be in the way or...”

I let my voice trail off. I sound pathetic, but I don’t know what else to think. Dixon clears his throat. “You should go to the rodeo. I’ll book an extra room.”

I look at him curiously, trying to see if there’s something more to what he’s saying, but he changes the subject again. “Okay, well, that’s settled. I better get back to work.”

Dad nods his head. “Me too, me too. You have anything Faith can do to help out?”

Dixon huffs his breath like he’s over having to babysit me or something. “Yeah, I’m sure I can come up with something.”

Dad kisses the top of my head, tells Dixon and me bye, and then walks out the door, leaving me staring at Dixon and him looking everywhere but at me.

He starts to ask a question while looking over my shoulder at the wall. I almost move around so he’s forced to look me in the eyes, but I don’t. I hold perfectly still. “You okay... I mean are you feeling... okay?”

I nod. “Yeah, sure. I’m fine. Are you okay?” I have to ask him because he looks anything but okay. As a matter of fact, he looks like he’s not doing well at all. His

hair is all over the place, he has dark circles under his eyes, and his shirt is rumpled.

He nods, still not looking at me “Yeah, I’m fine.”

I slap my hands together softly. “Uh, okay, so I don’t want this to be weird.”

Finally, he looks at me, and all my hopes that he may have changed his mind and wants more than one night go down the drain. Only now, when I’m reassuring him that he has an out, does he look at me, and he’s obviously relieved. “Right, it doesn’t need to be weird.”

I nod. “We said one night. We did it and got it out of our systems.”

## Page 12

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:07 am*

He grunts. “Right... out of our systems.”

The longer I stand here, the more awkward it gets. I point my thumb over my shoulder. “I’m going to go help Carl do the feeding and watering and then go check fences.”

I wait for him to tell me no. He’s made sure to keep me away from Carl and Eddie since I got in town, so I’m waiting on him to give me some reason why I can’t help him.

When he nods his head, it’s like a kick in the gut. He really meant it when he said one night. I turn on my heel and am almost out the door when Dixon stops me. I twirl so fast on my feet I almost stumble. He walks toward me. For just a second, I think he’s going to reach for me, but instead he crosses his arms over his chest. “You should probably take the side-by-side.”

I scrunch up my nose. “Why?”

His cheeks turn ruddy, and it’s the first time I’ve ever seen him embarrassed. He points to my lower body. “It’s just... it might... uh... hurt a little if you rode a horse.”

It’s my turn to be embarrassed, and I back out of the office. “Uh, right. Okay. I’ll take the side-by-side.”

I walk out of the barn and try to get my emotions together. I should not have gotten my hopes up, and now I’m going to have to figure out how to live and work here with

Dixon. It's going to be pure hell for me, and I'm not looking forward to it. Oh God, and when he meets someone... I let the thought simmer until the anxiety builds so much I have to remind myself to breathe and then count as I breathe in and out.

"Hey... you okay?" Carl asks.

I force a smile to my face. "Yeah, yeah, I'm fine. I was actually coming to look for you. I was going to help you feed and check fences."

He looks past me, and I turn to see what he's looking at, but I don't see anything or anyone.

Carl tucks his hands in his pockets. "Uh, does Dixon know about this?"

I nod. "Yeah, I just talked to him about it."

He asks. "Yeah, and he was all right with it?"

I put a hand on my hip. "He's not the boss of me, Carl. Now I'm going to check fences. If you're going, fine. If not, I'll see you when I get back."

He throws his hands up and follows me toward the barn. "I'll saddle Bessie for you."

After my little speech, I don't want to be picky and tell him I'd prefer to take the side-by-side, so I grab a saddle off the wall while he gets Bessie out of the stall. We work together, saddling the horse.

As soon as it's done, I put a foot in the stirrup and heft myself up onto Bessie's back. I gently sit down and suck in a breath. Oh, hell no. It hurts so bad, and just when I think I'm going to get off the horse, Dixon comes out of the office at the other end of the barn.

Carl is stammering and stuttering, “She said you knew she was going with me.”

Dixon glares at him. “Yeah, I know, but remember what I said, Carl.”

He nods. “Yes, sir.”

Dixon gestures, pointing out of the barn. “Go wait outside for Faith. She’ll be out in a minute.”

Carl gives me a look of sympathy. He probably thinks I’m about to get in trouble or something. As soon as Carl leaves, Dixon stands in front of me, petting Bessie’s nose. “I thought I told you to take the side-by-side.”

I grit my teeth. I’m in a hell of a lot of pain, but I’ll never admit that to him. “Like I told Carl, you’re not the boss of me.”

He nods once, and I know he’s pissed by the way his nostrils flare. “So you’re going to go ride fences, hurting. And don’t tell me you’re not in pain because I can see it written all over your face.”

I look straight ahead. “It’s not your concern, Dixon, so can I go now?”

He doesn’t say anything, and I pick up the reins to go, but he stops me. “I didn’t mean to be rough with you, Faith.”

This time, it’s my turn to avoid his gaze. There’s no reason he needs to see that he’s breaking my heart. “I don’t need your apology, Dixon. Can I go now?”

He huffs out a breath. “Yeah, go ahead. Be safe. Wait,” he says before walking over the wall. He positions a rifle into the scabbard on my saddle. “Be safe.”

Maybe earlier or even yesterday I would be swooning that he's worried about me and wants to protect me, but now I know he's doing it because I'm my father's daughter, and that's it.



“Bye, Dixon.”

It sounds so final. I click my tongue, and Bessie starts walking, and Carl is waiting for me. He looks anxious, making me wonder what Dixon had meant when he told Carl to remember what he said. It’s on the tip of my tongue to ask, but I shake the thought away. I’m going to forget about Dixon and quit thinking about all the ways he touched and kissed me last night. It’s over... and it will never happen again.

## CHAPTER 9

### DIXON

I’m rubbing my hand over my chest, and I realize I’ve been doing it a lot today. Ever since I apologized to Faith for what I did to her last night.

I shouldn’t have done it. I’m not sorry. I mean, of course I didn’t want to hurt her, but also I meant to make her feel the remnants today. I wanted her to remember everything we did last night.

She avoided me when she and Carl came back from mending fences, and I spent the rest of the evening in the office, trying to mentally prepare for the rodeo tomorrow. We have to be up early, and I should get to bed soon, but I can’t seem to make myself go to sleep.

I pace back and forth in the office and then step outside the barn and look up at the main house. From where I’m at, I can see Faith’s bedroom window, and her light is already off. Maybe she’s in bed. We were up late last night.

Carl and Eddie step out of the bunkhouse, and Carl seems surprised to see me. “I’m surprised you’re here, Dixon.”

“Where else would I be? I have a rodeo tomorrow.”

Carl points at himself. “I figured boss man would put you in charge of watching his daughter. You want us to keep an eye on her while we’re in town?”

I stand up straighter. “What are you talking about?”

Carl must not sense the urgency in my voice. “Faith said she was going to the bar tonight to let off some steam. I just thought...”

I don’t even let him finish. I walk back into the barn and into the office. I don’t even have to think about what I’m going to do. The thought of Faith at the Whiskey Whistler without me makes me crazy. I grab my hat and my keys, and not two minutes later, I’m on my way into town.

I park next to Faith’s little car, and then instead of walking around to the front entrance, I go in the back door. I stand in the darkened hallway and look around the bar. It takes me no time at all to find her on the dance floor. Her long red hair is hanging around her shoulders. Her lips are painted a cherry red, and I’m in a trance as I watch her sway her body side to side. I could stand here and watch her all night, but as soon as I see some cowboys surround her, I’m on the move.

Possession like I’ve never felt before pushes me through the crowd, and I don’t stop until I’m muscling my way between the cowboys and standing in front of a now frowning Faith. I stand up a little taller, and the cowboys that were hitting on her disappear.

“What are you doing here?”

I growl my response. “I was going to ask you the same thing.”

She pokes a finger in my chest. “You’re the one that has to perform tomorrow. You should be in bed.”

I move closer to talk in her ear. “And you thought I would be at home asleep while you’re here doing God knows what?”

She rears back in surprise. “I’m not sure what you think of me, Dixon Chase, but I’m not going to fuck you one night and then move on to another man tonight.” There’s a sadness in her eyes that wasn’t there before. “I know I was an easy lay for you, but?—”

I growl, putting my hands to her waist and pulling her against me. “Don’t finish that sentence, Faith. You weren’t an easy anything for me.”

She’s mad, that much is obvious, and I’m not sure why. This is what we talked about. This is what we agreed on, and I’m honoring our agreement.

“I need to go to bed, Faith.”

She points to the door. “Well, go then because I sure didn’t ask you to come here.”

I grab her hand and pull her through the bar to the back door. On my way, I see Carl and Eddie, and the look they’re giving me tells me they think I’m babysitting my boss’ daughter when that’s not the case at all. No, what I’m doing is purely for me.

When the door slams behind us, Faith pulls from my hold and starts stomping to her car. “I’ll go home, Dixon, but only because you need to get some rest. You’re not going to be worth shit tomorrow. You get killed it’s your own stupid fault because I sure didn’t ask you to come and get me.” She stops with a huff and gasps. “Oh my

God, did my dad send you?"

I grab her hand, and when she tries to go to her car, I pick her up by the waist and carry her to my truck. "Dixon, put me down. My car is here."

I put her in the passenger seat. "Give me your keys."

She crosses her arms over her chest. "No."

## Page 14

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:07 am*

I hold my hand out. “Give me the keys or I’ll get them myself.”

“I’ll give you my keys if you sleep in the house in your bedroom tonight. You can’t keep sleeping on that damn couch.”

I grunt. “I’ll never be able to sleep on that couch again. Hell, I look at it and I’m hard imagining you sprawled out on it.”

She stutters. “Well, then move back into the house. You’re being ridiculous.”

I raise my hand out, palm up. “Give me your keys.”

“Are you going to sleep in the house?”

“Yes.”

She reaches into her front pocket and slams the keys into my hand. I put her seatbelt on her, open her car door, toss the keys in, and then walk around to get into my truck. She’s glaring at me across the cab. “You’re just going to leave my car here with the keys in it?”

I huff. “Please, you’d be lucky if someone would steal it.”

“It’s a good car!” she shouts.

I type out a message on my phone. “I texted Carl. One of them will drive it home.”

She has her arms crossed over her chest, and the anger is practically oozing off her. She can be mad all she wants. “What were you thinking going to the bar?”

I don’t have to be looking at her to know she’s rolling her eyes at me. “Oh, I don’t know. I’m twenty-three, and I lost my virginity last night to a man that can barely look at me today. I wanted to go out and forget about everything.”

I grip the steering wheel. “Do you regret last night?”

I look over at her, and she opens her mouth but doesn’t answer. She snaps her mouth closed and looks out the window.

My heart is racing. It kills me to think she regrets last night.

We’re at the Allen Ranch, and I can’t stay quiet any longer. “Are you okay?”

She’s looking out the front window, so all I can see is her side profile. “I don’t know why you keep asking me that. I’m okay. People lose their virginity every day, Dixon.”

I don’t care about anyone else. I care about Faith, and it kills me to think she could be hurting and it’s my fault. I should have taken things slower. I should have been softer with her and not so rough. I shouldn’t have taken her three times last night. On top of that, her stubborn ass rode a horse half the day, so I know she’s hurting.

When we get to the house, I park, and she doesn’t want for me to come around to help her out. I know she doesn’t want to hear me give her a speech about how I should be opening her door, so I open the screen door and then the front door, standing back to let her in.

I follow behind her, and I can tell from her gait she’s hurting even though she’ll never

admit it to me.

Quietly, we walk up the steps, and without a backwards glance, she walks into her bedroom and shuts the door behind her.

I should go to bed and get some rest, but I know I won't be able to. I walk into the bathroom, find the healing ointment, and then without knocking, I walk into her bedroom, shutting the door behind me.

She's shocked I'm in her bedroom, and I know I shouldn't be in here about to do what I'm planning to do, but I'm here, and it's happening.

"Take your pants off and lie down on the bed."

She shakes her head. "Why? So you can apologize tomorrow for fucking me again? No thank you."

I grit my teeth. "Let me take care of you, Faith."

She cocks her hip out and stares at me with hatred coming from her eyes. "The only thing I want from you is for you to leave, Dixon."

I stalk toward her, lean down, and whisper, "Don't wake up your dad."

As soon as she registers what I'm saying, I pick her up, carry her across the room, and lay her back on the bed. She's glaring at me, but she goes quietly. I reach under her skirt, pull her panties down, and toss them to the floor. I push her knees apart, and her skirt slides up her thighs. I inspect her pussy, and she raises up on her elbows to look at me. "What are you doing?"

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:07 am*

I pull the tube of healing ointment from the pocket of my jeans and hold it up. “This should help you.”

She leans back and covers her face with her arm. “Ugh, I don’t even want to know how you know to do this.”

I ignore her and put the ointment on my finger. I slide it across her red skin, and she jerks at first but then sighs contentedly. I have to remind myself she’s hurt and she doesn’t need anything from me but soothing. After I’ve caressed the ointment into her skin, I put the cap on the tube.

Her voice is soft. “I shouldn’t have gone riding today... after last night.” She moves her arm so I can see her face. “This isn’t your fault. I’m the one that was stubborn. You told me I shouldn’t ride, and I did it anyway.” She blows out a breath. “I just don’t want you to think this is on you.”

I move to sit on the bed next to her. I put my hands on each side of her head. “I googled it. I knew you would be hurting, and when you left on the horse today, I searched online to see what could help you. It’s not because I have experience with this or anything... I’ve never cared enough to worry about this.”

She blinks up at me, and if I let myself, I could get lost in the blue of her eyes. She brings her hand up and cups the side of my face. I know I shouldn’t, but I tilt my face into her hand as if I’m yearning for her touch. Maybe I am.

Her voice is so soft, I have to lean down to hear her. “So what you’re telling me is that you care about me.”



The connection between us is strong, and I can't look away. Hell, I don't want to. I shouldn't admit it. I should stick to the plan, but I feel myself nodding. "Yeah, Faith, I do care about you."

She raises up, and I lower my head. I don't know who moves first, but our lips meet in desperation. I tilt her head, deepening the kiss. Her arms hook around my neck, and I don't want this feeling to ever end.

Her moan is what brings me to my senses, and I pull back. She doesn't let go, though. Her hands are still around my neck, and we're looking into each other's eyes. I don't want to explain to her again why this is a bad idea or why we shouldn't do it, but I do put my hands on hers and unclasp them from my neck. "I should go to bed. We gotta be up early in the morning."

She opens her mouth but closes it quickly before nodding.

"I'll see you in the morning."

I sit here, waiting, and I'm being a fool. I should just get up and go, but I don't want to leave or walk away from her. She must see my indecision because she gestures to the door. "Go ahead. You're riding tomorrow. You really should already be in bed."

I nod, lean down, and give her a quick kiss before abruptly pulling away and standing up. Kissing her is an addiction.

I get to the door, and she sits up. "Thanks for... you know."

She gestures to her lower body, and I nod. "You're welcome, princess."

I force myself to walk out of her bedroom, and as I walk to mine, I know I'm not going to be getting much sleep tonight with Faith just down the hall.

## CHAPTER 10

### FAITH

“Hey, Dad!” I say the next morning.

It looks like I’m late again because animals have been fed, supplies have been loaded, and trucks are ready to go.

“Hey, honey. You about ready to go?”

I hold the strap of my bag up. “I’m ready.”

He points to the truck behind him. “Dixon chewed Carl a new ass this morning, so he’s riding with me. You want to ride with us or you want to try your chances with Dixon? Just a warning, he’s in a mood.”

At that moment, Dixon walks around the truck. On sight, my body reacts to him. I’m not sure why I do it, but I know I want to spend time with him. “Dixon, you care if I ride with you?”

He looks between me and my dad. “Yeah, sure. You can ride with me.”

I don’t give him a chance to change his mind. As I’m walking to his truck, he grabs my bag off my shoulder. He follows me around to the passenger side and opens the door for me. I don’t hide my surprise, and as I climb into the truck, he leans in. “I told you that you were dating the wrong men, princess. Your man should open your door for you.”

Before I can ask him if he’s my man, he shuts the door and then puts my bag in the backseat.

Dad and Dixon talk for a minute, and then we're on our way to Whiskey Valley. I turn in my seat. "Soooo... what happened with you and Carl this morning?"

Dixon grips the steering wheel until his knuckles turn white. "I don't want to talk about Carl."

## Page 16

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:07 am*

I lift my eyebrows. “Oooh, it must be something good. What did he do? Shirk responsibility? Forget to feed something? Leave a gate open?”

“Nope,” he answers.

I reach across the cab of the truck and slap him on the arm. He looks down where I touched him, and his muscles tighten. I ignore his reaction. “Come on, tell me.”

He’s gritting his teeth so hard I think he might break one. “Fine. You wanna know? I heard him telling Eddie that you were hot and he wants you.”

I sit up a little taller. “And you what? Told him off? Told him I was his boss’s daughter and he shouldn’t talk about me that way?”

He grunts. “Looking back, that’s what I should have done.”

I clasp my hands together in my lap. “What did you say, Dixon?”

He looks over at me worriedly. “You’re not going to like it.”

Now I do tense up. What does that even mean? He is staring straight ahead, and I don’t have to ask him again because he starts to talk me through the morning. “I didn’t sleep well last night, knowing you were right down the hall. I knew you were in pain, and it was partly my fault.”

I roll my eyes. This again? “Dixon, that’s ridiculous. You weren’t too rough with me. We had sex three times in one night.”

He looks over at me. “It was your first time.”

I nod. “Yeah, but I wanted it. All three times, I was practically begging you for it. It’s as much my fault as it was yours, but what’s this got to do with what happened with Carl?”

“I punched him... and then told him he better never look at you or talk about you like that again.”

I shrug. “Well, that’s not so bad. I mean, you shouldn’t have hit him, but?—”

“And then I told him that you were mine and I’d kill him if he disrespected you like that again.”

I shake my head. I couldn’t have heard him right. “I’m sorry. Did you just say you told him I was yours?”

He reaches across the console and grabs my hand. “I did.”

I have so many questions. I want to ask him what that means. I want to ask him for how long and are we going to hide this from my dad, but I don’t say anything.

He squeezes my hand. “Say something.”

I thread our fingers together. “I think right now, you need to concentrate on your ride today. We can talk about—that—later.”

He doesn’t like it, that much is obvious, but I’m not going to get into emotions and feelings right now. There’s no way I’m going to tell him how I feel and then have him tell me he doesn’t feel the same. Him saying I’m his can mean anything. Like he doesn’t want to share me while we’re doing whatever we’re doing.

So instead of getting into all that, I change the subject. “Do you want to talk about your ride today? Who are you hoping to draw?”

He looks over at me, and for a second I wonder if he’s going to let me change the subject, but he shakes his head. “It doesn’t matter. I’ll take down whichever one I draw.”

I laugh because the man sure is confident, and I know he has reason to be. He’s one of the best bulldoggers in the South. I lean back and put my feet on the dash.

He groans and lets go of my hand and then slides his fingers up my thigh. “How are you feeling today?”

Like a lush, I open my legs wider. Geez, I might as well pull my shorts off and give him the access he needs. “Thank you for last night. Whatever that is you put on me really helped.”

He squeezes my thigh. “You should probably wait a few days before...”

I laugh again. “We’ll see. I dunno. The other night was so good, I might be addicted.”

He groans again. “Fuck, we need to change the subject again. You’re killing me here. I’m not going to be able to wrestle a steer with a hard dick.”

I sit up in my seat and lean over the console. “I can probably help you with that later.”

## Page 17

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:07 am*

He groans and leans his head back on the seat. When he lifts his head, he adjusts himself. “This is going to be a long ride.”

I bite my lip. “It’s only an hour.”

He opens his mouth and then slams it shut. I haven’t been paying attention, but my dad is passing us, beeping the horn and waving.

I sit back in my seat, and I don’t even have to ask Dixon because his face is filled with guilt. He brings his hand back to the steering wheel, and the warmth of his touch now feels cold and bare. “I shouldn’t be doing this, Faith. It’s going to kill him when he finds out about us.”

I can hear the pain in his voice, and I hate it, so I say the first thing that comes to mind. “It’s okay. He’ll never know.”

He turns his head to look at me. I’m wishing that he’d say to hell with that or that’s not going to work for him, but all he does is nod his head and then turn to watch the road in front of us. The rest of the trip is filled with silence, and even though I want to figure this out now, I know he needs to focus. Bulldogging is dangerous, and he doesn’t need to be thinking about anything but his job today. The rest can wait.

## CHAPTER 11

### DIXON

I won. It’s the first round, but I did it.

And as they call my name, the first person I look for is Faith Allen.

She's waving her hands over her head, cheering and going wild. I want to run to her, pick her up, swing her around, and make sure every cowboy here knows she's mine.

But I can't do that.

Hell, I'll never be able to do that.

As people gather around me, I lose sight of Faith. Kids are shoving posters into my hand for me to sign, women are shoving their breasts in my face, and some of them are even stuffing their phone numbers in my pocket.

But I'm not interested. What I want more than anything is to go back to my room and curl up in bed with Faith by my side. Maybe order takeout and talk and laugh. It's crazy the thoughts I'm having, but they feel like a dream.

"Good job, son."

I wince as Charlie Allen slaps me on the back. I can't even look him in the eye.  
"Thank you, sir."

Charlie is smiling ear to ear. "Now I know you're going to celebrate tonight, but take it easy. Finals are tomorrow, and you need to be well rested."

Karla, a woman I used to hook up with, is coming toward me, and I cringe thinking about the last time we got together. She comes toward me, putting her hand at my waist. I back away from her touch, but it doesn't slow her down. "Congratulations, Dixon. You wanna celebrate?"

I avoid Charlie's gaze. "I think I'm going to rest tonight."



Charlie's smile drops for a second, but I turn to Karla. "Sorry, but I need to talk to my boss."

Karla nods her head. "Call me later, cowboy."

She walks away, and I find Faith across the room. She's talking to some cowboys, but her eyes are on me. When she sees me looking at her, she jerks her eyes away. Too late, princess. I saw you looking. But that's okay, cause I'm looking too.

"Are you okay?" Charlie asks. He's looking at me worriedly.

"I'm fine. I just didn't sleep good. Plus, I'm getting old."

Charlie's forehead creases. "Old? I never thought I'd hear Dixon Chase talk about getting old, turning down dates, and?—"

Before he can finish, Faith walks up. "Congratulations, Dixon."

She hugs me, and it's awkward as fuck because I'm yearning to hold her against me, kiss her, and not let her go. "Thanks, uh, Faith."

I almost called her princess. If her dad heard me call her a nickname, there'd be no hiding the way I feel about her.

Faith looks at her dad. "So what are you doing tonight?"

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:07 am*

He rubs his belly. “Well, ya know, there’s a few guys that want to have dinner with the legend.”

Faith rolls her eyes. “Oh, you humble guy...”

Charlie just raises his shoulders in a shrug. “What? It was their words, not mine.”

Faith laughs. “I bet.”

I force myself to look away from Faith because there’s no hiding my feelings from her or her dad, but Faith and I need to talk before anything.

Charlie puts a hand on Faith’s shoulder. “I can skip the dinner, though, and you and I can go out.”

Faith waves him off. “No way. I can entertain myself, Dad.”

“Come with us,” Charlie encourages her.

But she’s shaking her head. “No, really, Dad, I didn’t sleep much last night, and I could honestly get some food from a tent or a truck and go straight to bed.”

Charlie’s eyes widen, and he looks suspiciously from Faith to me. Shit, he’s putting things together. Faith said almost the exact same thing I said to him about getting no sleep last night. “Okay, well, I’m off to celebrate. I’ll see you two in the morning.”

I avoid Faith’s gaze completely and slap her dad on the back. “Call me if you get into

trouble tonight, ol' man! Don't make me bail you out again."

Faith gasps, and I realize my mistake. She must not have heard this story. Well, I'll hear about it later. Right now, I'm going to get as far away as I can from Faith because there's no way I can be around her and just act like there's nothing between us.

Tucker Yates stops me. He's the number one bull rider in the state. He's a single dad that is busy raising a son while also riding the circuit. "Congratulations on your ride today."

I nod. "Just the first round. Good luck to you. I hear you drew Warrior. He's a mean son of a bitch."

Tucker nods. "Yeah, but I got him."

I'm about to ask him about his son when another cowboy comes up to talk to him. I pat him on the back, wish him luck again, and then walk away.

I'm almost to the exit when Karla stops me. She puts her hands on my shoulders, pressing her breasts against me. I grab her hands and hold them away from me. I obviously have it bad because I don't want Karla touching me. Hell, the only woman I want to touch me is Faith Allen—the one woman I shouldn't want.

"Karla," I say, blowing out a breath. "I'm not interested."

She flinches but recovers quickly. She's a woman who is not used to being told no, so I'm fully expecting a tantrum, a scene, or worse. She rubs against me. "You know how good we are together, Dixon."

I laugh, trying to take the bite out of my refusal. "Sorry, Karla. I need to focus on my

ride tomorrow.” I put her away from me. “I’m not interested.”

She gasps, and her mouth falls open. “Fine, but we both know you’ll be crawling back to me at the next circuit. We’re explosive together, and you know it.”

She leans up and presses a kiss to my lips, and I jerk away. It all happened so fast, and as Karla walks away, I’m wiping my mouth as I turn around to look where Charlie and Faith were standing. She saw. Faith saw Karla’s little scene. Even from here, I can tell she’s not happy. Charlie is talking to some cowboy, and Faith is watching me with a pained expression. Her face is pale and drawn. I want to talk to her and try to explain, but Charlie grabs her attention, and I’m left standing here, trying to figure out what to do.

I can’t fix anything with Charlie around. I need to talk to Faith, but I’m going to have to do it without her father here.

Reluctantly, I walk out of the arena because I know if I don’t, I’m going to make a scene, and Faith and her father could end up hating me for it.

## CHAPTER 12

### FAITH

I haven’t eaten all day, so I stop at a food stand and order a hamburger. I’m trying to act normal when on the inside, my heart is breaking in two. I should have known that Dixon gets around. He is famous on the circuit, and even when I was younger, I remember women throwing themselves at him. I’m not sure what I expected, but I sure didn’t think he would be kissing someone after everything.

“Here you go, little filly. Hamburger with tomato and lettuce.” He points to the counter. “Ketchup, mustard, and anything else you’d want is right over there.”

Forcing a smile to my face, I thank him.

I take one bite of the sandwich and drop it into the little tray. I can't do it. I feel sick, and it has nothing to do with the food. It has everything to do with that woman throwing herself at Dixon.

## Page 19

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:07 am*

My phone dings, letting me know I got a text, but I ignore it.

It dings again, but I'm just staring off, people watching, wondering if Dixon is planning to meet up with big boobs later.

When my phone rings, I reluctantly dig it out of my pocket. The unknown on the caller ID has me answering it hesitantly. "Hello."

"Faith," Dixon says, half out of breath. "Where are you?"

I instantly snarl. "Really? You want to know where I am now? You weren't worried about me a little while ago."

"Where the fuck are you?"

I stand up and dump my uneaten food in the trash before walking out of the tent. "Why? You worried you're going to be out with big boobs and I'm going to cause a scene? Well, I won't. I'm not like that."

"Faith, I'm going to ask you one last time. Where. The. Fuck. Are. You?"

He enunciates each word, and maybe I should be more worried about his tone, but I'm not. "It's none of your business where I'm at or who I'm with, Dixon Chase."

His voice drops an octave, and it sounds like he could be about to crawl out of the phone. "Faith Allen, come to room 312. If you're not here in five minutes, I'm coming to you and throwing you over my shoulder, and everyone on the circuit will

know you're mine before I get through the parking lot."

I gasp. He wouldn't.

"And Faith, don't think I won't do it. I will... Four minutes."

He hangs up the phone, and as soon as I hear the click, I look around me. He won't do it. He's already said he can't let my dad find out what we did, so there's no way he's going to make a scene. Hell, the circuit gossip is worse here than in Whiskey Run, and sure enough, even if he does come here and not throw me over his shoulder, people would still talk.

Dammit.

I pocket my phone and start walking toward the hotel. The whole way, I'm planning what I'm going to say. One thing for sure: I'm going to give him a piece of my mind. He thinks he can kiss some woman and then expect me to come running, and it's not right.

I walk through the hotel, stab the button on the elevator, and cross my arms over my chest as I wait. The longer I wait, the more upset I get, so by the time I get to Dixon's room, it feels like steam is coming out my ears.

I lift my hand to knock, but I don't have to because the door is swung open.

Dixon looks panicked. His hair's standing up every which way. He's missing his shirt, and his jeans are unbuttoned. Instantly, that night in the office comes to mind, and he grabs my shoulders. "Kiss me."

I put a hand on his chest. "No way. You think?—"

I don't even get the whole sentence out and he's pulling me into the hotel room and kicking the door shut with his boot. He leans me against the door. "Faith, please kiss me."

I push him away. "I don't know where your mouth has been."

With a pained expression, he shakes his head. "I didn't want her to kiss me."

I roll my eyes. "Usually if you don't want someone to kiss you, you don't let them kiss you."

"Faith, if you saw that, then you saw me push her away and leave."

I cross my arms over my chest. "Right, so is she meeting you here later or?—"

He leans toward me. "I'm not that guy, Faith, and I think you know that."

A shrill laugh explodes from me. "Please. I saw the women throwing themselves at you. I saw big boobs all over you and..."

He pulls me toward him and gruffly exclaims, "I just want you."

Before I can say anything, he's shaking his head, and his voice is thick with emotion. "I'm telling you, Faith. I only want to kiss you, and when that... that woman touched me, it made me sick. I don't want her. I didn't want her to touch me, and it made me sick that you had to see it." He tilts my chin up. "If it was the other way around and some guy..." He can't even say the words because he's shaking his head in disgust.

I'm starting to soften, and I lean into him. "So Dixon... I know this is temporary, and I thought I could handle it, but I have a favor to ask."



“Anything,” he grunts.

I gesture between the two of us. “As long as we are doing whatever this is, you don’t uh, date, other women.”

He nods. “Done.”

I tilt my head to the side, not believing it was that easy. “That means no...”

I can’t even say the words, but he’s agreeing. He wraps his arms around my waist and holds me to him. “Princess, since you walked into the Whiskey Whistler, I haven’t looked at another woman. I want you.”

I go to my tiptoes. “Okay.”

He doesn’t hesitate. He lifts me in his arms before I even get the whole word out. His lips press to mine as he carries me across the room to his bed.

The bulge of his manhood is at my core, and I’m wishing we didn’t have jeans on between us. I pull away. “I need you. I need this.”

He kisses my cheek, my lips, and my neck and then nibbles my ear. He whispers, “I want you too, but we can’t. I know you’re sore?—”

I push out of his arms, and as soon as my feet hit the ground, I turn him and push him onto the bed. “Oh no way, mister. We’re doing this.”

He raises up on his elbows. “Faith...”

I grab his jeans and try to pull them down his hips. “Lift.”

He grunts and raises his hips. As I pull down his jeans and underwear, his cock bounces, already hard against his belly.

I pull his pants down his legs, drop them to the floor, and then wrap my hand around his girth.

He grabs the bed covers and pulls, groaning. “Argh.”

I lick the tip of his penis and then stroke my tongue along his length. He groans, and I try not to smile as I bob up and down on him.

His hand goes to my cheek. “Look at me.”

I raise my eyes to his and keep sucking. He licks his lips. “Fuck, you look so good with your pretty lips wrapped around my cock.”

I moan, and his hips jerk. “Fuck, princess, you’re perfect. You suck my dick just right.”

Moaning again, I take him deeper until he’s hitting the back of my throat.

I’m sucking him one second, and then he’s dragging me up his body the next. I’m straddling his hips, and he’s removing my shirt and bra. He kneads my breasts, lavishing each one with the attention I need. I’m gyrating my hips, pressing my core against him. I groan, begging him. “Please.”

He rolls me to my back and hovers over me. “You sure about this?”

I grab the button on my jeans and make quick work of removing them and my panties. “You’re not backing out now.”

He slides his hand down my belly and palms my womanhood. He’s kissing my neck and whispers, “There’s other ways I can please you. I don’t want to hurt you.”

I put my hand on each side of his face and force him to look at me. “You’re only going to hurt me if you turn me away. After today, I need you inside me. I need to know, even if it’s just for tonight, that you’re mine.”

His finger slides through my folds, and he groans. “You’re so wet.”

I kiss him. “For you. I’m wet for you.”

He moves over me, lines himself up, and slides inside me. His eyes are on mine, and he doesn’t look away as he takes me.

The pleasure mounts, and my head goes back as I clench my eyes, but he stops. “Eyes on me, Faith. I need your eyes on me when I make love to you.”

My heart gallops in my chest at his choice of words, but I give him what he wants and don’t look away. Not when he brings me to orgasm over and over again and not when he finishes inside me.

## Page 21

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:07 am*

He's hovering over me, kissing me, and when he pulls back, he demands, "Stay the night with me."

"But—" I start, but he shakes his head.

"I want to sleep with you by my side. I want to roll over in the middle of the night, have you again, and I want to wake up to you in my arms."

How can I say no to that? "Okay."

He kisses me until I'm breathless, and I pull away. "One condition."

He nods. "Anything."

"Feed me."

He chuckles. "Done."

As he pulls me from the bed, talking about showering with me, I decide I'm just going to soak it all in. I know this is not a forever thing, but tonight, I'm going to pretend it is.

## CHAPTER 13

### DIXON

There's nothing like waking up to the sound of a shotgun being cocked.

I peel open one eye, and my worst nightmare has come to life. Charlie Allen is standing over me while his daughter has her naked body pressed against mine.

He's staring at me down the barrel of his rifle and he's spitting mad. "I'm going to kill you, Dixon Chase."

Faith gasps, and I wrap an arm around her. "Now calm down, Charlie."

"Get the hell away from my daughter."

I kiss Faith's forehead. "Stay here, princess."

Charlie growls, and I get out of the bed, making sure to keep Faith covered. I stand up buck naked and pull my jeans up my legs. Charlie is shaking the gun at me. "I trusted you. She's my daughter... She's not some buckle bunny."

I hold my hands up. "I know she's not, Charlie."

"What were you thinking?"

Faith raises up, holding the sheet to her chest. "Dad, stop it. I came on to him. This was my idea."

Charlie won't even look at his daughter. "Honey, stop. This is not your fault."

She climbs out of the bed, wrapping the sheet around her. "Dad, stop it. I'm a grown woman even if you don't want to treat me like one. This is not Dixon's fault."

I put my hand on Faith's bare shoulder. "Faith, baby, please let me handle this."

Charlie shakes the gun at me. I know he won't shoot me even if he wants to. "Get

your fuckin' hands off my daughter.”

“Dad! Stop it right now. Look, this is between me and Dixon. We both went into this knowing what it is, and we’re both happy with the situation.”

But Charlie is not hearing any of it. “You’re ten years older than her, Dixon.”

I put an arm around Faith and pull her against me. She’s surprised, but I don’t let her go. “Charlie, listen to me and listen real close. I love your daughter.”

Father and daughter both gasp. Faith’s eyes bug out of her head as she peers up at me. “Dixon?”

I wish the first time I’d told her, we were alone and could talk about it, but it is what it is. “Charlie, listen. Give us five minutes. Let us get dressed, and I’ll meet you outside. I just need you to listen to what I have to say, and if you still want to shoot me or hit me with the butt of your gun, you can. I won’t fight you.”

“Dixon!” Faith gasps.

I squeeze her shoulder. “Honey, it’s okay. You’re his daughter, and I can’t blame him for this. One day when we have a daughter, I’m going to ground her until she’s thirty-five.”

Speechless, her mouth falls open, and she just stares up at me. I know I’m pushing my luck, but I kiss her forehead again before looking at her father. “Charlie, please. Five minutes.”

He lowers the gun and glares at me. “Parking lot in five minutes, Chase. You better show up.”

He finally looks at his daughter. “Get dressed. You’re going with me.”

I move to stand in front of Faith, and Charlie’s face twists in anger. “She’s free to go when she wants, but she’s going to stay here and get dressed. I don’t want her down there while you and me talk in case it gets ugly.”

Charlie glowers at me. “I may be old, but you won’t get the best of me. You took advantage of my daughter.”

That hurts. I thought he knew me better than that, but I have to remind myself this is his daughter. I can’t blame him for anything he’s feeling. “I won’t fight you, Charlie. No matter what you say to me, think of me, or do to me, I won’t fight you.”

“You think I can’t take you? I can. I can kill you right now and not think twice about

it.”

Faith exclaims, “Dad!”

I shake my head. “I’m not going to fight you because you’re my mentor. You’re the closest thing to a dad I have, and you’re the father of the woman I love. I won’t fight you.”

Charlie stomps his foot. “I’ll see you in the parking lot.” He looks at his daughter. “Faith, you coming?”

She shakes her head. “I’ll be down in a little while, Dad.”

He doesn’t like it, but at least he doesn’t try to force her. As soon as he walks out the door, Faith pulls from my arms. She takes off the sheet and is gathering her clothes. “That was good, Dixon. I mean, I don’t like to lie to my dad, but maybe he won’t kill you now.”

I pick up my T-shirt and pull it over my head as Faith continues rambling. “This is actually kind of perfect. We can get through the weekend, and when we break up, I’ll just act like I’m over you, and we can end it. No harm, no foul.”

“Faith.”

But she doesn’t stop. “You sure were quick on your feet, but I really do think this is for the best. He’ll forgive you if he thinks you have real feelings for me and?—”

“Faith,” I say a little louder this time.

She is fully dressed now, putting her long red hair into a ponytail. “What?”



I walk over to her. “I wasn’t lying to your dad. I do love you.”

Hope flairs in her eyes, but she shakes her head. “No, you don’t.”

I tilt my head to the side and smile at her. “Princess, I think I know what I’m feeling.”

“But—” she starts, but I don’t let her finish.

“Faith. I know this is fast. I know I’m ten years older than you, and I know you may want different things than what I can offer you, but I do love you, and I would do everything I can to make you happy. I want to build a home with you. I want to have babies with you... I want it all.”

Her eyes widen in disbelief or like I’m speaking a foreign language. “Dixon?”

I stop when we’re toe to toe. “I love you, Faith.”

She’s speechless as she stares at me.

My stomach knots. “You don’t have to decide anything now. I know I’m rushing you but?—”

She puts her hands at my waist. “I love you too, Dixon.”

I let out a breath in a big whoosh of air. She dives into my arms, kissing me like there’s no tomorrow. I wish I could stay right here, but I need to go and see her dad before he comes back up here.

## Page 23

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:07 am*

I break off the kiss. “I need to go talk to your dad.”

She walks over to her boots, and I do the same. As I’m tugging mine on, I tell her, “I want you to stay up here.”

She scrunches her nose up. “You’re not fighting my battles for me, Dixon. He’s my dad. I’ll just explain things and?—”

“Princess, this is our battle, and as your man, I’m going to talk to your dad. Okay?”

She doesn’t like it, but she nods her head. “Okay. Fine.”

I kiss her again and promise her I’ll be back.

As soon as I walk out of the room, I’m trying to figure out how I’m going to convince her dad because this is probably the most important conversation I’ll ever have.

I pass a few cowboys I know on the way. I’d normally stop and talk but not today. Today, I’m focused because I have to make this right.

By the time I find Charlie standing next to his truck and trailer, any hope that he has calmed down is gone when I see him pacing back and forth, still shaking his gun in his hand.

I’m not sure how he got through the hotel with it, but most people know the legend Charlie Allen, so they probably don’t question him much.

I stop a few feet away from him. “I really am sorry, Charlie.”

He sets the gun on the bed of his truck and then puts his hands into fists. “Sorry for what? Betraying my trust, using my daughter?—”

As calmly as I can, I shake my head. “I didn’t use your daughter. I wasn’t lying up there, Charlie. I love Faith, and I want to make a life with her.”

He spits out the words in disgust. “What kind of life? You’re a cowboy through and through.”

I shrug. “So are you.”

He slaps his hand on his pant leg. “Exactly. That’s what I’m saying. I sent her to school because she deserves more than this life, Dixon. And now what? One look from you and she’s throwing it all away?”

I put my hands on my hips. “Sir, she’s not throwing away anything. Whatever she wants to do, I’ll support her. I’ll be the man she needs.”

He shakes his head. “Dixon, you know how I feel about you. You’re like a son to me, and maybe I could live with this, but you don’t know. The ranch that I love, her mother hated it and resented me for it.”

I jut my chin at him. “Is that why you don’t want Faith there?”

He finally looks at me instead of over my shoulder. “Is that what you think? You think I don’t want her there? Hell, I love it when she’s there, but I don’t want her to resent me for it.”

## CHAPTER 14

## FAITH

“Is that what you think? You think I’ll resent you if I stay at the ranch?”

My dad holds his hands up. “Now, honey...”

I walk up to stand next to Dixon. “No, don’t ‘now honey’ me. Is that what you think, Dad? Is that why you’re always pushing me away? You think I’ll resent you for loving the ranch as much as you do? Dad, I’m not Mom. She left you—hell, she left both of us fifteen years ago. She didn’t want you, but she didn’t want me either. It wasn’t the ranch. She may have made you think that, but there was more to it, and you know it. She was selfish and self-centered. She knew when she married you what she was getting into?—”

Dad runs his hands through his beard. “No, when we got married, we were traveling the circuit. New cities, bright lights, big parties. Once I had to start settling down and find another way to make money, it wasn’t the life she wanted anymore?—”

I shake my head. “Dad, I’m not going to stand here and listen to you make excuses for her. She left. She could have found another way, but she just left. Maybe she didn’t want this life, but if I stay in Whiskey Run, it’s because I want to.” I take a deep breath. “I didn’t get a degree in accounting, Dad.”

His mouth drops. “What are you talking about? Honey, you were at school. I visited you every semester. I saw your room, your?—”

I interrupt. “I graduated with a degree in agribusiness. I wanted to get something that would help me when I came back to help you run the ranch.” I suck in a breath. “You’ve spent years pushing me away from our ranch when all I wanted to do was be there.”

My dad's mouth falls open, and it's obvious he's shaken. I put my hand in Dixon's, and he threads his fingers with mine. "Now, Dad, I love Dixon, and yes we should have told you about us, but we weren't sure what this was?—"

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:07 am*

Dixon pulls me against him. “I knew. I knew the first second you walked back into town how I felt about you. I knew my life would never be the same.”

I lean against him. “Dad, I want to build a family with Dixon on our ranch.”

My dad looks between Dixon and me. He glares at Dixon. “You hurt her...”

“I won’t,” he promises.

He nods. “Fine.” He opens his arms, and I look up at Dixon. He smiles at me, and I release his hand so I can go hug my dad. He squeezes me tighter than he ever has before. “I love you, Faith. I’m sorry that I’ve pushed you away.” He loosens his grip and then looks down at me. “I wanna be called Pop Pop.”

I roll my eyes. “Dad, I’m not pregnant.”

He looks over my head at Dixon. “Yeah, well, I’m hoping you’ll be married before you make me a Pop Pop.”

I’m about to argue with him when Dixon assures him, “She will be.”

My mouth drops, and I turn to look at Dixon, but he just shrugs. “Honey, you had to know that we’re getting married.”

I put a hand on my hip. “Well, I hope when you ask, you do a better job than that.”

My dad laughs and then points at Dixon. “I guess it’s a good thing I didn’t beat your

ass. You have a competition coming up.”

I pull Faith into my arms. “If I win or lose, I’m going home happy. I love you, Faith Allen, soon to be Faith Chase.”

I laugh up at him. “I love you too. Now let’s go shower and then win you a trophy.”

My dad groans. “Ugh, are you two going to be all lovey-dovey and stuff?”

I’m happier than I’ve ever been. “Yes. Get used to it, ol’ man.”

We talk a little longer. I tell my dad bye, and Dixon waves as we walk hand in hand into the hotel. It feels good that we don’t have to hide this.

Dixon leans down and whispers to me as we’re walking through the hotel, “So hear me out. We can probably save time if we shower together.”

I laugh. “You know what, that probably would save a bit of time.”

He picks me up, twirls me around, and then puts me on my feet again. There’s cowboys everywhere watching in surprise. I’m sure they’re used to the reserved cowboy that Dixon is well-known as being, but now they’re seeing a man in love.

As we step into the elevator, I lean into him. “I’m sure we’re going to be the talk of the circuit after that little display.”

“Good,” he answers, kissing me on the nose. “I want the world to know you’re mine.”

I lean into him, and already I’m thinking about a future of us building our home, having a family, and living the life I’ve always wanted. I turn in Dixon’s arms and

put my hands on each side of his face. “You’re making all my dreams come true, cowboy.”

“And you are mine,” he says before lifting me up in his arms. The elevator door opens, and he carries me out and down the hall.

I hold on to him. “Shower and then you need to get ready for the event.”

He kisses my shoulder. “I know.”

“No sex,” I tell him.

He just chuckles.

I lean back and look in his face. “If you lose or you get hurt?—”

He just laughs again. “I won’t.”

“Dixon,” I say softly, worried.



## Page 25

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:07 am*

He slides me to my feet when we're inside the hotel room. "Princess, I'm going to win today, and then I'm going to take you home and we're going to plan our life together."

I nod, barely able to contain my happiness.

He kisses my neck, pulling at my shirt. "But first I'm going to love my future wife."

I practically swoon against him.

He makes love to me, showing me how good we can be together, and it's even better that we no longer have to hide and there's no guilt holding us back.

## EPILOGUE

### FAITH

#### Four Years Later

I'm leaning on the rail, holding Dixon Junior on my hip and holding my breath the whole time. Dixon is the top of the leaderboard, and his event is happening now.

"There's Daddy," DJ screams.

I bounce him on my hip. "There he is."

I can't take my eyes off the man that has become my everything these last four years.

I never thought I'd say it, but getting caught by my dad was the best thing that could have happened. I'm not sure what we would have done if we hadn't. Would Dixon have pushed me away? I've asked him, and he said he knew we would be together, but he definitely would have gone another way of telling my father.

We built our house on the land my dad gave Dixon. It's exactly what I dreamed of and more.

The sound of the horn has me holding our son tighter, and I'm glued to what's happening in front of us. DJ is cheering, but all I can do is hold my breath and watch as the steer takes off first. Dixon gallops after him on his horse, and at the perfect moment, he jumps from his horse, grabbing the steer's horns, and then Dixon is in the air, wrestling the steer to the ground. It's only a few seconds, but it feels like a lifetime until the steer is flat on its side.

As soon as he has him down and the buzzer rings, Dixon is up and heading straight for us.

He climbs the railing, and DJ is going crazy at his dad's antics. "You did it, Daddy! You did it!"

He kisses his son's head. "I sure did, buddy." He looks at me. "What about you, Momma? You see that?"

I roll my eyes. "Of course I saw that. I'm proud of you. You were amazing."

He laughs and kisses me before whispering, "I think you said those same words to me last night."

I smack him playfully, and then he's climbing down the railing.

The crowd is going wild, and everyone is cheering us on.

DJ is eating up all the attention.

We stay in our seats, but soon my dad joins us, taking DJ from my arms. “Our boy did good.”

I had worried in the beginning if Dad was really going to be okay with me and Dixon, but he’s taken it all in stride. Plus, when he found out he was going to be a grandfather, he’s been as happy as the time he won his national title. “He did good, Dad. Of course, he’s got a great trainer.”

My dad shakes his head. “Nope, I can’t take credit. Dixon’s always been natural talent. Just like this one. He should be down there performing.”

My dad tried to convince me to let DJ enter into the sheep riding event, but I want to wait a few more years. “Soon, Dad. Promise.”

I turn to look for Dixon, and he’s making his way toward us. He has a huge smile on his face, and even though there are people stopping him for autographs, he barely takes his eyes off me. When he reaches my side, he lifts me up, and I kiss him. “Congratulations.”

He nods to the arena. “I haven’t won yet. Dustin is up next.”

We sit on the bleachers, and I take a moment to just enjoy my family all being together. I still can’t believe that my dad thought I wouldn’t want this life.

We all watch as Dustin performs, and as the buzzer rings, I look at the clock and choke back a cry. Dustin’s time is two seconds less than Dixon’s.

## Page 26

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 4:07 am*

I turn, mouth hanging open, to Dixon. I thought for sure he had it in the bag. DJ is patting his arm. “Awww, Daddy, it’s okay. You’ll win next time.”

Dixon nods. “I sure will, buddy.”

My dad hollers, “Who wants a hot dog?”

“Me!” DJ cries.

My dad stands up with DJ in his arms. “We’ll meet you two at the food tent, okay?”

I nod. “Okay, Dad. Thanks.”

I turn to Dixon and put a hand on his chest. “I’m sorry.”

He is still smiling. “I’m not.”

I loop my arms around his neck. “I don’t know if you were watching or not, but you just got second.”

He shrugs. “It’s okay. Dustin needed this win. His wife left him.”

I gasp. “Oh my, that’s awful.”

He nods in agreement. “Right. So he can have this win in the arena. As long as I have you and DJ, I’m happy, princess.”

I lean into him. "I'm already yours. You don't have to keep up the flirting."

I expect him to laugh, but he shakes his head seriously. "You make me happy, Faith, and I love this life we have together."

"Me too." I had planned to tell him after he won, but I guess now is as good as time as any. "I think I have something else that might make you happy too."

He kisses my neck and whispers, "What's that?"

I pull back and look into his eyes. "I'm pregnant. We're going to have another baby."

His eyes widen in excitement, and then I'm lifted off my feet and he's swinging me around. He's holding on to me and laughing when he pulls away. "Come on. Let's go celebrate."

He's pulling me through the crowd, and I'm trying to keep up with him. "But Dad and DJ..."

He stops, towering over me. "Can wait. Your dad will love to show him around the place. I want to celebrate with my wife."

There's a pause as we look into each other's eyes, and I know I'll give in because that's what I want too. "I want to celebrate with you too, Dixon."

He pulls me through the crowd of people, and I couldn't be happier. I have everything I want, and life just keeps getting better. My husband kisses my neck. "Even when I lose, I've won."

I sigh against him. "I was just thinking the same thing. I love you, Dixon Chase."

He presses his lips to mine. "I love you too, princess."