

~ Dakota's Way ~

by Robin Hicks

Summary

Koty Silvers, a detective from Virginia Beach is just getting over her break-up with Tina. Not wanting to get involved in another relationship at all, she was so not ready for Doctor Kasey Brooks to enter her life via her sister-in-law Chris.

This is an uber story, and does contain love (and other things) between two consenting women, but nothing real graphic. It also contains a little bit of violence but once again, nothing too graphic. Please send comments good or bad to bigboo2u831@msn.com so that I may learn from them. This is my first attempt at writing.

Special thanks to Phantom Quill. This story would not be half of what it is today without her guidance, and help on some basic English that we tend to overlook as we get older. For anyone who is thinking of writing a story, have someone beta read it. It really makes a difference. Hats off to you phantom Quill, you're the bomb.

Chapter one

Koty Silvers awoke to the obnoxious sound of her alarm clock blaring in her ear. Mumbling into her pillow she slowly reached out to shut off. *'Jesus, I feel like I just fell asleep!'* Lately, it was very difficult for her to fall asleep easily. Up until a few months ago, Koty had fallen asleep almost every night in Tina's arms.

For the three years that they were together, Koty thought that life just couldn't get any better. It was by pure accident that Koty's loving world came crashing to an end, when she caught Tina in the arms of another woman.

Her best friends Jamie and Trish had asked Koty to go out with them to a new bar that had opened about eight months ago. Since Tina worked for the fire department, and this was one of her on nights, Koty told them she would go with them...

"Man, this place is packed," Jamie yelled over the loud music as they made their way to the bar. "I don't see any tables open right now but we can hang out here until someone gets up to leave."

"This is fine right here Jamie, we can just...oh my God."

Turning to see what Koty was looking at, Jamie saw Koty's lover Tina on the dance floor with another woman kissing. Reaching for Koty's arm, she wasn't quite quick enough as Koty bolted past her, and headed for the dance floor. Right before Koty reached her destination she changed

her mind, and turned to leave but Tina had already seen her.

"Koty! Koty wait!" Koty stopped but she refused to turn around. Tina caught her by the arm and turned her around to face her. "Jesus Koty, what are you doing here?"

"What am I doing here? What the hell are you doing here Tina, you told me you had to work tonight, and who the hell was that woman you were fucking kissing?"

Tina tried to pull Koty's trembling body to her. "Baby..."

"Don't Tina, don't you fucking dare! Please just get the hell away from me." Koty turned and walked towards Jamie who had a murderous look on her face and was aiming it towards Tina.

"I gotta go guys, I'll call you tomorrow." Without looking back, Koty made a beeline for the door and out to the parking lot. She just made it into her car before she breaking down in tears. Five minutes later she was leaving the parking lot and was heading home. Not far behind her was Tina.

Koty had never in the three years that they were together questioned Tina on where she was going or where she had been. She fully trusted her so it had never entered her mind at all that she was screwing around on her.

'What a fucking idiot I am! Son of a bitch, why am I always the last one to find these things out?'

Jamie had been telling Koty for a while that she had a bad feeling about Tina. Jamie wasn't one to hold anything back if she thought that something or someone was out to hurt Koty.

She had never believed Jamie, she thought it was just Jamie being her over protective self. The look on Tina's face when she knew that she had been busted, man was that a kodak moment. She was scared. Well, she needs to be scared.

Koty had just walked into the kitchen to make herself a strong drink when Tina came rushing through the door. Koty caught her breath, and tried to speak as calmly as she could.

"Tina, why are you here? At this very moment I really have nothing to say to you."

"Baby, please just talk to me for a minute...Please"

She walked into the living room and sat on the couch. Koty followed behind her but chose to sit in her recliner. Looking at Tina, she saw tears in her eyes but ignored them and swallowed down half of her drink.

"What do you want Tina, what is it you want me to say?"

"I don't want you to say anything yet, just please hear me out. No matter what happens here tonight Koty, you've got to know that I love you, and I didn't intend to hurt you. Please believe

that Baby...I don't want to lose you."

"Tina, how long has this been going on and you may as well tell me the truth?" Leaping from the couch, Tina ran her hands through her long red hair.

Focusing her eyes on the picture of her and Koty above the fireplace, Tina sighed, "let me fix us both a drink and I'll tell you everything. Just remember Koty, I don't want to lose you over this..."

Koty had been devastated to find out that Tina had been messing around on her for several months. Working for the fire department, Tina worked three days on, and four days off. One of her days off, Koty agreed for Tina to spend one of the nights she had off, with friends from the station. Apparently, this one night with her friends, had been the night she had been seeing this woman.

Tina had told her that she didn't love the other woman, that it was something that just happened and she couldn't seem to help herself.

"I love only you Koty, I wish I could make you understand that. I know what I did was totally fucked up, and I don't know what happened to me to make me do it. I meant it when I said I didn't love her baby, I just can't explain it."

That night, Koty had told Tina that she couldn't believe their love meant so little that she could do this and yes, as a matter of fact; she did lose her because of it. Since Tina never said it would never happen again, Koty had asked Tina to leave. She had not seen her since.

For a full month, Koty refused to go anywhere except work. Not to her twin brother Monty's, and not even over to Jamie and Trish's. It had taken a lot of time and patience for them to finally get her to start going out again. Just going to a restaurant for dinner seemed to be a major ordeal for her. It took a little time, but slowly Koty started to venture out again.

There were a lot of women interested in Koty, especially when they found out that her and Tina were no longer together. Koty was oblivious to it all though. She wasn't the least bit interested.

She did have drinks a few times with different women, but she let them know in the beginning, there would be nothing else. Alone. That is just how she wanted to be. No one to answer to, eat when she wanted, go out when she wanted and no one else to break her heart.

Chapter Two

Shaking herself from the bitter memories, Koty slowly dragged herself out of bed. Rubbing her eyes and stretching, she made her way to the kitchen, started a pot of coffee then headed for the bathroom for her shower. She had a long day ahead of her and was already in a foul mood.

Koty was a detective for the Virginia Beach Police department for the past fifteen years, joining the police academy when she was twenty-one, right out of collage. Her brother had tried to talk

her into taking a summer just to play around and enjoy herself, but she wouldn't have any of it. She felt like she didn't deserve to enjoy herself. The pain of losing her parents when she was seventeen was still too fresh in her heart.

Once she had joined the force, she poured her life into accomplishing her goal, so it didn't take long for her to advance to detective. She was well respected by most at the station, and was now one of the top detectives there. Everyone there knew of her sexuality but either didn't care or was too chicken shit to say anything.

For the past month she had been working a sting operation on jewel theft in the Virginia Beach, Norfolk and Chesapeake areas. With a little luck, today she would end the case.

On her way to work, she thought about the birthday party the following night for her brother's wife, Chris. She loved Chris like she was her own sister, but she just wasn't much in the partying mood. She had promised her she would be there, so she figured she would go for a while to make an appearance then leave.

At the station, she was talking to another detective, and good friend of the family, Jason Price. Patting Koty on the back as he walked up to her, he said, "today should be the day Silvers. Hopefully you'll get that rat bastard."

Tossing a snickers bar at him, koty smiled. "Geeze Koty, why couldn't I be your type so I could marry you? You treat me better than my mama."

"Yeah, but unlike your mama, I would have kicked your sorry ass a long time ago. I'm supposed to meet with the perp Brian, at two o'clock. We know he's working alone on this, and I'm pretty sure that I'm the only one he has sold any of it to. Let's hope so anyway. I'm going there today to purchase more. As soon as he shows it to me, I'll have his ass."

Handing Koty a cup of coffee, Jason told her, "This guy is a real slime ball Koty, just watch your back on this, and be really careful."

"He has a record a mile long, but I have good back up. It should go pretty smoothly. I'm ready for this thing to end."

Chapter Three

On her way to her meeting with the perp, Koty thought once again about Chris's party tomorrow night. Her twin brother Monty and Chris had met about the time Koty was getting ready to finish college, and got married two years after that. Chris and her hit it off right away. Chris had always accepted her for who she was and could care less for what her lifestyle was.

Chris was a orthopedic specialist at Virginia Beach General, and also worked part time at a walk in clinic. Monty owned a very successful construction company in Chesapeake. Monty and Koty had always been close, but since the death of their parents, became even closer. Without Chris, Monty, Jamie and Trish, Koty didn't know what she would have done these last few months.

Koty pulled her lavender Jag up to the curb of a really beat-up and run down house. '*Jesus, what a piece of shit.*'

Checking her 357 Magnum and the wire they had put on her before she left the station, she put on her bomber jacket and pulled it tight. Taking a deep breath, she locked her car and walked to the door while taking stock of her surroundings, and knocked. The door opened slowly, then she was looking down the barrel of a Glock 34 9mm.

"Shit Brian, put that fucker away before you shoot someone or even yourself." Brian moved away from the door and let her in.

"I wasn't taking any chances, you got the bread?" She showed him the briefcase.

"Yeah I've got the bread. It's all here, you got my jewelry?"

Brian shut the squeaky door, walked to the counter and poured himself a shot of tequila. "Want a shot babe?"

"I aint your babe and hell no, that shit will rot your brain. I'm a whiskey girl myself."

"Suit yourself," he said as he sat down in the chair setting the bottle on the table next to him.

"Man Brian, you sure got some sweet looking things in here for such a dump of a house."

"Yeah, but aint no one gonna wanna rip off a joint like this now are they?"

Taking another shot of tequila, he reached under his chair and pulled out a tattered shoebox and handed it to Koty. She lifted the lid and let out a soft whistle. '*Holly Shit, look at all of this.*' Pulling a jewelers glass out of her pocket, she slowly lifted a beautiful ruby and diamond ring.

She caught the initials L.G.T. engraved on the inside. '*Lillian Grace Thomas.*' A wealthy woman in Chesapeake that had her house broken into just two weeks ago.

"This is a fine piece man." That was her cue for back up to come in. Hearing a slight noise outside his door, Brian jump up and reached for his gun but Koty was already in motion and tackled him, both crashing into the end table that the tequila sat on, bringing a lamp down on the side of Koty's face.

Koty held fast though, until officers Parks and Stevens pulled him away and cuffed him. She turned her head just as her Captain walked in and helped her to her feet. "Hell of a job Silvers." He reached and wiped blood away from her eye.

"We'll take it from here Koty. Make sure you have that pretty sister-in-law of yours look at that

eye."

"Alright Capt. I'll be in, in the morning to fill out my paperwork."
She turned to Brian. "Thanks son, you just made my day."

"Fuck you bitch, I'll catch up to you."

When Koty got in her car, she reached in the glove compartment for a band-aide and put it above her eye on the cut. '*Ow, shit that hurt.*' Pulling away from the curb, she headed to her favorite club, 'Laces' for a drink.

Chapter Four

Koty awoke late Saturday morning with a banger of a headache, and her eye bruised and swollen. Groaning, she popped some Motrin, made a pot of coffee then called Chris.

"Koty, I was getting ready to call you. You are coming to my party tonight right? Jamie and Trish will be here."

"Yea Chris, that's why I'm calling. I have to go to the station for a few hours but I will be there, I promise."

"Oh, that's right. Jason called Monty last night and told him that you finally caught that guy. Congratulations Sweetie, I know you're glad it's finally over."

Koty finished her coffee before answering. "I am glad it's over. It was really starting to drag out. Anyway, I just wanted you to know that I would be there. I'll see you tonight."

Latter that day after finishing her report, Koty went to find Chris a birthday present. After a couple of hours shopping, which felt like it could have been days to Koty, she decided on a pair of gold earrings with Chris's birthstone in them.

After taking her shower, she was trying to decide what she would wear. Chris had told her not to dress up, just to wear jeans or something. Everyone always told her she could wear a burlap sack and she would still be the hottest woman around.

Koty didn't see it that way. She knew that she had nice eyes, but she always felt that she was just average. She finally decided on a snug but comfortable pair of jeans, and a mauve silk shirt. After lacing up her Timberland boots and spritzing on some New West perfume, she was ready to go.

When she arrived at Monty and Chris's, there were already about twenty people there, including Jamie and Trish. Trish was the first one to spot her.

"Oh my God Koty, what in the hell happened to your face?"

Chris, who on her way to the living room with a tray of food overheard Trish's comment. Slowing to take a look at Koty's face, she stopped short. Placing the tray on a nearby table, she gently reached for Koty's chin, turning it to face her.

"Koty, what on earth happened?" Koty gave her one of her crooked smiles.

"It's nothing Chris, just a scratch. It happened yesterday in my scuffle with that asshole. I'm ok."

"Scratch my ass, Koty. Kasey does better with this kind of thing than I do."

Looking over her shoulder, Chris hollered for Monty to get Kasey, a trauma surgeon, and close friend. Kasey had recently moved back to town, and was working at the same hospital and clinic that Chris was at.

'Who the hell is Kasey?' Koty mused. *'Honest Chris, it's alright.'*

Koty persisted as a woman walked up to Chris. Koty momentarily lost her breath. She was looking into the most intense gray eyes on one of the most beautiful women she had ever seen. Hair, the color of the sun with a few red highlights, full pink lips, and the sexiest dimple.

'God, this is a friend of Chris's? Why haven't I ever met this woman before?'

Koty knew that she was gawking like a teenager but couldn't help herself. Just then the corner of her lip started to twitch, something that always happened when she was nervous.

She was finally able to pull her gaze from Kasey's eyes when Chris started telling her what happened. When Kasey reached for Koty's face, Koty thought she was going to pass out.

Koty started to pull away from her touch, but Kasey put one hand on her cheek and the other on her shoulder. In a low husky voice, she said, "it's ok Honey, I wont hurt you."

As Koty's lip started to twitch again, Kasey gently probed around her eye, for what felt like an eternity to Koty. Without releasing Koty's face, she stared into her ice blue eyes, which were a hell of a contrast against her tanned skin and pitch-black hair.

Smiling, Kasey slowly released Koty's face, and eyes. "I can't tell for sure without an ex-ray, but you could have a fractured bone here and it's starting to get infected. You really should have gone to the emergency room and had this taking care of. It could use a couple of stitches."

"I'll go on monday. I hate waiting in those damn things anyway. It takes forever to be seen." Koty whispered.

Chris was watching Koty's reaction to Kasey and just smiled. She had never seen her this nervous around a woman before. Anyone for that matter.

Looking into Koty's eyes once more, Kasey said, "if you're insisting on waiting until then, at least let me clean it for right now, and cover it up. Chris will be at the hospital on Monday but why don't you pop into the clinic and let me get an ex-ray, ok?"

Kasey would not release Koty's gaze until she agreed to let her check it out. "Um...sure, I guess so, but I know where Chris has her first aid kit. I'll go clean and cover it, and I'll be there on Monday." Koty turned and walked to the bathroom cabinet where Chris kept the first aid kit.

Koty's actions did not go unnoticed by Jamie or Trish either. Jamie had been Koty's best friend since grade school and a smile played on her face. *'It's good to know that Koty is alive again, but I won't get my hopes up just yet.'* Jamie would give anything to see her best friend happy again. If this woman was a friend of Chris's, she had to be ok.

Chapter Five

Koty would hear that husky voice every now and then throughout the evening, and would steal a glance in its direction. Every time that she did, she would catch Kasey's eyes just leaving her. *'Hmm.'*

This woman had definitely caught Koty's attention, and for the life of her she couldn't figure out just why. Sure she was beautiful, and those gray eyes spooky, and sultry at the same time, but it wasn't that. *'I know that I have never met her before, but yet she seems so familiar.'*

Later that evening Koty asked Chris how long she had known Kasey. "We became fast friends when we met. We were in our second year as undergraduates, and we became study buddies for exams, and would go out to each other's clubs whenever we had a break. It was at one of my favorite clubs back then, when I met Monty. We had stayed close friends through out the years and Kasey we were both glad that she got back up with me when she moved back.

"Just curious." Koty felt her face heat up from a powerful blush, so she turned away to go make another drink. Jamie and Trish walked up to her as Chris went to answer the door.

"What's that shit eating grin on your face Jamie Jennings?"

"Oh...nothing, what's up with you and Dr. Feelgood?"

"Nothing is up with Dr. Feelgood and her name is Kasey, so get that smirk off of your face. Besides, she's straight, knuckle head."

"Ok, ok... just asking. Don't go getting your panties pinched. She is pretty hot though if you ask me." Jamie said as she pinched Koty on the cheek.

"Yeah well nobody asked you." Koty told her as she pinched Jamie back. Trish just laughed and patted her on the back. "She is pretty cute Koty, and she has been watching you tonight."

'Yeah right.' Koty thought as her face heated up yet again.

Later in the evening, Koty watched as Chris walked up to her with a perplexed look on her face. *'I bet I don't want to know what this is about.'* "What's up Chris?"

"Some guy in a monster truck has Kasey blocked in and he's nowhere to be found. Someone said that he left with some guy that was here earlier." Chris hesitated for a moment, "Um...Koty, Kasey is ready to go, and I normally wouldn't ask but can you give her a ride home? She only lives about ten minutes from you."

Koty really wanted to say no, but didn't want to let Chris down. "Sure Chris but I'm gonna go ahead and say my goodnight's now then. I'm starting to get another headache." She gave Chris a hug. "Happy Birthday sis, I love you."

"I'm sorry that you had to cut your evening short with your family, just to bring me home Koty."

"It's ok, I was ready to leave anyways. Honest."

Pulling into Kasey's driveway and putting her Jag in park, Koty turned in the seat. "You need a ride tomorrow morning to pick up your car?"

"That's awfully sweet of you but no, Chris told me that she and Monty would drive it over here in the morning for me. Thank you though for asking. Remember, come see me at the clinic on Monday so I can check out that cut of yours. You really should have gone to the emergency room though."

Before Kasey reached for the door, she leaned over and gave Koty a quick kiss on the cheek. "Thanks again, I'll see you Monday." Then Kasey was out of the car and walking to her door, leaving Koty slack jawed and staring.

'She would not get that close to these lips if she knew that I was a lesbian.'

When Koty got home, she made herself a whiskey and seven, then sat in her recliner to listen to her answering machine. She had just taken a huge swallow of her drink and almost choked when she heard Tina's voice asking if they could get together sometime this week for some drinks and to talk. Koty reached over and slapped the answering machine right off of the table, not caring where it landed, or if it broke.

Later, she had stopped counting how many drinks she had had, and woke up at four in the morning still sitting in her chair. Getting up to go to bed, she mumbled something about whiskey and ex'es.

Chapter Six

By the time that Koty made it in to see Kasey on Monday morning she had a huge black eye, and the cut was really swollen. Kasey made a small gasp when she saw it, and turned to her assistant.

"Renee, please get an ex-ray of Miss. Silvers eye for me, and let me know as soon as you have it.

Twenty minutes later, Kasey told Koty that she did indeed have a chipped bone, and there were some fragments that needed to be removed. "I'm going to have to make about a half inch incision where your cut is to remove those pieces. You will get about four stitches and I'll be done. Don't worry though, I only mess up once in awhile."

Seeing the look on Koty's face, she laughed. "Joke Koty, that was a joke. I'm sorry. Look, you won't even be able to see the scar unless you really look close, I promise."

Watching the needle come closer to her, Koty cringed a little and asked, "are you really gonna give me a shot right there in the cut?"

"It's going to hurt like hell if I don't. Don't tell me a tough detective like you is afraid of a little needle?"

Koty smiled, and closed her eyes, cringing again at the thought of it. "Here, put these headphones on, lay back and relax. Don't take them off until I say so. I will be done in no time."

Koty's lip started to twitch when she felt Kasey's soft hands on her face. Finally she felt Kasey remove the headphones, and lift her chin to inspect her work.

Koty gave a crooked smile and said, "I guess I will have to walk around looking like Mike Tyson for a while huh?"

Still holding her chin, the doctor very slowly looked over Koty's face. In that low husky voice, she said, "Mike Tyson you are not Honey. It is going to hurt for a while, so I'm giving you a prescription for some painkillers, and an antibiotic for the infection. You need to let me know if the swelling doesn't go down."

Turning to leave, Koty stopped and smiled. "Would you like to have dinner with me sometime this week Doc?" *'Oh my God, I did not just ask her out did I? Please, please let that have been just inside my mind!'*

The doctor hesitated a moment. "I would love to Koty, how about Wednesday night?"

"Um...great, how about I pick you up around seven? Dress casual, it's not real fancy, but they have really good food."

"That will be fine Koty, I'll see you Wednesday night then."

Walking out of the building, Koty still couldn't believe that she had just asked a straight woman

out to dinner. *'I guess she is straight anyway.'* Koty mused. *'Oh well, what's a little innocent dinner anyway? We are going to eat, not to have sex for Christ sakes! God, she is one of the sexiest women I think I have met.'*

Since Koty had taken the whole day off, and knowing that Monty was usually in the office on Mondays, she decided to ride to Chesapeake and see if he wanted to go have some lunch.

The siblings hadn't had lunch together in almost a year, and she really missed that. Before Tina and she had gotten together they used to meet at least once a month for lunch. That started to slowly diminish until it was only around every five or six months. Actually, they used to do a lot of things together. When Chris and Monty got together it was the three of them.

She knew then and there that she would have to start seeing them more often, and make up for the lost time. She would start spending more time with Jamie and Trish as well.

Monty and she were born and raised in Norfolk, Virginia, in the Edgewater area down by Old Dominion University. Back in thought days, kids could play outside even when it was dark outside, and they never had to worry about the sicko's that there seemed to be today. Today, you don't want your kids to play outside even in the daylight, for fear of something happening to them.

They had lived on 48th Street at the time, and 49th on up, was all white families, and 47th on down, was where the black families lived. In thought days though they all played together. To those kids, there wasn't any separation by color, or gender, or anything else for that matter. Whose ever yard you were in at the time darkness came, that was where the kids usually had dinner, and sometimes ended up spending the night there.

Koty shook herself out of her memories and pulled into the parking lot at Monty's office, just as he was just getting out of his truck. Spotting Koty's infamous lavender jag, he walked up and leaned into the window.

"What' up sis, and what brings you to my side of town? Anything wrong?"

"No, nothing is wrong. Can't a girl come see if her brother has time for her, and maybe see if he wants to go have some lunch?" She got out of her car and gave him a hug.

"As a matter of fact, I do have time for something to eat. I just need to do something in the office real quick, come on in."

"Cindi, could you please get Paul Richardson on the phone for me, then put him through to my office?" He asked of his secretary as he passed by her desk.

"Sure thing Boss Man. Hi Koty."

"Hi."

Puzzled, Koty asked why he was trying to reach the man who had been their family lawyer for

over twenty-five years.

"I'm not real sure yet, but I might be having a problem with my foreman. I got a call from the hardware company that we normally do most of our bussiness with. They wanted to know if we were going to need to place a order for the supplies that had came in a week before. When I told them that Coleman should have already picked it up, they informed me that they haven't heard from him, or seen him in over a month.

"He's getting the material from some place because the jobs are being done. When I confronted him on it, he told me that he wasn't sure if the supplies would come in soon enough for the deadline, so he went somewhere else.

"While that seemed logical enough, something about the way he seemed to fidget during that conversation, and believe me, that man doesn't fidget, well it made me curious so I've been checking a little bit more into it. He's pocketing money somewhere, I just know it. I just haven't found out how, or where yet."

Koty left his office when the call came through to let him talk, and to pass the time talking to with his secretary. Cindi had tried to date her for a long time. They went out several times, but nothing became of it, at least not for Koty. Now they were just good friends, and saw each other at Laces every once in awhile for drinks. Koty really enjoyed Cindi's company, but couldn't make her feelings become any stronger.

The younger woman would rather have Koty for a friend than nothing at all, so she no longer pursued a relationship with her. If the detective ever changed her mind though, she would be right there.

'That bitch of an ex girlfriend is crazy as shit for fucking around on a woman like Koty. If she were mine, I would treat her like the Goddess she is,' the secretary silently fumed.

Monty came out of his office and told Koty that he was ready for her to buy him a really expensive lunch, that there was a new restaurant that just opened by Greenbriar Mall he'd been wanting to try.

Koty and Monty both inherited a great deal of money when their parents passed away, leaving them the sole owners of a huge import, export bussiness. Niether Monty nor Koty knew very much about the bussiness, so they both agreed to sell it. When they both turned twenty-five, they inherited trust funds from thier deceased grandparents.

Koty generously donated to just about any fundraisers that had to do with Aids, and people really loved it when she walked in the door to one. She was very well known in the gay community, though only for her generous contributions.

Chapter Seven

As Kasey drove home from work that evening, she thought about Koty and their dinner date on

Wednesday night. *'There is something about that woman,'* she thought as she pulled into her driveway. A strong attraction that she couldn't deny.

Kasey knew that she would have to keep herself grounded where Koty was concerned though. Chris, worried about Koty, had filled her in on what Tina had done to her. She told her how devastated Koty was at the break-up

'That woman is a fool. Koty is not only gorgeous, she is downright sexy. She is on the rebound though, and I know all about women on the rebound.' This line of thinking brought to her mind, the memory of Samantha, that she had buried long ago. A memory that still brought uneasy feelings with it.

Two years ago, Kasey had met Samantha, a beautiful therapist that was on the rebound from her lover Annie. She had let herself fall head over heels in love with Samantha, then eight short months later, Sam told her she was going back to Annie.

Kasey still vividly remember Sam's explanation. *"I need to do this Kasey. I need to show that I didn't give up on a five-year relationship. I love you. I'll always love you, but I have to give her another chance."*

That was the last time she had seen Sam, and was saddened by it because they were actually very close friends before they became lovers. Kasey moved back to Virginia Beach from Richmond, just at the beginning of the year.

Kasey had totally shocked herself when she accepted Koty's offer for dinner. She knew she needed to keep a safe distance but couldn't help herself. She had said yes before she even realized it.

'What was the harm in having dinner with a friend?' Kasey mused. *'Koty seemed like a really nice woman. Besides, Chris believes the sun rises, and sets on Koty Silvers.'*

Chapter Eight

Wednesday evening Koty pulled out of her driveway, dressed in a pair of denim dress pants, Justin cowboy boots, and a baby blue silk shirt. Her long black hair was falling loosely down her back.

She wasn't quite sure why, but she wanted to look nice for Kasey and their date. *'It's not a date you ding-a-ling! It's just dinner, nothing more and nothing less. Besides, I like to look nice every now and then. Tonight is no different.'*

She knocked on Kasey's door, and when it opened, for the second time in less than a week, she found herself speechless. Kasey was wearing a black dress that hugged every curve imaginable and showed a generous amount of thigh. *'Oh sweet Jesus!'*

Mistaking the look on Koty's face, Kasey backed up a little. "My, I'm a little overdressed aren't I?"

Composing herself and catching her breath, Koty whispered. "You are perfect. Um...you look great, please don't change. Are you ready to go?"

"Yes, let me grab my jacket." Kasey turned quickly, so Koty would not see the blush on her face from her comment. "Shall we?"

As they drove, Koty told her that she was taking her to one of her favorite places to eat. "It's small and quiet, but you'll love the food. I used to go there quite a bit, but it's been awhile. By the way, I wanted to thank you for taking care of the eye thingy for me."

"You're welcome."

Dinner was going quite nicely. Both women were relaxed, and conversation came easy. They were suprised at some of the things they had in common. They discovered that they both loved the same country artist's, snow skiing, and a secret passion for Walt Disney movies.

"Are you up to another bottle of wine, or are you ready to leave?"

"Actually Koty, I would like some more wine if you are up to it."

They were waiting for the waiter, to come back to the table to take their wine order when a beautiful red headed woman walked up to Koty, and put her hand on her shoulder.

"Koty, why haven't you returned my phone calls? I really need to talk to you. Please call me later, no matter what time it is." With that, she shot a none too friendly look at Kasey, and walked away leaving them both speechless.

Koty was doing a good job hiding it, but Kasey could tell that she was suddenly uncomfortable. Reaching across the table, she put her hand on Koty's. "Look Koty, why don't we just call it a night, ok?"

Koty just stared at their hands for a moment, then looked into those incredible gray eyes before answering. "Yeah, lets get out of here. You don't mind do you?"

"Absolutely not. It's been a long day for the both of us I'm sure. Lets go."

The ride back to Kasey's was pretty quiet. Kasey was wondering who the beautiful redhead was, and Koty was wondering what the hell Tina was doing there, when she didn't even like the place. Koty almost had to beg Tina to go there with her before.

Koty walked Kasey to her door, and when they both at the same time, went to kiss each other on

the cheek, they missed and got each other on the lips instead. Both of them, wide-eyed, backed away from each other, and gave a small gasp.

Koty made a quick apology, said goodnight, and hurried to her car then left.

Kasey was still standing there for several minutes with her jaw dropped, when Koty was well out of sight. "This isn't going to be easy being just friends with her. That woman is so charming, she is dangerous."

"Great Silvers, just Great! What in the hell was that all about?"

She remembered the look on Kasey's face. Man was she shocked. *'Shocked yes, repulsed no.'* Koty was sure that Kasey felt it too. *'Felt what? Just what do you think you're feeling. I need to get a handle on my emotions.'*

Chapter Nine

Thursday night after work, Koty stopped by Monty and Chris's house, to let Monty know that she had some phone calls in about his foreman. Chris answered the door, and pulled Koty in by her arm.

"Koty, come on in here. I made lasagna for dinner, why don't you stay.

"You know I can't turn down your cooking Chris, of course I'll stay. But, is there going to be enough food left for Monty? I'd hate for him to go hungry, because you know how much I love lasagna."

"I guess we can let him have a little bit. You know how bitchy he gets when he's hungry."

While they were sitting at the table, Chris asked Koty how her dinner with Kasey went the night before, and made Koty almost choke on her tea.

"Um...how did you know about us having dinner?"

Chris just smiled and filled their glasses. "Well, Kasey told me of course. Why, is it supposed to be a big secret?"

"No. Well no, I was just curious how you knew about it, that's all." She glanced over at Monty, who was just smiling to himself.

"Besides, it would have been a little better if Tina hadn't shown up, asking me why I haven't returned her phone calls. Like I have nothing better to do than worry about her. Other than that, it went ok. It felt good." *'Too good actually, and that scares the shit out of me.'*

"Kasey and I are going to open a clinic together." Chris told her as they went to sit in the living room. "She is very sweet isn't she Koty?"

'What are you up to Chris?' Koty wondered before responding. "Yeah...I guess she is, but then again, all of your friends are very nice. I know you've been talking about opening a clinic for quite awhile now, I'm happy for you sis."

Koty thanked Chris for the 'best lasagna in town' and got up to leave. She hugged them both goodnight, and was on her way home when she decided to stop at Laces and have a few drinks. It was still early enough.

Laces was one of the few clubs around, that served as a wonderful restaurant in the afternoon and early part of the evening, turning into a hot spot dance club, with a D.J starting at 9:00.

As Koty turned from the bar with a whiskey & seven in hand, she heard her name being called. Jamie and Trish were at the corner table.

She bent to give them both a kiss. "Hey guys, what are y'all doing out on a work night?"

Jamie worked at the Fire Department with Tina, and Trish owned a little book store that was doing really well. Most of the books were lesbian romances, but there were a lot of other gay related and straight ones. They also had collectable gifts as well.

Koty even helped out with the store a few times when Trish and Jamie wanted to take off for the weekend. She enjoyed lesbian romance novels, and had quite a collection herself. Trish had recently hired a couple of collage students to help out part time, but normally worked until closing.

"It's my off days, and Trish doesn't have to be there until eleven. Sit your sweet ass down, and tell us how your date with Dr. Feelgood went."

"Jesus, how in the hell does everyone know about us having dinner together? And it wasn't a date!"

"Easy Tonto, I'm just yoking your chains a bit. Besides, I told you, she is a hotty. If I wasn't with this old ball and chain, (Jamie playfully poked Trish in the ribs) I would probably make a play for her myself."

"Yeah right, you would be a jiggling mass of sappy goo, if it wasn't for that ball and chain right there ya goof ball."

Anyone who knew Jamie and Trish, knew that they were a match from the Goddess herself. Koty knew that Trish was the perfect catch for Jamie. She was loving, funny, sensitive, and 100% monogamous. Something none of Jamie's past girlfriends ever were. They were totally made for each other, and Koty would dare anyone to say different.

Koty had never known her best friend to be as happy as she was with Trish. Trish put up with even more shit from her than Koty did. True love suited them both.

"Hello...Koty, anyone home?" Jamie laughed as she finished off her drink.

Koty shook herself from her thoughts and reached for her drink. "Dinner of course was great. I took her to Bluegills. We were getting ready to order more wine when Tina waltzed up, put her hand on my shoulder, told me I needed to return her calls, gave Kasey a shitty look, then sauntered off."

"Tina? What the hell was she doing there?" Jamie asked with a frown.

"I don't know, she sure never wanted to go there when we were together. I about shit when she walked up."

"Koty, when was the last time you talked to her?" Trish asked as she handed her another drink.

"She left a message on my answering machine asking me to call her so we could get together and talk, but I haven't seen her since I asked her to leave. I really don't have anything to say to her right now."

Laughing, Jamie put her drink on the table. "To hell with Tina, I say make a play for the Doc."

"I told you Jamie, she's straight. Besides, I'm not in the market for anyone right now." *'Even if she is hot.'* Koty silently added.

"I don't know about her being straight Koty, surely a smart Dick Tracy like yourself can figure that out."

Koty finished off her drink and stood to give them hugs goodbye. Trish asked her if she was still going with them to see the Martina McBride concert with them on Saturday night.

"Are you kidding? I wouldn't miss it for the world, that's one woman I should marry."

"Yeah right, you and every lesbian on the east coast. Go home and get your beauty sleep Baby." Jamie told her, patting her on her butt.

Chapter Ten

The next morning, found Koty at her desk talking to Jason about a case he just finished with when her phone rang.

"Detective Silvers, can I help you?"

"Hey sis, I have a favor to ask of you. Remember that foreman I was telling you about? I need to see if you can get any background on him. I need to find out what the hell he is up to."

Koty got some more information from him that she thought she might need, and told him she

would get back to him as soon as she found anything out. She took it to a friend of hers at the station, and told her she would check back later.

Saturday evening, Koty was in a rare good mood as she got dressed for the concert. She went through five different outfits before deciding on a tight fitting pair of butter soft black leather pants that fit her like a glove. She then picked out a tight pink tank top, and a black leather jacket that matched her pants.

She knew the effect that this outfit would have on some women, but that wasn't why she was wearing it. It just made her feel good. After pulling on her boots and some New West perfume, she was on her way to Jamie and Trish's house.

It had been awhile since she had gone to a concert. The last one she remembered was Melissa Etheridge. Trish had won free tickets and a limo ride from being the tenth caller on the radio. She had gone with Tina, Jamie, Trish, and one other couple. It was a good thing that they had the limo, because none of them were fit to drive afterwards.

Trish opened the door to Koty's knock and stepped back with a grin. "Wow Koty, that outfit is really hot. How are people going to be able to watch the concert when they won't be able to keep their eyes off of you?"

Jamie came around the corner at that time. "Shit girl, I haven't seen you wear that thing in a long time. Look out Virginia Beach! Well, if you ladies are ready, lets rock this town."

As they drove to the concert, Koty thought about the first time that she had worn her current outfit. It was over three years ago when she had met Tina. She had gone to a party at Jamie's where she introduced Tina as being the newbie at the fire department. She had just transferred from North Carolina.

Tina had asked her to dance, and could not keep her hands off of Koty. Her excuse had been that women in leather 'just did something to her.' Tina would only let Koty wear leather if it was just the two of them going someplace where they would be alone.

"Baby, I know how I reacted to you in leather. Nobody else needs to be looking at you the way I do when you wear it. I can't bear it when other women just look at you." Tina had confessed at one time.

Koty briefly wondered if the woman she had caught Tina with wore leather. She shook off her memories, and concentrated on the concert. *'I really don't need to have these memories.'*

Faint lights on the stage, and one brilliant light silhouetted the image of a solitary figure behind a curtain. All at once, bright lights and a pulsing beat that could be felt as well as heard, began, and bodies were up clapping and yelling. The Goddess of country music, started the show.

During the intermission, Koty volunteered to go get beer for everyone. As she approached the line, someone dropped a drink. The woman in front of her quickly backed up to keep the splash

from hitting her. As she went to back up, she tripped over Koty's foot and started to fall.

"Whoa, careful!" Koty advised as she caught the woman before she hit the ground. Looking down at her, Koty caught her breath. There in her arms was Kasey. Unable to speak right away, she just held her there.

In that low husky voice that turned the detectives insides to mush, Kasey laughed, "Koty hon, are you going to just hold me all night or will you help me up?"

"Jesus Kasey, I'm sorry. Are you alright?"

"Koty, I tripped over your feet, don't apologize ok?"

Kasey could not help but to look Koty up and down once she was helped to her feet. She felt herself blush hotly, and quickly looked away. She was positive that Koty could see the lust in her eyes, and the heat radiating from her body. She could imagine Koty in a lot of things, but never black leather. Seeing her dressed that way sent her body into meltdown, and her libido into overdrive.

When the doctor felt safe enough to speak, she introduced Koty to her friend Lee, who watched them the whole time with an amused look.

Lee reached for the detectives hand. "That, is a very stunning outfit you're wearing. Isn't it Kasey?"

"Um...yeah, it's really nice. I see that your eye is looking a lot better Koty," Kasey said to change the current topic, "does it still hurt?"

"Actually, it's much better. Now that the black and blue has mostly faded I don't feel so awkward going out in public."

"Thursday or Friday, either come by the clinic, or have Chris remove those stitches. I imagine they are starting to itch."

"Yeah, Chris told me she would remove them for me. I'll see you later Kasey. It's nice to meet you Lee, you two enjoy the show," the detective said as the two turned to leave.

Looking back over her shoulder as they walked away, Lee asked, "wow, who is that beautiful specimen of woman flesh? She is sexy as hell."

"She's just a friend Lee. Actually, she is Chris Silver's sister-in-law. You met Chris at the hospital a few times when you met me for lunch."

"Yeah, I remember Chris. So, she's just a friend huh? Ever date her?"

"No. We have never dated. We had dinner once, but it wasn't a date. The only reason she even

asked, is to thank me for taking care of her eye." *'Isn't it?'*

Lee glanced over her shoulder once again. "Well, I gotta tell you Kase, sparks were flying so fast I thought you were going to ignite, but if you don't want to date her..."

"Forget it Lee. She is going through a lot of stuff right now, and doesn't need any complications."

"Uh huh. Well, you could help her out I bet. Did you notice the way she was looking at you?"

"You, are imagining things. Koty isn't interested in me, or anyone else for that matter as far as I know."

"Oh yeah? Then why she is still watching you?"

As Koty made her way back with the beer, she was wondering who the cute blond was, and just what she was to Kasey. *'Jesus Silvers, it's none of your damn business.'*

Handing her friends thier beer, Koty told them what happened.

"I don't know Koty," her best friend teased, "looks like destiny to me."

"Shut up Jamie. God Trish, how can you stand her when she's like this?"

"I ignore her of course. You are coming to the club with us afterwards aren't you?"

"But of course. Besides, I need a real drink, beer just doesn't cut it for me."

Chapter Eleven

They had to drive around the parking lot several times before they found a spot to park. Trish slipped her arms through both Koty, and Jamie's. "Boy, it's packed tonight. Everyone must be here from the concert."

Luck be with them, as they walk towards the dance floor, a group was just getting up to leave. Jamie grabed the table right away. They had been there for about thirty minutes or so when Trish asked Koty to dance with her.

"Sure, I think I have enough alcohol in me to make me believe I can dance shake a leg or two. Lets go sweetheart."

Two fast songs had played, and a slow one was just starting. Koty was just getting ready to bow for Trish when she heard a husky voice behind her.

"Mind if I cut in?"

Trish grinned, said sure, and turned Koty into Kasey's arms. Koty caught her breath. She couldn't speak.

"Fancy meeting you here Koty, are you following me?"

"I...uh...I..." *'Geeze, why do I constantly find myself unable to perform complete sentences when she is around?'*

"I'm joking with you Koty, take it easy." Koty swallowed then found her voice.

"What are you doing here Kasey?"

"Lee brought me here a couple of weeks ago for dinner. It was in the middle of the week, and wasn't quite as busy as it is now, but I really liked it, so here we are. We stopped by tonight to have a couple of drinks."

Koty looked over and saw Lee leaning against the bar talking to some women there. *'Christ! maybe Kasey is a lesbian just like Jamie thought!'*

Kasey stepped in a little closer, and put her arms around her neck. Koty trembled slightly when she noticed Kasey's breathing change. They never lost a beat as another song started to play. Without Koty's permission; the detectives hands had a mind of their own, slid down to Kasey's hips, and pulled her even closer.

When Kasey placed her thigh between hers, Koty felt that she was going to spontaneously combust. *'Oh God, this can't be really happening. I can't let this happen. She feels so good.'*

After a few turns around the dance floor, Kasey felt Koty tense up. Following her gaze, she saw the red-head from the restaurant slither up to Koty, and ask if she could cut in. Koty was getting ready to refuse when Kasey backed away and walked off, but not before Koty saw the dark look on her face.

"Who's your new girlfriend Koty?"

"Jesus Tina, what's it to you anyway? Where is your girlfriend? Surely she wouldn't like you hanging on women, and sniffing around would she. Haven't you caused enough damage for one lifetime?"

"Whoa Baby, take it easy. I just wanted to talk to you, and see how you are doing. Come here." She pulled Koty closer to her. "I've really missed you Koty."

"Oh you have, have you? Somehow I find that just a little hard to believe Tina. Like I said, where's your girlfriend?"

"She's not here Koty, and she's not my girlfriend. Can't we just dance or do you really hate me that much?"

Koty saw the tears starting to form in Tina's eyes, and in a much calmer voice she said. "I don't hate you Tina, I just can't..."

"Good, then hold me like you used to."

"Tina, I..."

"Hush Baby, just dance with me." Tina told her as she placed her face in the softness of Koty's neck.

Koty stole a glance over at the table where Jamie was getting ready to come out of her seat and say something to Tina. Trish had her hands on Jamie's shoulders trying to calm her down.

"Let her be Honey. Koty is a big girl and can handle Tina."

The song was finally over and Koty pulled away.

"Please call me Koty." Tina told her as she kissed her hard on the lips and left her standing on the dance floor. Koty shook her head then walked back to the table.

"Damn it Koty, how can you dance with that..." Jamie saw the dour look on Koty's face and never finished her sentence. "Sorry. Here, I got you a drink."

Tina walked over to the table where her friends were sitting, and thought about Koty. It really bothered her a lot to see her dancing with that woman. She missed Koty, and to this day, still couldn't figure out why she had messed around on her.

Koty was the catch of a lifetime, and she knew that she had messed up big time. Koty hated women that screwed around on their partners, and Tina had become one of those women. She hoped that one day soon, they could at least be friends again.

Koty had been the one stable thing in Tina's life that she could ever depend on, the one friend that would never have turned her back on her, and she threw it all away. *'I still love you Koty. I always will. I can't change what happened, and don't even know that it wouldn't happen again, but I love you.'*

Tina finished downing her drink and put her jacket on. She stood there for a little while longer just watching Koty. When she saw Trish lean over and give her a hug, she told her friends that she was leaving, and she would catch them later.

As she drove home, she thought about the night she met Koty at Jamie's house. She never would have dreamed that a woman like Koty could be even remotely interested in her. She could have anyone that she wanted. Tina knew, because she had asked around. When she found out that Koty was interested, it made her feel so special. As a matter of fact, Koty had always made her feel special. Maybe that was why it was so hard for her to understand why she

did what she did.

All of her friends kept telling her that she was really messing up by screwing around on Koty. She guessed she thought that maybe Koty would never find out, and once the affair had burned itself out, she and Koty would always be together. She should have known from the start that it wouldn't work out that way. In a way, she was glad that Koty found out. She desperately hated running around behind her back. Wiping a stray tear from her cheek, she walked into her house and went straight to bed.

Koty looked around the bar trying to find Kasey, but her and Lee had already left. *'Fuck. Obviously, Kasey is gay. Just as obvious Lee must be her girlfriend.'*

She didn't know what would have happened on the dance floor if Tina hadn't showed up. She felt herself getting far too carried away out there dancing. She was enjoying it too much. She felt herself getting a little too crazy and was on the edge by the time she got home that night.

'Man, I really need a break.' She climbed under the covers and turned out the light. *'I don't think I want to know what tomorrow is going to bring me.'*

Chapter Twelve

On Monday morning Koty called Monty. "I have a little info for you on your foreman. You better get an inspector over to any of the buildings that he's done. Seems that this guy Coleman did the same thing in Washington State. A huge office building that he did apparently collapsed, killing two people. By the time they figured out that the materials he used were at fault, and they weren't the materials he was suppose to use, Coleman had left town. Taking with him about two million dollars he got from pocketing the money that wasn't used for supplies.

"Word is, that he could be pretty violent when provoked. He also had an inspector working out of his pocket. I guess that's how everything was passed."

"God damn it! I knew something was up. I know just the guys I need to talk to. Thanks Sis I owe you one. If you find anything else out call me on my cell phone, not my work."

"Alright Monty, but be careful ok."

"I will be. Look if you don't have any plans tonight why don't you swing by for dinner. I know Chris would love to see you."

Koty hung up the phone, leaned back in her chair, and thought about Kasey. She didn't know if she could be just a friend with her or not. The only way to avoid any sexual feelings toward Kasey was to stop seeing her completely. Koty no longer felt that, that was even an option.

Then there was Lee. Were her and Kasey together? Kasey had said that they were friends. Just how close of friends, is what Koty wanted to know. She really didn't believe that Kasey would have danced with her that way if she and Lee were together.

Koty picked up the phone, and dialed the number to the clinic. "Yes, may I speak to Dr. Brooks please? Yes I'll hold."

"Dr. Brooks can I help you?"

Just hearing her voice sent heat up her spine. "Um...Kasey...it's Koty, I hope I didn't call you at a bad time."

It took a moment before Kasey spoke. "No Koty, it's alright. How are you, is everything ok?"

"Oh, yeah. Everything is ok, look, I wanted to see if maybe you would want to have dinner, and maybe see a movie with me on Friday night?"

More silence.

"Koty, I ..."

"Please don't say no Kasey. Twice now, we were enjoying each other's company and got rudely interrupted. I don't know, I would just like to see you again."

"And have your little friend show up again?"

Koty was quick to answer. "Kasey, I don't think..."

"Look Koty, why don't you come over to my place on Friday night, and I'll cook dinner there. Be there around seven o'clock alright?" *'What am I doing?'*

"Well sure, ok. What should I bring?" Koty felt her breath leave her as relief set in.

"You don't bring anything but yourself Koty, I'll see you then."

When Koty replaced the receiver on the phone she sat back with a huge smile on her face. Closing her blue eyes, she tilted her head back.

"That must be some really good thoughts there Silvers to send you off to space like that."

Koty jumped as she heard the voice beside her. "Jesus Jason, don't sneak up on me like that!"

"Sneak up? Hell Koty, I called your name twice. So what gives, what put that kind of smile on my favorite girl?"

"Shut up Jason, don't you have work to do?"

"Oh my, it must be pretty good, but I will let it drop for now. Come have lunch with an old friend."

Thursday evening when Koty pulled into her driveway, she saw Tina's truck parked at the curb, and Tina lounging on her front porch swing. She dropped her head to her steering wheel and shook it. *'I must have been a very bad girl in my last life.'*

Slowly dragging herself out of the jag, she walked up to Tina. "What are you doing here?"

"You've been avoiding me Koty, and you refuse to return my phone calls, so I decided that I would wait for you here. Wait, please don't be mad Koty. I'm not here to fight, or cause you any problems. I really just need to know you are all right, and to talk to you. I miss you Baby, can't you believe that?"

Koty closed her eyes and sighed. "What else could you possibly have to say to me Tina?"

"Please Koty."

"God, this is so against my better judgement, and I'm sure I should have my head examined, but you may as well come in. I was going to order pizza, have you eaten yet?"

Grinning, Tina stood up from the swing. "No, I haven't eaten. Thanks Koty just let me grab something from my truck and I'll be right in."

Koty walked into the house shaking her head and thinking that this probably wasn't a really good idea. *'Nothing good could possibly come out of this, I should have said no.'*

When Tina came into the house, she was carrying a bottle of Grand Marnier in one hand and a yellow rose in the other. Koty just stared at her with her hands on her hips, and blew a stray strand of hair out of her eyes.

"What's this all about Tina, what's going on?"

"Nothing really. I just wanted to say that I was sorry for hurting you like I did."

"I hope you don't expect me to forgive you just like that Tina, because I can't. It's way too soon for that."

"I don't expect it Honey. I couldn't blame you if you never forgave me. I know what I did was totally wrong. Like I said, I needed to know that you were doing ok, that's all."

Walking into the living room and sitting in her recliner, Koty picked up the phone to order a pizza. Tina said she was going to make them both a drink and put the rose in some water.

Koty rubbed her fore-head to help ease the dull ache behind her eyes. *'It won't hurt any to have her here. We were very close while we were together. It will be ok.'* Koty knew that there was a

small part of her that missed Tina. *It is hard to erase three years.'*

After a few drinks, Koty started to relax a little and asked Tina if she wanted to watch the movie *Jumping Jack Flash*. They used to sit for hours and watch Whoopi Goldberg movies all of the time.

When the pizza arrived Koty put the movie on and they both sat on the couch to watch it. Koty had to admit to herself that it felt kind of good to have Tina there, even if it was just for pizza and a movie.

After two movies, they both must have fallen asleep. At one point in time Koty had lay her head on Tina's lap. She awoke to Tina gently shaking her shoulder.

"Wake up Honey, it's late. I'm gonna go so you can get some sleep."

Reaching out her hands, she grasped Koty's, and pulled her to her feet. Tina then leaned forward and gently brushed her lips with her own. As she was about to pull away, she heard Koty's soft moan and leaned in again, and this time started kissing her passionately.

Koty knew that she should pull away and put distance between herself and Tina, but she couldn't bring herself to do so. It felt so familiar and comfortable. She let herself be led to her bedroom.

When Koty awoke the next morning with Tina's leg and arm draped over her she cringed and started to slide out of bed causing Tina to stir and reach for her.

"Oh my God, I can't believe this." *'What in the hell have I done?'*

"Koty..."

"No Tina. Jesus, I can't believe we let this happen."

"Look Koty, it just happened. You know how you get when you drink Grand Marnier."

"No Tina. Koty yelled. You know how I get when I drink it! Was this a fucking setup?"

"Christ Koty, don't be so naive, you wanted it as much as I did!"

Koty turned her back on Tina and ran her hands through her hair. In a much to quiet voice she said, "please just leave Tina."

"Look Honey, why don't we just take a shower and..."

"No Tina!" When Koty turned to face her she was crying. Tina jumped out of bed and went to her.

"Oh God. Please don't cry. I'll go; I'll do anything you want Baby, just please don't cry."

Tina finished dressing, and was getting ready to say something else to Koty, but changed her mind and left. Koty had seen the tears in Tina's eyes but refused to acknowledge them.

Chapter Thirteen

Koty went to the kitchen to put coffee on, and then to take a shower. *'I need to wash Tina right off of my body. God was that ever stupid!'*

Later that afternoon, Koty called Jamie to see if she could meet her at Fuddruckers on the Boulevard for lunch.

After getting their lunch and sitting down with drinks, Koty told Jamie what had taken place the night before.

"Oh Koty, how could you set yourself up like that?"

"I know, I know. It was a really stupid thing to do. I've been telling myself that all morning. When she walked in with the rose and the bottle, I should have known right away that it was a mistake. In fact, I knew it was."

"Do you want to get back with her?"

"Hell no! Look, I got drunk, and was horny. Tina is really great in bed, but that's it. It's in her blood to screw around. Hell, she was still with Kym when we started seeing each other."

The detective pushed her plate away, all of a sudden losing her appetite.

"Tina will never change, but I can't put all of the blame on her. It's not like I couldn't say no, and she damn sure didn't force me, or twist my arm. I don't know what came over me, but you can damn sure bet it won't ever happen again."

Smiling, Koty reach over and stole a prawn that was hanging off the edge of Jamie's plate. "I ask again, how come you and I didn't fall in love years ago? It would have been so easy."

"Shit Koty, we would have already killed each other by now. Well... I guess then you wouldn't be in this predicament if I had killed you huh? You grab one more of my shrimp and I just might do it anyway."

The two friends tossed tips on the table, grabbed thier jacjets and went outside where a strong gust of wind came howling around the corner.

Later that evening after work, Koty went home to shower and change before she went to Kasey's for dinner. Kasey answered the door wearing very snug faded Levi's worn through at the knees.

A soft sweater that hugged every one of her curves, and she was barefoot.

Koty wondered if she had ever seen anything more beautiful, than the woman in front of her. "I brought some wine, I hope you like Averno." Kasey smiled and reached for the bottle with one hand, then Koty's hand with her other, pulling her inside.

"As a matter of fact, I do like it. Thank you Koty, make your self comfortable. Dinner should be ready in a few minutes."

Kasey liked the way that Koty seemed comfortable enough, to just toss her jacket on the back of the chair, like she had been coming over forever. She also liked the way that Koty's jeans clung to her hips as she walked over to that chair. *'Those legs go on forever.'*

"It smells really good in here Kasey, what are you cooking?"

"Rack of lamb, potato's and some fresh veggies. This wine will go great with it. I wasn't sure what to fix, I hope you like Lamb."

"Well yes, I do like it. You really fixed all of that?"

"Yes Koty, I fixed all of that. Here, have some wine. I'm really pretty handy in the kitchen."

"Not me, I get joked a lot about not being able to cook. I guess I never really had much interest in it. Hell, Monty can cook his ass off, I'm not sure what happened to me."

"That's alright Koty, I'm sure you have a lot of other talents." Kasey's face flamed red at what she had just said. She turned away from Koty praying that she didn't notice. Koty didn't say a word.

During dinner, they discussed the clinic that Chris and Kasey were going to open. Koty still couldn't believe that she hadn't met Kasey before now, since she and Chris were such close friends.

"I know this is something that Chris has wanted to do for sometime now. It's good to see that she will be having one of her dreams come true. How about you? Is this something you've wanted also?"

Kasey pushed her plate away and leaned her elbow's on the table. "Chris and I talked about years ago. The timing is finally right, and I'm really looking forward to it."

"Will you still work at the hospital?"

"I'll still work there at least one night a week. I truely love being a trama surgoen, but I am at a point in my life right now, where I want something else as well. This is going to be perfect for me. I know that Chris is just going to be at the clinic once we get it started."

"Have you always wanted to be a surgeon Kasey?"

"Ever since I can remember I've wanted to be a doctor. I don't remember if there was a time I haven't wanted to be one."

"Yeah? Well I bet playing doctor for me as a kid, was quite different from what it was for you huh?" Kasey chuckled, then drained her wine glass.

After dinner, Kasey took the dishes to the kitchen to put them in the dishwasher while Koty cleaned off the table.

"We finished off the wine Koty, but I have some Crown Royal, would you like a drink?" Kasey called out from the kitchen.

"That sounds really good, thanks."

The doctor came back with the drinks, and suggested that they sit out on the deck since it was a mild night. The deck overlooked a small creek that ran into the Northwest River, and they could just make out the images of the dock from the bright moon.

"You know Kasey, there is some real good fishing in that creek there. Especially if you're fishing for bluegill or perch."

"I'll take your word for it Koty, but the only fish I can imagine catching, is if one is getting ready to slide off my plate at Captain Georges."

"Not much for the slimey worms and all huh?"

Kasey laughed, and Koty was mesmerized by the glow of Kasey's profile, and golden halo from the moon's light. *'God you are beautiful.'*

Looking at her watch, Koty quickly sat forward. "Geezz, it's already midnight. Where in the hell did the time go?"

Koty stood, and reached out her hand to help Kasey stand. "I really enjoyed dinner Kasey, I'm sorry it is so late."

"Nonsense Koty, I enjoyed it as well. Thank you for coming."

Inside, Koty walked over to the chair with her jacket on it and put it on. Kasey walked her to the door and when Koty turned to give her a hug goodnight, Kasey leaned in and kissed her. When she went to pull away, Koty reached for her hips and pulled her back to her not wanting the kiss to end.

When Koty felt Kasey's tongue, a fire shot right through her soul and straight down between her legs. This was absolutely the most passionate kiss she had ever felt. Her head started to swim, and lust filled her body.

Without realizing it, she had gently pushed Kasey against the wall and slipped her leg between her thighs. When she heard Kasey moan, she started to tremble.

Kasey slipped her hands inside Koty's jacket and started to slowly kiss her neck.

'Oh God, I can't let this happen. I've gotta pull away and leave.' Koty abruptly pulled away and heard Kasey gasp for breath.

"Koty, what's wrong?"

"I...um..." Koty cleared her throat and tried again. "I'm sorry Kasey. I just can't do this." She reached for the door and was out it in a flash.

Kasey shut the door and leaned against it closing her eyes. *'Oh my God I have never been kissed like that before.'* She was somewhat relieved that Koty did leave though, because she knew if she had kissed her like that for much longer, she would have pulled Koty right into the bedroom with out giving it another thought.

She turned and locked the door, shaking her head to clear her thoughts. She shut off the living room light and quickly headed for the bathroom. *'I need to take me a very long, and very cold shower if I'm going to make it through the night.'*

Koty was still in a daze when she pulled into her driveway after leaving Kasey's house. She couldn't believe she acted that way over a little kiss. *'That wasn't just a little kiss Silvers, you wanted more. Much more.'* Kasey was an incredibly sexy woman, and those smokey gray eyes were to die for.

Chapter Fourteen

Koty slowly opened one blue eye, and realized that it was morning. Remembering that it was Saturday, she groaned and pulled the covers over her head, and was almost back to sleep when the phone started to ring. *'Shit.'* In her early morning croaky voice, she answered. "Hello?"

"Good morning Koty, its Kasey. I hope you don't mind, but Chris gave me your phone number."

Sitting up in her bed with her heart suddenly beating erratically, she said, "um...hi Kasey, is there something wrong?"

"No. No, it's nothing like that. Look Koty, I'm sorry for calling so early, but I wanted to catch you before you made any plans for today. Well anyway, some friends of mine are having a pig roast up in the country, and I thought that if you didn't already have plans, maybe you would like to go with me."

Kasey knew that she was rambling but couldn't stop herself. "Like I said, it's up in the country. There are always a lot of people, plenty of food and drink, and they usually have a couple of

bands playing. So what do you say Koty, do you want to come?"

Koty laughed to herself, and blushed on the last part of Kasey's statement. "Well ok, what time?"

"I'll pick you up around twelve if that's alright with you. I have a few things that I have to take care of first, and then I'll be over."

Koty smiled. "Twelve is fine Kasey, should I bring anything?"

"No, but dress comfortably. I have a horse that I keep up there on their property, and if you would like to go riding with me I'm sure I could get one of Lu or Dina's horses for you."

"You have a horse?"

"Yes I do. I don't get much of a chance anymore to ride like I want to though. I've been too busy at work and it's quite a ways up there."

"Well, I don't know about the riding part, I tried it once when I was about thirteen, and I don't think I was very good at it then."

"There's nothing to it Koty, but you think about it. I would love to take you riding if you want to. Anyway, I'll see you around twelve."

Koty hung up the phone, and lay back down. She was excited about seeing Kasey again, but was also a little apprehensive as well. She thought about last night. She knew it wouldn't take much to sleep with Kasey. *'I'm terrified that I will fall in love with her, and that scares the shit out of me.'* She wasn't quite ready for another commitment. Tina was enough to last her for a long, long time.

She decided to clean her long overdue house, and had just put the vacuum away, and was headed for the shower when the phone rang again.

"Hello?"

"Hey sweet cheeks, how about you bring your cute little ass over here, and spend some time with me and Trish? Then later, we can have some dinner and drinks. What do you say?"

"Hey Jamie, I'd love to, but Kasey asked me to go to some kind of pig thing with her, and I already said that I would go. Shit, I'm sorry."

"What the hell are you sorry for girl? I'd be really pissed at you if you turned her down. Like I said, that woman is hot, and hot for you if you ask me."

"Nobody asked you James. If you aren't busy tomorrow, maybe I'll come by then."

"You do that sweet thing, then you can tell me all about the party, and what's going on with you

and the Doc."

Chapter Fifteen

At twelve o'clock on the nose, Koty answered the door to Kasey's knock. "Hi, come on in. I just need to grab my jacket."

Kasey watched as Koty picked up her glass and took it to the Kitchen. '*Jesus, this woman would look good in anything.*'

Koty was dressed in jeans that were so worn they were almost white. Black boots, black belt, and a plain black and white flannel shirt. The image made Kasey's jeans a little to tight around the crotch.

"You ready to go?" Koty asked, penetrating into her thoughts.

"Uh...yeah, I'm ready." '*For more than one thing.*' She mentally scolded herself for her thoughts.

They got into Kasey's Mustang, and headed for the interstate. Both were quiet for a while until Kasey could take the silence no longer. "It's about a two hour drive from here, but the drive is pretty scenic and it's beautiful where we're going. I used to take this trip a lot, and I always did love the drive. By the way, I didn't know if they would have it there, so I picked you up a bottle of Crown Royal."

A little surprised, Koty just grinned. "Thanks, that was very thoughtful of you."

"You're quite welcome."

"So, how long have you had this horse? I am trying to picture you with this cowgirl hat and chaps." '*Oh my, what a vision.*'

"God, Tonka's 18 years old, and I've had him for about 16 years. When my parents moved to Texas, I moved him to Dina's barn. When I lived in Richmond, I would go every weekend to ride him. Since I've moved back to the beach, I don't get out there as often."

Kasey leaned across Koty's lap, and reached into the glove compartment for some CD's. "Do you mind listening to Melissa Etheridge?"

"I love Melissa. Um...What is that perfume you're wearing Kasey?"

"It's Halo, I just bought it the other day. I've been eye balling it for a while though. Do you like it?"

"Uh, yeah. It smells really good." '*Too good actually, and I know where Halo is purchased from.*' 'Fredericks of Hollywood'. Koty thought. '*Yummy.*'

Kasey turned up the volume on the CD player, and Koty was a bit relieved that conversation would stop, at least for a while. Leaning a little on the door she studied Kasey's profile. Smelling that perfume made her want to bury her face in Kasey's neck. She physically shook herself to shake off the urge.

Seeing Koty shake, Kasey asked. "Are you cold Koty?"

"Um, no. I'm fine." Embarrassed for being caught, Koty turned to face the windshield. *'Get a grip on yourself, you're losing it!'*

Both women said very little for the rest of the drive. They were enjoying the scenery. They pulled into a tree shaded driveway that must have went on for a half mile until it opened up with fields on either side. Straight ahead was a beautiful old style home that had obviously been redone. Fantastically huge Oaks surrounded the home with rolling hills behind, and to the left of it. Koty saw that the porch wrapped all the way around it.

"Wow Kasey, you were right, this place is beautiful."

There must have been at least fifty cars and trucks parked in the field to the right of them. And it was only 2:30. "I bet this place gets packed by 5:00. I'm glad we got here when we did." Kasey said as she parked the car.

As they got out of the car, Kasey told Koty that they were going to find Lu and Dina so she could introduce her to them. Making their way through the massive crowd of women, Kasey heard her name called.

Turning to the sound of the voice, they saw Lee walking towards them. Pulling Kasey into a hug, then reaching for Koty's hand, she brought it to her lips.

"It's a pleasure to see you again Detective."

"Koty. Please call me Koty." Koty felt her cheeks heat up.

"Ok Koty, how have you been?" Lee said grinning.

"Um, I'm fine. How about you?" Koty was a little embarrassed at all of the attention.

Turning her attention, but not her eyes to Kasey, Lee told her, "Lu has been looking for you. I told her you would be here shortly, but you know how she is."

Finally releasing Koty's hand, she grabbed Kasey's, and pulled her towards the barn. "Come on hon, I'll take you to her so she will settle down."

Kasey turned her head and grinned at Koty, grabbed her hand, and pulled her with them.

Lee stopped in front of a woman with jet-black hair, and eyes just as black. "Looky what I found

Lu."

Lu grinned, and pulled Kasey into a fierce hug. "Where have you been? God I've missed you woman. You always stay away far too long." Noticing Kasey holding a strange woman's hand, she asked, "who is your friend Kasey?"

"This is Koty, Lu. She's a detective in Virginia Beach. Koty, this is Lu. A very dear friend of mine."

"A detective huh? You sure don't look like any detective I've ever seen." Lu took in Koty's strong presence matched only by her own, and smiled to herself. "And damn if you aren't the prettiest one I've ever seen. It's nice to meet you Koty." Lu reached out to shake Koty's hand.

"I thought that all detectives had beer bellies, and were bald. You know, the kind that walks around with a lollipop in their mouth."

They all laughed thinking of the old show Kojac. Hearing the laughter, another woman came to Lu's side and kissed her cheek. "Koty, this is the better half of me. Dina, meet Koty, she's Kasey's friend."

Reaching out, Koty shook her hand. "It's really nice to meet you. You have a beautiful place here." *'Wow. She must be a model. Man, Kasey sure knows a lot of beautiful women.'* She had the kind of eyes though that could probably melt steel if she were mad enough.

After a few more introductions and a tour of the house, Kasey was saddling up two horses. "This here is Tonka, Koty. You'll be riding him."

"Shit Kasey, Tonka sure is a good name for him. He's as big as a damn truck, and that's a hell of a ways down to fall!"

Laughing, Kasey placed her hand on Koty's back. "It's alright Koty, he is big, but he's as gentle as a lamb. You'll do just fine, I promise." Noticing the skeptical look on Koty's face, she quickly added. "Trust me."

Koty gave one of her crooked half smiles, but the corner of her lip started to twitch. Something that Kasey had already picked up on, that she did when she was nervous.

"Honest Koty, you'll really have fun. Just give it a go for me. Please?"

"Kay."

They had been riding for about twenty minutes, when Koty finally started to relax. She had to admit to herself that it was kind of fun, just the two of them in the woods.

Both women slowly rode side-by-side without talking, just enjoying the scenery. Koty thought that she could still feel the heat on her back from when Kasey had placed her hand there.

Koty was mesmerized by the country around her. The grass was actually the color of the green crayon in a box of Crayola Crayons. The different colors of the leaves on the trees took her breath away, reminding her of a place in the mountains that she loved.

Stealing a peek at Kasey's profile, then the hills around her, she relaxed even more, and took in the clean crisp air. *'Wow, what a beautiful day.'*

Two hours later, after brushing down the horses and releasing them, Kasey asked Koty if she was ready for a drink.

"God yes. That was some workout. No wonder the cowboys walk all bow legged. It's gonna take a month for my legs to straighten out."

"God, what a big powder puff." Kasey joked as she started walking.

Just as they had finished getting Koty a mixed drink and Kasey a Coke, Lee approached them again. Sliding her arm around Koty's waist, she said. "Hey Honey, there is this really cute redhead over there in that crowd that says she knows you from way back when. I told her I would bring you over to her as soon as I found you, so come with me. The band is getting ready to start, and that's where she is."

Kasey surprised herself when she realized she was a little taken back by the amount of touching Lee was doing to Koty. Lee was one of Kasey's best friends and she knew that it was just her way, but it still bothered her a bit.

When they approached the woman that Lee was talking about, Koty immediately went to her, and as far as Kasey was concerned, pulled her into a much too close, and much too long of a hug. Then the woman had the nerve to soundly kiss her on the lips. They were obviously more than friends at one time or another.

Koty finally released the woman and turned to Kasey. "Kasey, I'd like you to meet an old friend of mine Deanne. We've known each other for years, though we haven't seen each other in over a year. Deanne, this is Kasey. She works with Chris at the hospital.

Deanne told them that her new girlfriend was the lead singer for the band. This piece of news made Kasey relax a little, but not much. While Koty and Deanne talked for a while longer, Lee pulled Kasey aside.

"I told you Kase, that Koty is one fine looking lady. You had better stick to her like glue tonight, or you're gonna have a hell of a lot of competition."

Kasey silently looked around her, and noticed a lot of women eye balling Koty. Some were even gawking. Kasey gave a light smile to Lee. "I told you Lee, we're just friends." *'Then how come I want to go over there and claw their eyes out?'*

Chapter Sixteen

During an intermission of the band, Koty told Kasey that she was going to the bathroom, and she would bring her a soda back with her. Twenty minutes later, when Koty still hadn't arrived back, she went to look for her.

She spotted Koty leaning against the wall of the barn. A woman, and her reputation that Kasey knew well, was blocking Koty with one hand on the wall, and the other on Koty's waist. Frowning, she walked up, took the drink from the detective, and grabbed her by the hand.

"Lets go finish watching the band Koty."

Koty had to duck underneath the woman's arm as Kasey pulled her.

The woman got an angry look on her face. "Still stingy with your toy's huh Kasey?"

"Yup, you know me so well don't you Carla?"

Kasey ended her sentence with that, and kept walking with Koty's hand still in hers. Koty wasn't sure why she was so mad, but decided it would be best to just let the subject drop.

"This is a great party Kasey, I'm glad you asked me to come with you."

Kasey stopped and turned to look at Koty, and their eyes locked for what seemed to be an eternity. Kasey finally released her gaze.

"It is a great party and I'm glad you're enjoying yourself. I'm sorry for the display back there, but Carla really knows how to be a bitch sometimes."

"Sokay."

Making their way back to the band, Kasey finally released Koty's hand, and stuck hers in her pocket to shake off the tingling that touching her caused.

It was after ten o'clock when Kasey asked Koty if she was ready to leave. "It's going to be pretty late by the time we make it back to the beach, and I don't want to fall asleep driving. And you, obviously aren't in any shape to drive." The doctor lightly laughed.

Koty just smiled as she got into the Mustang. *'I am definitely feeling no pain, but I haven't felt this good in a long time. I wouldn't change nothing about tonight. Well...'*

For a long while, both women were quiet, just listening to the CD player. Kasey reached over and cut down the volume. "Tell me Koty, is your name short for something?"

Koty grinned. "You mean to tell me that my wonderful and loving sister-in-law didn't fill you in on my life's history?" Turning to face Kasey, she reached out her hand. "Dakota Silvers at your

service ma'am."

Kasey laughed and shook her hand. "Dakota huh?"

"When Monty and I were born, our mother was going through this crazy stage of naming everything after the states, including our pets. So, we got our wonderful names, Dakota and Montana."

"So Monty is Montana huh? I didn't know that."

"Yeah, kind of cheesy ain't it?"

"Actually, I kind of like those names. They fit you both."

"Maybe, but the kids sure got a kick out of them when we were growing up."

"Chris told me that your parents died in a car accident."

For a moment Koty didn't say anything, and Kasey was instantly sorry that she brought the subject up.

"Yes they did. We were just seventeen. I had a three-day weekend from collage, and I wanted to come home to see my girlfriend. My car was in the shop so I asked them to come pick me up. They wanted to wait until Friday, but I had to insist that they come Thursday instead. "It started to snow really bad that day, and they were hit head on by a truck that crossed over into thier lane. It took me many years to get over the fact that it was my fault."

"Oh God Koty. I'm sorry I brought it up. That must have been really tough for you then."

"Still to this day, I have nightmares about it. Only in my dreams, I'm the one driving the truck. That was nineteen years ago."

It had become quiet again, and after a while, Kasey realized Koty had fallen asleep. Deep in thought, she felt Koty's head softly fall on her shoulder. Adjusting herself in the drivers seat, she tried to make Koty a little more comfortable.

About fifteen minutes before they arrived at her house, Koty woke up, and rubbed her eyes. Realizing where her head was resting, she quickly sat up.

"Jesus Kasey, why didn't you wake me up?"

"You looked so peaceful, I didn't have the heart. It's ok Koty, you didn't leave any drool marks or anything."

Koty blushed, and glanced at her shoulder just to make sure that she didn't.

Pulling into the driveway Kasey put the car in park, but didn't shut off the engine. "Well, thanks again for inviting me Kasey. Like I said, I had a great time."

"You're quite welcome Koty, and I'm glad you went with me. I too had a good time."

Koty leaned over and gave Kasey a light kiss on the lips. She started to pull back but stopped. This time when she leaned in she kissed her deeply. Koty heard a throaty moan and thought her heart would pound right out of her chest.

They both pulled away gasping, and Kasey could see the want in Koty's eye's.

Barely able to speak, Koty asked, "would you like to come in for a drink Kasey?"

Kasey slowly reached up, and put her hand on Koty's cheek. With her thumb, she traced the outline of her lips. "Honey, that would be the perfect ending to a most fabulous day, but I think we ought to take a rain-check. I think that you will thank me in the morning."

"I...Um...Goodnight Kasey."

Koty leaned over once again, but this time kissed her on the cheek. She got out of the car, walked up to the house and didn't look back. If she had, she would have noticed that Kasey was just sitting there staring at her door.

Kasey wanted nothing more than to run right into the house, and make love to Koty. She knew though, that she wouldn't be able to handle it if Koty pulled away from her again. *'It's best if I just take myself home right now.'*

Koty had made herself a drink when she got into the house. She couldn't understand why Kasey wouldn't come in. She felt by the way that she kissed her back that she wanted to just as much. *'Right, that's just wishful thinking.'*

Chapter Seventeen

Sunday morning, Koty woke to the ringing of the phone. *'Ugh, I'm gonna change my number!'*
"Hello."

"Morning Koty, it's Jason. I followed Coleman yesterday like you wanted me to. He met up with some guys over at the new site on Battlefield. They were unloading some crates, and putting them in the building that's mostly finished. Even though the building is pretty much done, I found it kind of odd that they locked it up with chains tighter than Fort Knox. It isn't like there is anything that someone would want to rip off. They even have a guy hanging around the place like he's watching it or something."

"Doesn't that seem odd? Why all of the trouble? The property itself is pretty secure with security passing around there every half hour."

"That's what I thought too. Why don't I come and pick you up, and we can take a ride over and check it out?"

"That's a good idea Jason. Just give me a half hour to shower and get some caffeine going through these veins. I'll see you in a bit."

During Koty's shower, she couldn't get Kasey out of her head. Her feelings were already way too strong for the other woman, and she felt that maybe she should pull back from her before she got in even deeper. If she were to fall in love with the Doctor, it would be a one sided love she felt sure.

She had just finished her second cup of coffee when Jason knocked on the door, and asked if she was ready. Silently they drove to the site where Jason had seen the suspects the previous day. When they pulled off to the side, they watched as a pick-up truck stopped at the door, and two men started unloading more crates.

"Jason, that truck isn't one of Monty's. As a matter of fact, they never even work on Sundays. If anyone of them do, it's normally Monty. Something is definitely not right here. I need to talk to Monty some more about this, and do some more digging on Coleman."

She sat there for another ten minutes, and decided to leave before anyone saw them. "Koty, I'll talk to some of the guys at the station and see if they will keep an eye out when they go by here. We'll figure out what's going on."

Jason pulled up to Koty's house and put his truck in park. "Thanks Jason. I'll see you tomorrow."

Koty remembered that she had told Jamie she would go over to her house for dinner today, so when Jason dropped her off, she went directly to her car and headed over there. *I'll have to face the Grim Reaper sooner or later so I may as well get it over with*, Koty thought to herself.

"Give me a hug, and go sit down and get comfy, I want to hear all about your day with Dr. Feelgood." Jamie said as she swatted Koty on the butt.

"Let me go get us something to drink, and let Trish know that you're here."

When Koty finished telling them yesterday's events with Kasey, Jamie started laughing, "I told you Trish, she's falling for the Doc!"

"Shit Jamie, just because she is the most sexiest woman I have ever seen doesn't mean I'm falling for her!" Koty sighed and finished her drink. "God, I do think about her all of the time though."

Jamie and Trish both just laughed. Trish stood up, kissed Jamie and patted Koty on the back. "I'm going to finish making dinner. You two just relax for a while and I'll call you when it's

ready."

When Trish left the room, Koty told Jamie about her and Jason riding over to the construction site, and what they had seen. "I'm gonna take a ride over there after work on Thursday, and snoop around. Maybe I can come up with something to prove that Coleman is up to no good."

"Uh oh. I know that look babe. Look, you are the best at what you do but you're not the whole damn squad. Don't go there by yourself Koty. There's no telling what you might find."

"I'm just going to take a look around James, maybe take a few pictures. It wasn't tools in those crates they had, but I don't know what it was. I'll take a peek and then leave."

Dinner had been finished, and the kitchen cleaned hours ago. The three sat in the living room just talking and having fun.

Jamie sat back and watched the smile on her best friend's face. *'It's so good to see her smile again. That Goddamn Tina really fucked with her mind.'*

Jamie had missed Koty when she was trying to deal with Tina's deception. She had really worried when Koty stopped coming over, and even stopped going to her brothers. Koty had been so happy when she was with Tina. Her devastation over her break-up had really eaten at Jamie. She sometimes felt that it was her fault since Jamie had introduced them at one of her parties.

'I tried to tell her after a while that something was going on with Tina. Friends had told me that they had seen her out with other women, and I just couldn't make Koty believe me. I hope she finds something with this Kasey woman.'

Koty had given them hugs, and told them she needed to go home and get some sleep, that she had a long day ahead of her tomorrow. It was close to midnight when she finally showered and went to bed.

Chapter Eighteen

Thursday before Koty had left work, she had been thinking about Kasey. Again. She hadn't seen, or spoken to her since the night of the pig roast, and had wondered if Kasey was mad at her.

'Maybe I'll give her a call when I get home tonight.'

Koty slowly pulled up to the side gate of the construction site. Getting out of the jag, and standing by the front, she contemplated on going further. She recognized the truck from the other evening, and a few others.

She thought about calling Jason then decided against it. She figured she was only going to take a quick peek and then leave. *'I'll just sneak around back and see if I can see anything through any windows.'*

She never saw the truck pull in, just in time to see her go around the corner.

There were no windows for her to look through when she got around the back. She slowly walked to the door and tested the doorknob. *'Unlocked.'* She started having second thoughts about entering when something cold and hard was pressed against the back of her neck.

"Don't turn around sweetheart. Just do as I say, and you will be just fine."

The man pushed her through the door into a large room where Coleman and four other men stood around a table, which held several bags of cocaine.

"Well, well. What do we have here Rich?" Roy Coleman said as he walked up to Koty. He lifted his hand and caressed Koty's cheek. Koty slapped his hand away, and stepped back. Coleman just laughed.

"Mighty feisty aren't..." He stopped mid sentence, and walked up closer to her and studied her face. "Holy shit fellows, do you know who this wild-cat is?"

He grabbed Koty by the front of her jacket, and pulled her to the table. "This bitch is Monty Silvers sister. And you know what else she is fellows? She's a fucking cop!"

The guy who had held the gun to her neck was once again behind her. Coleman raised his own gun, and pointed it at her face. "This changes everything boys."

"What are you going to do with her Roy?" One of the guys on the other side of the table asked.

"Yeah Coleman," Koty smirked. "What are you going to do? Monty already knows about your little scam here with all of your little playmates. Actually he's been onto you for a while now."

Coleman's eyes went dead cold, and Koty knew he was getting ready to pull the trigger. She kicked high, knocking the gun out of Coleman's hand, and with her left arm she slammed her elbow into the nose of the guy behind her, smiling when she felt it snap and heard him scream.

She heard a gun go off, and felt a hot burning pain in her ribs as she hit the floor. In a fog, she heard Coleman's voice. "Shit, torch this place now!"

"Hey man, we can't just leave her here!"

"I said torch this mother fucker now, and yes we can just leave her here. I'm not going down because some bitch cop knows everything."

That was the last thing that Koty heard before her world went totally black. She never saw, nor smelled the fire or smoke.

Pat Martin, a mechanic for the Ford Plant was on his way home from his shift when he saw

smoke coming from the building, and some men running for their trucks. He quickly grabbed his cell phone and dialed 911. He stayed on the phone with them until the fire department showed up.

Firefighters had to use bolt cutters to get into the building. One of those firefighters was Jamie. She entered the room and saw boots behind the table. Unsure if there was a body attached to those boots, she went to investigate. When she spotted Koty, she dropped to the floor screaming for help. "I need help here Now!"

Crying, she reached for her best friend. *'There's so much blood! Oh God Baby, please, please be ok!'* "Koty! Hang in there for me damn it. Don't you dare leave me!"

Two husky firemen lifted Koty, and rushed her outside with Jamie hot on their heels.

Jamie spotted Jason Price talking to one of the Patrolman. "Jason! Oh God Jason, it's Koty. Koty was the one in there, and she's hurt really bad. Please take me to the Hospital."

Hugging Jamie, and helping her into his car, he told her that Koty would be ok. *'Oh Jesus, I hope I'm right!'*

Jamie was still crying when she asked to use Jason's cell phone. "Chris! Oh my God Chris. This is Jamie, look, Koty is being rushed to the hospital. We responded to a call about a fire, and when we got there I found Koty inside. Jesus Chris, she's been shot!"

Jamie followed Jason through the doors of the Emergency Room. A moment later she saw Kasey walking down the corridor.

Kasey turned as she heard her name, and saw Jamie running towards her. Seeing Jamie covered in soot, still in her jumpsuit, Tillamock boots, and her tear-stained face, the little hairs on the back of her neck stood straight up. Kasey reached out and caught Jamie as she stumbled into her.

"Jamie, what is it?"

"It's Koty. She's been shot. We pulled her out of a burning building, and she is in really bad shape."

Kasey didn't wait to hear anything else. She was already running to where the trauma team was frantically working on Koty.

Somebody yelled, "Call O.R. stat! We're losing her!"

Jason handed Jamie a cup of coffee, and told her he needed to go back to see what he could find out. "You have my cell number Jamie, call me as soon as you hear anything. I'll be back as quick as I can."

Jamie had just taken a sip of her coffee when Monty and Chris came running through the doors.

Chris ran to her and hugged her. "What's happening? Where's Koty!"

"I haven't heard anything since we got here, Kasey is with her. God Chris, I know it's bad though." She started crying again.

"Monty Honey, find out from Jamie what happened. I'm going to find out what I can about Koty." Chris kissed him and left.

Monty and Jamie held each other tight. He could not control the tears running down his face. He kissed Jamie's forehead, and led her to a chair. This woman in his arms couldn't be any more of a sister if she was his blood.

"It's going to be all right Jamie. Can you tell me what happened?"

Jamie had just finished telling Monty what she knew when the doors flew open, and Tina came rushing in.

"Jamie, what happened? Charlie came in and told us that you found Koty in a fire, and she had been shot."

At first, Jamie was pissed that Tina was even there. Then she softened when she remembered that she and Koty had been together for three years. It was somewhat understandable that Tina might be upset. "Come sit down Tina, and I'll tell you what I know."

An hour later, Kasey came up to them, stopping short when she saw Tina. She turned her attention to Monty and Jamie. "She's in stable condition now. She lost a lot of blood, but fortunately no major organs were damaged. The bullet hit her in the ribs busting a few, but that's probably what saved her life."

Kasey glanced at Tina once more, and then back at Monty. "She also inhaled a lot of smoke, but there isn't any physical burns, and there doesn't appear to be any damage to her lungs. Chris is still with her, Monty, you can see her in about another hour."

Jamie could see tell tell signs, that Kasey had been crying. She reached for her hand and asked, "She's gonna be alright then?"

Kasey squeezed her hand tightly. "We won't know for sure for another twenty four hours but yes, it appears that she is going to be ok."

Kasey reached up and pushed the hair off of Jamie's face. "She's going to be ok Jamie, why don't you go home and..."

"No way, I'm staying right here. Trish is coming, and she's bringing me something to change into. I'll clean up in the lounge."

Jamie hugged Kasey hard, and the tears started again. "You take care of her Doc. She's my best

bud, ya know?"

"Yeah, I know, but Dr. Young is going to be her doctor, and he is one of the best." Kasey felt the tears threaten to start in her own eyes again. She turned to Monty as she still held Jamie's hand. "I'll come get you as soon as it's ok." Then she left.

Just then, it dawned on Tina who the doctor was. *'That's the woman Koty was having dinner with. The same woman she was dancing with at the club.'* Tina wondered if they were lovers. *'Surely Koty wouldn't jump into bed with some one this fast. Nah, that's not Koty's style. No matter how beautiful that woman is.'*

Chapter Nineteen

Jamie saw Trish come through the doors with a backpack flung over her right shoulder. Reaching for her lover Jamie cried once again. This time though, they were happy tears. Happy because her best friend was going to be ok.

As Koty awoke the next morning, she slowly opened her eyes to get them focused. At first she was confused at where she was, and it took a moment to realize that she was in the hospital.

Her chest felt like it had been crushed, and her throat was sore. She saw Monty asleep in the chair, and tried to call his name, but only a croaking noise came from her throat.

Monty opened his eyes when he heard the sound, and came to her side. "Don't try to talk just yet Koty, just relax."

Koty then remembered the shooting, and why she was here in the first place. She reached for Monty's hand and whispered. "Coleman."

"I know Koty. I talked to Jason last night, and it seems that the guy who called 911 got the license plate number from one of the trucks that just happened to be Coleman's. They found him last night with suitcases in his truck. He was getting ready to skip town. They don't know yet if he is the one who shot you, but they are pretty sure he will talk. He's not the kind to take the fall by himself."

Koty's eyes started to close so Monty kissed her on the forehead, told her to get some rest, and he would be back later to see her once he took care of some things at the office.

Much later when Koty woke again she saw Jamie and Trish sitting there smiling at her. Jamie came over and gently brushed her lips on Koty's. "Don't you ever do that to me again Dakota Silvers, or I will kill you myself. Do you hear me?" Once again there were tears in Jamie's eyes.

Trish leaned over and kissed her. "Hey Baby, you sure put the fear in us last night. God, if anything should ever happen to you, I would have to have this one committed. How do you feel?"

Koty laughed. Her throat was still sore, but not as bad as that morning. "I'm ok Trish, you guys can't get rid of me that easily you know."

Koty went to sit up but gasped when a shooting pain hit her in the ribs. "Christ that hurt, are my ribs busted?"

"Yeah, but you are lucky that was all that happened. They said that those busted ribs are probably what saved your life, even though you lost a lot of blood."

"Geez Trish, thank you for that bit of information." Koty laughed and squeezed her hand. "I really need to sit up."

"No Koty, you need to lay still before I have to sic the Doctor on you."

"Did someone say Doctor?" Came a voice from the doorway. Koty saw Kasey walking in, and her heart started to pound.

Kasey walked over to Koty, pushed the hair off of her face, and smiled that drop dead gorgeous smile. She gently brushed her thumb across Koty's cheek, and looked deep into her eyes. "And how are we feeling today?"

Before Koty could answer, Jamie told Koty that they would be back that evening to see her. They slipped through the door with smiles on their faces.

Koty looked back at Kasey, and in a deep croaky voice, said. "I'm alright, when can I go home?"

Kasey grinned, and with some of the tension now gone said, "Don't rush it Honey, you were hurt pretty bad you know. You had all of us pretty worried there for a while."

With a weak smile Koty asked, "Were you worried Doc?"

Kasey stared at her for a moment with a sad smile, and then in her low husky voice, said, "Yes Honey, I was very worried."

Kasey checked her vital signs, and glanced over her chart. "I'm going to get you some ice chips to suck on. We'll see if that will help soothe your throat a little. Is there anything else I can get you?"

"Yes, you can find out when I can go home."

Kasey was only gone from Koty's room for about ten minutes before she returned with the ice. When she walked into her room she stopped short when she saw the mysterious red-headed woman again, standing next to Koty holding her hand. She gave a quick glance at the red-head then back to Koty. *'Who in the hell is this woman?'* She knew that she should just walk right back out the door, but couldn't make herself do so.

She was very uncomfortable with the red-head holding Koty's hand. The little green monster on her shoulder was kicking up a storm. *'Whoa, you don't have grounds to be jealous old girl. She doesn't belong to you.'*

Kasey put some ice in a cup, and looked over Koty's chart again to make it seem like she wasn't paying any attention to them. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw the woman tell Koty she would be back to see her, and then leaned down and kissed her.

"Bye Baby, you get some rest now."

"Alright Tina."

'Tina? This woman was Koty's ex? Why in hell is she coming around so much now.' Kasey felt herself tense with a rage she had never felt before in her life. Shocked at her own feelings, she turned her back until Tina left the room. She became very edgy, and turned to hastily set Koty's ice on her tray, then turned to leave.

"Kasey, is there something wrong?" Koty asked sensing the change in her.

Pausing, Kasey slowly turned to face her. "Koty, I...I've got a lot to do, I'll be by to check on you later."

Kasey walked out of Koty's room in a funk. *'I know that they were together for a long time, but sonofabitch! You're an ex Tina, you are the one who fucked her over so just go away.'*

Kasey resisted walking back into Koty's room and telling her exactly that, but changed her mind and went to make her rounds for the morning. Koty needed to get more rest anyway.

Koty was released from the hospital three days later with instructions not to return to work for two weeks, and to get plenty of rest. She didn't know if she could stay still that long.

She had hardly seen Kasey since the morning that Tina was in her room. The few times that she did see her, Kasey was quiet, and seemed distracted.

Chris was there to pick Koty up the morning she was released, and helped her into the car.

"Monty picked up your car honey, and dropped it off at your house. Jamie had followed him there to give him a ride home."

Koty leaned her head back against the seat, and wondered what she was going to do with herself for the next two weeks since she couldn't go back to work.

"Koty, are you alright Sweetie? Chris asked as she brushed some loose strands of hair from Koty's face. "You look really distracted hon."

"Yeah, I'm ok. I guess I'm just feeling a little sorry for myself right now. I don't know how to just hang around the house and not do anything."

Koty turned to gaze out the window. "Have you talked to Kasey lately Chris?"

She cast a sideways glance at Koty, and gave a puzzled look. "I talked with her shortly before I came to pick you up. Why?"

"Just curious."

"Koty, is there something going on with you and Kasey? You don't have to answer that, I just thought..."

"No, there is nothing going on." Koty frowned and looked back out the window.

'*Hmm.*' "Do you want something to be going on?"

"Yes. No...I don't know Chris. I know that I can't stop thinking about her, but I don't think the feeling is mutual."

"Are you in love with her?"

"Come on Chris, I just got rid of Tina. Why would I set myself up like that so soon?"

Chris gently pulled into Koty's driveway, trying not to jar Koty too much, and turned to her after turning off the ignition. "Speaking of Tina Koty, what's going on there? She sure has been hanging around a lot lately."

"Nothing is going on there either Chris. I'm not sure what she is up to, but I'm not getting back with her. Is that why Kasey is mad at me?"

"She hasn't said anything to me about that Koty. Why?"

Chris was helping Koty get her things from the car. "Give me that Koty, you're not suppose to be lifting anything."

"Chris, I can carry something." Koty pouted as she handed Chris her bag.

"Not today you can't, now behave. Are you going to answer my question?"

"I don't know. I'm not really sure if she is mad, or not." Koty slowly sat down on the couch and pulled one of the pillows under her arm to help ease any pressure.

"That's ok though, cause I don't know what I want, so I guess it's no big deal."

Chris just smiled at her. '*Uh huh. I think there is a whole lot more going on that you don't even know my dear sister in-Law.*' Chris couldn't imagine two other people, that she would love more than anything to see get together. After all, they were two of her favorite people.

Chapter Twenty

By Wednesday, Koty was feeling better, and was able to move around easier, so she decided to drive to Monty and Chris's for dinner. Monty met her at the door, and gave her a big hug.

"Ow."

"Sorry Sis, come on in and sit down. You look a little better. At least some of your color has come back. How do you feel?"

"My ribs still feel like someone did the Electric Slide on them, but other than that I'm ok." Koty said as she took a glass of tea that Chris handed her.

"Monty, lets sit down and eat first, and then you can hound Koty." Looking at Koty she said, "He's been going nuts since I wouldn't let him go over and bug you."

"Have not." Monty said sticking his tongue out at Chris. Koty busted out laughing.

"God, that is so mature!"

After dinner, Monty made Koty sit in the recliner and prop her feet up. "You need a blanket Sis?"

"Jesus Monty I'm ok, stop fussing over me." Koty said with a big grin. "I'll never heal if you don't quit babying me."

"You know Koty," Monty said after lighting a cigarette, "Coleman isn't the one who shot you, but Jason has enough to put the bastard away for a really long time. Plus, Jason got a call from Washington. They're wanting to have him expidited there and charge him with manslaughter. He named the guys who were with him, like we knew he would. They have three of them in custody, but the one who pulled the trigger is still loose. His name is Bob Wheatly."

Frowning and reaching for Koty's hand, Chris said, "Honey, you really need to be careful knowing that he is still out there."

"That's what Jason keeps telling me. He put an unmarked car at my house, but I think the guy is probably long gone by now. Jason doesn't know I know about the car he put there."

Koty leaned back and rubbed her temples with the palms of her hands. "I know Jason isn't gonna give in though. In the past three days, there has been four different cars on my block. Last night I took the guy some pizza and a coke. I thought he was gonna shit when I walked up to his unmarked car. He thanked me for the pizza though."

Monty handed Koty a drink. "The building that they torched was insured. I'll rebuild it. I have three different inspectors working with me to check out the other buildings that they have done.

It's probably going to take a couple of weeks for them to find anything out but I'd rather be safe than sorry."

Chris sat down next to Monty, and curled her foot up underneath her. "Kasey and I are opening up our clinic in two months. We decided to still work at the Hospital a few nights a week, but we won't be at the clinic anymore. Next Thursday is my last day at the clinic but Kasey will be there for three more weeks."

"That's great Chris. So, you've already picked a location and all?"

"As a matter of fact, we found a place just two blocks down from the other clinic on First Colonial. We start remodeling in a week and a half. Dr. Jets might be joining us also. She is supposed to let me know next week."

Koty started to yawn, and got up to leave. "It's been a long lazy week, and I've got laundry to do before I go to bed. Thanks for dinner guys." She gave them both a hug then headed to her lonely quiet house.

"You still don't do any cooking huh Lee?" Kasey asked as she made them drinks.

"Why should I? Right now it's just me I have to fend for. That's why I always find a woman who can cook. As a matter of fact, it's mandatory in a relationship with me."

They both laughed and carried their drinks into the living room to get more comfortable. Both full from the big dinner that Kasey had cooked.

Kasey had been restless, and called Lee and invited her over after work. She had, had a long day and couldn't keep her mind focused for some reason. She couldn't seem to quit thinking about Koty. That woman had really gotten under her skin and left a permanent mark. She couldn't recall ever being affected this way by anyone.

"So Kase, what's been happening with you and Koty?" Lee seemed to have read her thoughts, and asked. "I've gotta tell you hon, if you didn't have your eye on her...Well anyway, she sure is a looker." Lee didn't give Kasey time to answer as she continued, "When you and Koty left the party that night, there sure were a lot of unhappy women there. Jesus, you should have seen them all coming up to me and asking who she was."

Lee winked and gave Kasey a smug smile. "You sure pissed Carla off. Man was that woman hot. I don't know what you did or said to her, but she was fit to be tied."

Kasey grinned. "Yeah well, she'll surely get over it."

"Oh she'll get over it, but I don't think her girlfriend will. Apparently she saw, and heard everything she said and did to Koty." Lee lit a cigarette and leaned back. "They got into this

really big fight after you left. Her girlfriend slapped her right in front of everyone then left her stranded there."

Still laughing, Kasey put her glass down. "That must have been a hell of a show. I kind of wish I had stayed to witness it. Carla's had that coming for a long, long time. She may be good looking, but she's a womanizer, and has a nasty temper, so it couldn't have happened to a more deserving person."

"Yeah, it was a hell of a show. Pretty funny actually." Lee took a drag of her cigarette, and just stared at Kasey for a minute. "You still haven't answered my question. So what's up with you and Koty?"

"Nothing is up Lee, I've already told you that."

"Come on Kasey, I know you better than that. If nothing is happening, it's because one, or both of you are chicken shits, and you're holding out."

Lee finished her drink and stood to go make another, but she stopped and looked at her friend. "Look, I know you are crazy for her, and I also know that she couldn't keep her eyes off of you the whole time at the party. Now hold that thought." Lee went to make her drink, then came back and sat next to Kasey. "Kasey, there is some really hot fire waiting to be lit between the two of you, so what gives. Talk to me."

Kasey rubbed her temples and leaned back against the sofa. "I don't think Koty and her ex are quite over each other."

"What do you mean?"

"What I mean is, I think that maybe they are still stuck on each other Lee. At least the ex is still in love with Koty if you ask me."

"Well, didn't you tell me her ex cheated on her? Fucked her over pretty bad didn't she?"

"Yes, but I swear that woman shows up everywhere. She showed up the first night we had dinner. She showed up at the bar after the concert, and she showed up at the hospital."

Kasey thought about the kiss she witnessed between them, and felt the deep rage start all over again, and got up and fixed herself a Grand Marnier. She had just been drinking Coke. "I tell you Lee, the kiss that woman gave Koty before she left the hospital had way too much heat in it to just be friendly."

"Did Koty kiss her back?"

"No, but I'm sure it was just because I was there, I don't know."

"Could it be you are putting something more into it that really isn't there?"

"I don't know Lee. I just don't know." Kasey gulped down her drink, then went to get the bottle. She sat down and poured another.

"You're jealous Honey," Lee said with a smile. "You're letting this get to you. I can tell by the way you're drinking. It's rare to see you drink, but it's even more rare to see you slam it down like you are doing. Look Kasey, I don't know Koty that well, and I sure don't know her ex but..."

"Her ex is gorgeous Lee." Kasey said with a sigh.

"Well what the hell are you, Spam? Shit Kasey, you are a knock out, with a smile that could drop any woman to their knees. Myself included so don't hand me that shit! Look Honey, her ex fucked her over pretty bad, and Koty doesn't strike me as a woman with a learning disability. I don't think she will take her back, I've seen how she looks at you."

Taking a long sip of her drink, Kasey softly said, "I don't know if I want to take that chance again Lee. You remember what happened with Samantha."

"Kasey, you gotta take chances every now and then. Besides, I don't think you should compare those two."

Lee got ready to leave and pulled Kasey into a hug. "Baby, there are no guarantee's in life, take a chance Kasey. If you don't, you're gonna kick yourself in the years to come wondering what might have been. If there is any chance Baby take, it. Don't let her get away." Then she left.

Chapter Twenty-One

The next morning as Kasey was making coffee, Lee called. "Hey Sweetie, a friend of mine at work is having a really big party at Laces Friday night. There is going to be a lot of people, and it sounds like a lot of fun. What do you say, will you go with me?"

"Well, I guess I really could use a night out." Kasey paused a moment.

"I'll go Lee, but I won't be able to get there until around 9:30 so I'll meet you there ok?"

"Fine, that's fine Honey. Wear something sexy, and I'll see you there."

"Bye."

Monday morning Kasey saw Chris sitting in the hospital cafeteria by herself. After getting her coffee, she went to sit at the table with her. "Are you alright Chris? You look really drained."

Chris smiled a tired smile. "Dr. Camp couldn't make it in last night for some reason or another. They called me at 2:00 this morning and asked if I could cover for him." Yawning, she set her cup down and smiled. "I haven't pulled a double in about eight months. So Dr. Brooks how is your day?"

"Obviously not as bad as yours. I'm meeting Mr. Rico at the new office later today with the plans. He said that he could start earlier than they thought. I was going to ask you if you wanted to come with me, I think though when you leave here, you need to go home and get some sleep."

Chris went to refill her coffee then sat back down. "I'm off tomorrow so I can get plenty of sleep tonight. I want to come with you."

"Great." She was hoping that Chris would say yes. "We're suppose to meet him around 5:30."

Chris stood to get ready to leave. "I tell you what Kasey, Monty isn't due home until later this evening. I'll pick something up for us to eat from Bamboo Hut, and I will meet you there."

Chris was getting really excited about getting this Clinic up and going. This had been a dream of hers for quite a while now. She loved working at the Hospital, but there was something more personal about running a clinic. When Kasey had told her several years ago, that she also wanted to have her own clinic, the wheels started to turn. Just eight months ago, they got really serious, and started scouting around for the perfect location. When they found this building, their dreams became a reality, and everything started moving ahead pretty fast. Monty had recommended Mr. Rico, and told them that he was one of the best.

Chris met Kasey, and Mr. Rico at exactly 5:30, and they all went over the plans. After he left, they sat down to eat their take out that Chris had picked up, and discussed what their plans were going to be.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Friday night rolled around, and at 6:00 p.m. Koty dressed after her shower in sweats, and an old Houston Oilers t-shirt. She fixed herself a Crown and Seven, then settled down in her recliner to watch some old 80's sitcoms and just relax. By seven thirty, she had watched three shows and had as many drinks. Feeling pretty good, she was laughing at a funny part on the show when the phone rang.

"Hello?"

"Hey Koty girl, it's Jamie. Get that pretty little ass of yours up and dressed. There's a great big party going on at Laces and you're going with us."

Koty groaned. "Not tonight James, I'm already in my P.J's. You go ahead and I'll take a rain check." Before Jamie could protest, Koty grinned and said, "Love ya, bye." And hung up the phone.

She knew if she would have stayed on the phone, Jamie would have talked her into going, and she really just didn't feel like it. Besides she already had a nice little buzz going.

All she wanted to do right now was relax, and watch some television. She looked over at the phone, then reached to shut off the ringer just in case Jamie tried to call her back.

She knew that Jamie would be pissed at her for hanging up on her, but she also knew it wouldn't take her long to get over it. Hell, they were best friends after all.

About twenty minutes later, the doorbell rang. "Shit!" Koty mumbled as she walked towards the door. Before she could open it all the way, Jamie and Trish pushed past her.

"Dakota Silvers, don't you ever hang up on me again!" Jamie said as Koty shut the door behind them.

"Well come on in guys. Geeze."

Trish grabbed Koty by the hand, then gently pulled her towards the bedroom, trying to be careful not to hurt her.

"Koty, you get your ass in there, and get dressed before I dress you my own damn self. What's it gonna be girl? Need my help?"

Trish wiped her hands together like she was brushing dust off of her palms, put her hands on her hips, then gave the detective a level look. Stunned, Koty started laughing. She had never seen Trish be this forceful. "Um...Yes ma'am. Did you say a big party?"

"Yes, we said a big party. Now be a good little Princess, and dress to kill. There is going to be lots and lots of gorgeous women there tonight, and we want you with us."

When Koty came out of the bedroom, she was dressed to kill. Her snug jeans hugged her long muscled thighs, and her shirt showed every sensuous curve that she had. The shirt was cut low, to show just enough cleavage that even Jamie and Trish's eyes about bugged out of their heads.

"Jamie hollered. "Holy shit! That's my girl." She slapped Koty a high five and Koty winched a little in pain. "Shit Koty, I'm sorry. I forgot about your ribs."

Koty just smiled. "I'm alright Jamie, are you ready to go?"

"Yeah Baby." Linking her arms through Trish and Koty's she said, "Lets go cream some jeans!"

Trish elbowed her in the side and told her to behave.

Koty was glad that they got to the club when they did, because there were only three tables left in the whole bar. She looked around from the table they were at, and recognized several women that were regulars at the club. She slowly turned her chair to a position where she wouldn't get bumped, and, so that she could watch Jamie and Trish dance.

Sipping her Crown and Seven, Koty noticed Liz and Tammy walking towards her table. Liz was another running buddy of Koty and Jamie's from school. Koty slowly stood, and gave them both a hug telling them to sit at their table. "There are plenty of chairs for you guy's. Besides, the way

those two dance, I'll at least now have someone to talk to, and won't be lonely sitting here by my lonesome self."

"Why aren't you out there dancing with them Koty?" Liz asked as she sat next to her. "I can't remember seeing you sit this still."

"The fast songs are a little too much for my ribs right now, so I'm taking it easy."

"Oh yeah, that's right. We heard about what happened. You doing ok then?"

Liz and Tammy had been out of town visiting Tammy's family when Koty had been shot. They just got back the previous night.

"Yeah, I'm alright. I just have to take it easy for a little while is all."

Suddenly standing, Liz said, "Here comes Fred and Ginger now." Referring to what they all called Jamie and Trish because they couldn't stay off of the dance floor.

Laughing, Jamie walked up to Liz and hugged her. "Lordy Trish, look what the cat's dragged in."

They had been there for about an hour laughing and drinking when Jamie nudged Koty, and gestured towards the door.

The sight that Koty saw made her catch her breath, so that she choked on her drink. In the doorway stood Kasey in a short, strapless, clinging black dress. *'God, she is so stunning!'*

Liz gave a low whistle when she saw what they were looking at. "Who in the hell is that?"

"Wow. What a looker." Tammy whispered.

Koty didn't say a word. She couldn't. She just sucked down her drink, and turned back to everyone at the table.

"Aren't you going to go over there and talk to her Koty?" Trish asked her.

Tammy looked at Koty with a grin. "You know that woman Koty?"

Jamie paid the waitress for the drinks that just arrived. Handing Koty and Trish their drinks; she ruffled Koty's hair. "That my friend is Kasey. She and my pal Koty here have the hots for each other, but they are both too chicken shit to admit it."

A slow song started to play, and Tammy gave Liz a knowing grin. Tammy had been a die hard match maker ever since Koty had met her. She just absolutely couldn't stand to see anyone alone. So with a sheepish grin on her face, Tammy turned to Koty, and held out her hand. "Koty, this is a slow song, and I promise not to hurt you, so don't argue and come dance with me."

She pulled Koty out to the dance floor. "See, this ain't so bad is it Koty?"

As Tammy turned her, Koty's eyes locked onto Kasey's.

Kasey had been watching her the whole time. Koty nodded in her direction and Kasey smiled. She smiled that drop you to your knees smile that made Koty's body turn to liquid, and she thought she would dissolve right there on the dance floor.

The song ended and they walked back to the table. A few moments later the waitress came and sat a drink in front of Koty.

"From the lady in black at the bar." She said nodding in Kasey's direction.

Koty felt her face suddenly flush. She was glad it was too dark for anyone to see. "Um... Tell her thank you will you?"

Another slow song started to play, and Tammy and Liz got up to dance. Koty was just getting ready to say something to Jamie when she felt a warm hand rest on her shoulder.

"Excuse me ladies." She heard Kasey's husky voice say. "Uh...Koty, will you dance with me?"

Koty closed her eyes, and swallowed hard. She slowly got up and followed Kasey to the floor, missing Jamie and Trish's wide grins.

Kasey turned and stepped towards Koty laying her hand on her shoulder. "Maybe this time we can finish our dance."

"We will as long as you say no to anyone who tries to cut in."

"Koty, I have no right, and I sure don't want to seem greedy."

"I don't mind." Koty answered with that crooked grin. Kasey smiled back, and put her arms around Koty's neck.

Koty's heart started pounding wildly as she pulled Kasey closer to her body. An electric current shot between them as their bodies connected. "I thought you were mad at me, or something."

Kasey pulled back just enough to look Koty in the eyes. "I'm not mad at you." She said softly.

Kasey looked around the dance floor as if in deep thought then slowly turned her face back to Koty.

"It's just...It's just that...That woman..."

"What woman? Who Tina? Look Kasey, Tina and I were lovers for three years. We aren't anymore."

"Well Koty, the way that I see it, is she still wants to be with you."

"It doesn't matter what she wants Kasey. That's just her way. She doesn't like it when I get attention from anyone else, she never did. Besides, Tina shouldn't have anything to do with..."

Koty stopped mid sentence when Kasey lightly kissed her lips. *'Oh God. I'm going to die right here where I stand.'* Koty thought as she closed her eyes briefly.

"Shh Koty, lets just dance ok?"

Unbeknown to Koty or Kasey, the women at Koty's table were slapping high fives to each other. They did not miss the scene on the dance floor.

As the song ended, Koty reluctantly pulled away from Kasey.

Still holding Koty's hand though, Kasey asked. "Will you dance with me later?"

"I'd love to, and Kasey?"

"Yes hon?"

"There are extra chairs at our table if you and Lee would like to sit with us."

Koty had spoke so softly that Kasey almost didn't hear her.

Smiling, Kasey said, "Maybe in a little bit, Lee is meeting someone here." She leaned over and kissed Koty on the cheek, then sauntered off of the dance floor.

Koty walked back to the table with a smile on her face. As she approached, she saw them all staring at her with shit eating grins.

"What?" *'Smart asses.'*

A fast song came on, and everybody but Jamie jumped up to dance. As Koty sat down, she smirked at Jamie who was teasingly fanning herself and saying, "Hot Baby, umm umm hot."

Koty playfully slapped her hand. "Shut up James."

A half hour had passed when in the middle of everyone laughing at something Liz had said, the women heard once again, that husky voice.

"Excuse me again ladies, but can we join all of you?"

Everyone stood, and did a comical version of musical chairs. Liz and Tammy made sure that Kasey was sitting next to Koty, and Lee and her date sat next to Kasey.

When Koty looked up at Liz, she just smiled, shrugged her shoulders, and winked. *'What the hell are you up to Liz old girl?'*

Koty and Kasey danced to several more songs, and shortly before last call they were up again, slow dancing.

By now, Koty was feeling the effects of the alcohol, and admitted to herself that she was a little drunk.

Drinking had always given her a false sense of courage to do and say things that she normally would have been too shy to say or do. She pulled Kasey impossibly close and kissed her deep and passionately.

When she felt Kasey respond, and heard her throaty moan, she whispered in Kasey's ear, "God I want you so bad. Will you come home with me?"

Kasey looked at Koty for a moment, and hesitated before she said, "Koty...I would love to go home with you..." Kasey paused.

"But..." Koty said. "I hear a but."

"Koty Honey, you are drunk. If and when I sleep with you, I don't want alcohol to have anything to do with it."

Koty started to speak, but Kasey lightly pressed a finger to her lips. "Hear me out Koty, please. I know all too well what alcohol does to the hormones. "I also know that alcohol induced sex can lead to hurt feelings, and even heart break. I simply can't and won't let you hurt me."

"Hurt you! What do you mean hurt you?" Koty swallowed a gulp of air. "Kasey, I would never intentionally hurt you. I can't believe that you believe that."

"Koty, please don't make this any harder than it already is." Kasey pleaded.

"Kasey...I'm in...Oh fuck it. You want easy? Then I'll make it easy for you."

Koty pulled away from her, and walked right off the dance floor, and right out the door and waited for Jamie and Trish to come out.

Later that night, Koty was in bed totally exasperated. She couldn't believe that she almost told Kasey that she was in love with her. She hadn't even known it herself until she almost blurted it out. *'Jesus, what a huge mistake that would have been.'*

"Tina! What in the hell have you done to me!?" She yelled out loud, then grabbed her side. *'Oh shit, that hurt.'* She was still in the middle of cussing life when she closed her eyes and fell asleep.

Chapter Twenty-Three

The next afternoon, Koty was wallowing in self-pity with the CD player belting out Shelby Lynn when the doorbell rang and Jamie let herself in.

"I'd love a drink Koty, thank you."

Koty gave a half smile then turned the CD player down and went to fix them both a drink.

"Koty, aren't you taking your pain pills?"

"Yes, but the last one I took was this morning. I'll be fine. And no, I didn't take any last night."

Sitting on the couch with drink in hand, Jamie eyeballed her best friend. "Ok Koty, tell me what's going on. You wouldn't tell us jack shit last night." Taking a sip of her drink, Jamie watched Koty ease herself down in her recliner. "Koty, one minute you were on cloud nine, and the next you were red-faced, sulking, and storming out of the club. Talk to me babe, what gives?"

"Shit Jamie, everything is so messed up!" She closed her eyes and let out a deep sigh. "I messed up last night, and asked Kasey to come home with me."

Koty jumped up from her chair then sucked in her breath at the stabbing pain in her side, and went to make another drink. "She told me I was drunk, and wouldn't sleep with me because of it." Koty almost laughed. "She said something about alcohol and hormones, and that she wouldn't, and couldn't let me hurt her. Can you believe that shit? Like I would hurt her!"

Koty gulped down the rest of her drink before putting the glass on the table. Thinking twice about the glass, she asked Jamie to fix her another one. "You want to know what the real shitter of this is Jamie? Last night I almost told her that I was in love with her."

Jamie's jaw dropped in shock and when she looked her best friend in the eyes, she saw tears starting to form there. She quickly went to kneel in front of Koty and pulled her into a much needed hug. "I knew it had to be more than you were letting on Babe." *'Yes!'*

"God Jamie, I hardly know her, but I am so full of her. I can hardly stop thinking about her, and when I am able to stop, it's only for long enough to fall asleep, and then I dream about her. Shit. Then I get drunk and ask her to sleep with me. What a fool I am."

"You are not a fool Babes." Jamie went and sat back down on the couch. "True love is like that sometimes. It just kind of jumps up, and slaps you in the face whether you are ready for it or not."

"Well, it doesn't really matter anyway, Kasey stated her point, and I took the hint. End of soap opera."

"I don't know if I would rush to the bank with that deposit yet Koty if I were you."

Jamie got up to make her and Koty another drink. Making Koty's weaker than she knew Koty did herself. Handing the glass to Koty, she ruffled her friend's hair. "You know Koty, when Trish and I first got together, she wouldn't sleep with me the first time I asked her because I was drunk."

Koty looked a little stunned, and then grinned. "That's different Jamie."

"Now just how in the hell is that different Dakota? It's the same damn situation."

"I don't know, it just is. I don't think that I am very good at this relationship stuff."

"Koty, you just haven't found the right woman yet. It damn sure wasn't Tina. Maybe Kasey is that woman, and maybe she ain't, but you just don't give up because of Tina, or anyone else for that matter. Maybe you need to give this thing with Kasey a chance."

"Like I said before Jamie, she's not interested so it's not like there is a chance to give."

Chapter Twenty-Four

After making herself a snack, Kasey sat down to read the newspaper. She kept thinking about last night, and how she couldn't get Koty out of her mind. The way that Koty had walked away from her on the dance floor almost crushed her. She had wanted nothing more than to grab Koty, and go home with her. She had her rules though. Never again would she sleep with someone for the first time when they were drunk. Especially when that someone was on the rebound.

Kasey also wondered for the hundredth time what it was that Koty was going to say to her before she got mad and left. She could still hear her words, "*Kasey, I'm in...*"

And then she stopped and left. Kasey really wanted to hear the rest of that sentence.

The phone rang breaking into her thoughts. "Hey sweetheart it's Lee. Are you feeling any better today?"

"Oh hi Lee, I'm fine. Really"

"I got to tell you Kasey, I don't recall ever seeing you quite that upset before, and then you wouldn't even tell me what was going on."

"I'm really sorry Lee, I didn't mean to spoil your evening last night."

"Honey, you didn't spoil my evening last night. As a matter of fact, my evening went just fine when I took Ms. Texas home."

Kasey laughed for the first time that day. "God Lee, you are so bad."

"Damn right I am. You want me to come over, and you can talk about it?"

"I don't want to talk about it, but you are welcome to come over, I'd love your company. Besides, I want to hear all about last night, and Ms. Texas."

Laughing, Lee said, "I'll be right over, this conversation could take a while. Want me to pick anything up on my way?"

"No, I'm good, I'll see you in a little while. Bye."

Kasey hung up the phone and started thinking about Koty again. The devastated look on her face last night when she left just wouldn't leave Kasey's mind.

She didn't mean for Koty to take what she said the wrong way but obviously she did. *'You blew it Kase, she'll probably never want to speak to you again.'*

"God I hate this! Will my life ever be normal again?"

Throwing her half eaten sandwich away, Kasey went to make a batch of tea for when Lee came over. They had been known to polish off a pitcher when they got into their long conversations, leaving both of them wired.

Koty still hadn't quite recovered from her wounds from the shooting, and Kasey was really worried about her. Koty had dropped some weight and was still a little pale.

'I'll think about Dakota Silvers later. Not that it's gonna do any good.'

Chapter Twenty-Five

Since this was Jamie's three off days from the fire department she decided to stay at Koty's house for dinner. Trish wouldn't be home until around eleven because she had to close the store that night.

Koty pulled their steaks off of the grill, and they sat on the deck to eat. "I think that I am going to spend some time with Mel this week while I have the time off." Koty told Jamie after they were done with their dinner.

Melody was yet another friend of theirs from high school. Mel once had a slight crush on Koty when they were in high school, but now they were just very close friends. Mel had moved to West Virginia about two years ago. She and her partner Gina had bought some property in the mountains and built a house on it. They said that they were tired of the city life; they needed to be able to breathe.

Koty would usually them about twice a year on her vacations. Since she had nothing but time on her hands now, she figured she would go there and get her mind off of certain things, and put

things, back into perspective.

"Hello, Koty. Are you still with me? I asked you how long you were planning to stay?"

Coming back down to Earth, Koty shook her head. "I don't know. I've been cleared to go back to work next Monday, but only for desk duty, and I can't stand to do any desk work. Actually, I still have vacation time. Captain Riggs told me to take as much time as I needed, so I'm not sure how long I'll be. I'll just have to see how things go when I get there. I'm tired of this house James; I'm going stir crazy.

"You know how much I love it there. I never want to come back. Get that look off of your face. You know damn well I'll be back. I wouldn't be able to live without seeing your mean mug every couple of days or so."

Jamie laughed and patted Koty on the back. "I know what you need my friend. You need to get laid."

Koty snapped her jaw shut, then they both busted out laughing.

"You're a pervrt James."

Koty called Mel first thing Sunday morning.

"Koty! What's going on girl, when are you coming up here to see us?"

Koty smiled at her friend's enthusiasm. "Well, that's why I'm calling you now. I need a break, and I'd like to come up tomorrow if you don't already have plans, and it's ok with Gina."

"Hell yes it's ok. Even if I had plans I would change them." Mel said happily. "I'll have to work a couple hours a day, but we'll have the rest of the days and nights to play. Not that I have to work mind you. Hell, Dad left enough money for me to live two lifetimes without ever having to lift a finger. I do what I do because I like it."

"Just what is it you are doing Mel?"

"I'm working for the Wildlife Preservation and doing a lot of rescue work for injured wildlife. Gina and I both are doing it. It's really kind of cool."

Koty and Mel talked for about ten more minutes, and Koty told her that she would see them early in the evening the next day.

Koty met Monty and Chris that afternoon at the Golden Coral for lunch.

"Look guys," Koty told them after taking a sip of her tea, "I'm going to visit Mel and Gina for a little while. Can you check on my place every now and then?"

Chris looked at Koty for a moment. "How long is a little while Koty?"

"Um...I'm not sure yet. I'll see how it goes while I'm up there."

Now Monty eyed her suspiciously. "What's going on Sis?"

"Nothing's going on. Look guys, I just need to get away for a little while. I'm feeling a bit cooped up in that house, and you know there is nothing better than the mountains to give me the space that I need." Shrugging her shoulders, she said. "I'm due for vacation anyway so the timing is right."

She pushed her half eaten plate of food away from her. "Look you two, quit looking at me like I'm gonna break in two. I'm fine. Really. I'm just gonna use the time that I have off to do some relaxing, and breathe in some real fresh mountain air."

Chapter Twenty-Six

Koty pulled into Mel and Gina's driveway at 6:30 Monday evening, and Mel was already at her car door before Koty could even get it open. Grabbing her as she got out of the car, Mel hugged and kissed her. "God it's really good to see you chica, it's been way too long." She held Koty at arms length and raised her brow. "You're losing far too much weight girl. Come on in, Gina has supper ready for you."

Koty had almost forgotten just how beautiful the mountains were. Every time that she felt she needed a break, she and Tina would come to visit them. Tina had always liked Mel and Gina both. She just hated the mountains. Every time they had come, Tina was always in a hurry to leave. Koty smiled at the fact that she could stay as long as she felt like it. She would enjoy the mountains, and her friends.

Looking around her, she remembered all of the walks she would take through the woods, and down to the lake at the edge of Mel's property. *'Man, we sure had some great parties down at that lake.'* Gina would always bring down a sound system that they had loaded in the back of her truck, so they could listen to hours of great music.

Koty also remembered the many times that she and Tina had skinny-dipped in that lake. She had often thought that, that was one of the only things that Tina had liked about the place.

When the moon was high, it was breathtakingly serene. To Koty, the whole place was breathtaking. It was like being a million miles from nowhere, with nothing but the sounds of the wind and animals as background music. No sirens or horns blowing, nothing but the sound of peace.

Koty shook off the memories as she grabbed Mel's hand. "God it feels great to be up here. I never fully remember the beauty of this place until I come back and see it all again. I sure have missed you guys."

They stayed up late that night talking about what was going on in each other's lives. Mel was a little upset that neither Koty, Chris nor Jamie had called her when Koty had went into the hospital. Koty had explained that if it had been any worse than what it was, they would have.

She also told her friends about how Jamie, Trish, and herself had walked into that dance club, and caught Tina with that other woman. Jamie had called Mel and Gina, when Koty kicked Tina out, but she didn't go into a lot of details, so they didn't know the whole story. Koty also told them about the drug bust, and how she came about meeting Dr. Kasey Brooks. Finally around two thirty in the morning they said their goodnights.

The next morning, Koty was out in the barn where Mel and Gina kept a lot of their rescue animals. She was leaning against a post talking to Mel when something furry climbed up on her shoulder, and then down her back. Screaming and then calling for Mel, she started to dance in circles trying to grab at her back.

Gina was laughing so hard she dropped to her knees in fear that she would pee her pants.

"Koty!" Mel said reaching for her, "Shit girl, calm down. It's just a baby raccoon!"

"Baby my ass, do you see them fucking teeth? God Mel, get this thing off of me!"

By now Mel was laughing so hard that she had tears in her eyes. She gently took the baby off of Koty's back and held it close to her. "Jesus Koty, you scared the shit out of the poor thing."

"I scared it? What in the hell do you think it did to me Mel?" She asked breathlessly.

Mel went to hand Koty the baby raccoon, but Koty almost fell down backing away from it.

"Oh no you don't Mel, you keep that Satan-spawned fur-ball away from me."

"God Koty, what a big sissy you are. You're one of the toughest women that I know, and a bad ass detective, but you're afraid of a little baby raccoon. You are priceless Honey."

Gina, after composing herself, and smothering her laughter, got to her feet and patted Koty on the back. "It's ok Koty," she said as she wiped the tears from her eyes, "I was afraid of them at first too. It took me quite a while to get use to all of these animals. Now they are so much a part of our lives we sometimes forget that not everyone is used to them."

Later that evening they sat on the side deck of the house that overlooked one of the most beautiful sceneries that Koty had ever seen. Sipping their drinks and finishing their steaks, they watched the sun set.

"This is one of my favorite things about this place." Koty told them as she propped her feet up on the rail. "Of course being with you guys, is the best thing. I've really missed ya'll."

"This scenery is just the thing that made us decide to build the house on this spot." Mel said as she handed Koty a fresh drink. "When we stood in this open area we knew right then and there that we wanted to build here. Sometimes at night we will be sitting here and we'll watch a herd of deer wander around right over there at that patch of tree's. They always see us sitting here, but they don't seem to really mind. It's like they know we won't hurt them, and we are just here to watch. It's quite an awesome feeling."

Chapter Twenty-Seven

By Monday morning Kasey was pacing the floor. She couldn't decide what to do about Koty. She wanted to be with her so bad it was killing her. She knew Koty was upset with her, and she was quite sure that she wouldn't call.

Twice now she turned down Koty's advances. Not that she really wanted to, but she thought she was doing the right thing. *'She probably thinks you're nothing but a big tease you jerk.*

After two hours of debating on what to do, she finally decided to cave in and call. After the fifth ring, the answering machine picked up and she hung up the phone. She refused to leave a message. She wanted to talk to Koty, not her stupid answering machine. She tried calling again at nine o'clock and once more at eleven. Still all she got was the machine.

When Kasey got home from work on Tuesday she tried again. No answer. No answer once again on Wednesday, so she decided to finally leave a message. "Um...Hi Koty, it's Kasey. I've been trying to call you since Monday but I guess I just keep missing you at home. I'm sure that you are busy but if you have the time, I really want to talk to you. Koty, please call me as soon as you get in. It doesn't matter what time. Anyway...please call. Bye."

Kasey waited until one in the morning on Thursday for Koty to call. Koty did not call. After taking a long hot shower, she finally decided to just go to bed.

Friday afternoon, Kasey met up with Chris for lunch, and then they planned to go over to the new office and meet with the contractor. Neither one of them could wait to get it up and running.

"Hey Kasey, how was your morning?" Chris looked at her with concern on her face. "You look pretty beat, bad night at the Hospital?"

"No, I was off last night, but I was up late. I hope I don't look like I feel." She said with a smile.

The waiter brought their food and drinks, and Kasey took a long swallow of her coke. Absently, she wiped the condensation from the glass and contemplated asking Chris about Koty. "Uh Chris...have you talked to Koty lately?"

"Yeah, I talked to her on Wednesday night. She's in West Virginia, why?"

"West Virginia?" Kasey asked stunned. "What is she doing there?"

Chris leaned her elbows on the table and said with a frown, "Some friends that she went to school with live up there. She goes to the mountains when she needs what she says is space and down time. I gotta tell you, she really needed the down time this time. I've never seen her this low. Even when she kicked Tina out she wasn't this bad."

Chris took a sip of her drink and then continued. "Koty is going through a lot right now. She puts on a tough act, but she can be really fragile at times as well. Nobody but those that are very close to her would even know something was out of wack with her." Chris gave a slight smile. "This past year has not been that kind to her, but she will be fine. When she gets enough 'space' as she calls it, she will be back ready to take on the world."

Noticing the almost sad look on her friends face, Chris asked, "Kasey, what's going on, are you ok?"

"Yes...No...I've been trying to call her, and wondered why I couldn't seem to catch her."

Chris silently stared at Kasey for a moment then said, "Kasey, I'm not really sure what's going on with you and Koty, and it's probably none of my business, but I do know that she cares a lot for you. It's not my place to say that, but..."

"Chris, is Koty and Tina going to get back together?"

'Bingo.' "What I do know Kasey, is that Koty gives one hundred percent to her relationships. Tina hurt her pretty badly. I'm not sure what she is feeling right now, but I don't believe that she will take Tina back. Why do you ask? Do you think they are going to get back together?"

"I don't know Chris, I really don't know. I think that in her own shallow way, Tina is still in love with her."

"Kasey, you might be right on that, but I think Koty is smart enough not to fall for it. Koty loved her deeply, but I think Tina messed up big time when she screwed around on her."

They changed the subject and finished their lunch. On the way over to the new office, they discussed hiring a few people to help them when they opened.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

Koty called her Captain and requested one of the weeks that she had left for vacation. She actually had two weeks to take, but since she had already been off for two weeks from her shooting, she figure one more was all she needed.

"Koty," he had said to her, "I want you to take as much time as you need, don't come back until you are ready. Just tell me you are coming back. This place is not the same since you haven't

been here to pick on everyone. The guy's really miss you."

She had reassured him that she definitely would be back; she just needed a little more time. She told him that she would call him as soon as she got back to town and keep him posted.

She knew that her job was not on the line, but she didn't want to push her luck. She was smart enough to know that anybody could be replaced. She still liked her job enough not to let that happen.

The following Wednesday found Koty giving hugs, and saying goodbye to Mel and Gina. "Thank you guys for putting up with me for as long as you did."

"Yeah Koty, cause you really were a handfull to have here." Melody hugged the detective back. Don't wait so damn long the next time you come up here."

"I promise not to stay away for so long again. I love you guys, and I'll see ya'll soon, bye." Koty waved one last time before she pulled her jag away from her friends.

She took the long way home, enjoying the mountain views and scenery. She decided to get a hotel room instead of driving all the way home. She found a Motel 6 and pulled into the parking lot. She knew that she wouldn't find a better hotel on these back country roads.

Koty really had a great time with Mel and Gina for the time that she had spent with them. She never did let them talk her into holding any of those furry creatures though. Tough cop or not, she just couldn't make herself do it.

She did promise though, that when they had another fund-raiser that they were to call and let her know, and she would send them a very healthy check. She had told them that she loved all animals; she just didn't want to hold them.

She had slept in late, then had brunch at the hotel's restaurant. She visited a few antique shops that were just a couple of towns away, but hadn't seen anything that caught her eye enough to buy it. Not that she was much into antiques anyway, but always enjoyed looking.

Small towns had always interested her, with everyone knowing everyone. Hell, the post office was the Greyhound bus station, slash video store. There must have been a whopping three stoplights in the whole town.

'Andy's Market' was their great big grocery store, and the Police station was about the size of a 7-11 with maybe three cars. Probably the worst crime here was the local boys shooting out mailboxes and street signs with BB guns for some Saturday night fun.

Debating wehther she would stay another night in the small quaint town or not, she decided to go ahead and drive home. She could always stop in another small town later if the urge hit her. It's not like she was in a great big hurry to get home. *'What for? Oh get over yourself Koty. What a wimp you are turning out to be.'*

She did stop at another small town about 80 miles out for an early supper. Two more antique shops and she was finally on her way home. She had to admit, she felt a lot better now than she did when she first headed out to see Mel.

Maybe she was on the way to getting her life back on track now. This past year had seemed like she was living someone else's screwed up life.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

By the time Koty walked into her house that evening it was eleven o'clock. She kicked off her shoes, then sat down to listen to her messages and go through her mail.

She was erasing most of the messages as soon as they would start if it wasn't anyone she knew. She was about to erase the next one when she heard Kasey's voice. Her heart constricted and started to pound. She played the message three times trying to hear a hidden message. *'She was probably calling to tell me to get lost or something. Shit, do I call her back?'*

She went to make herself a drink and then change into a pair of boxers, contemplating calling her back or not. *'Oh well what else could I lose?'* "Oh well, here goes nothing." She dialed her number.

"Hello?"

"Um...hi Kasey, it's Koty. I just got your..."

"Koty, where are you, are you at home? When did you get there?" Kasey was speaking so fast that Koty could barely understand her.

"I just got home. I sat down to get my messages and heard yours. So what's up?"

"Koty...can I come over for a few minutes?"

"Well yeah...You want to tell me what's going on Kasey?"

"I'll be there in ten minutes Koty, I'll talk to you then."

"Kasey? Kasey?" Nothing but a dial tone. "Shit!"

Exasperated, Koty went to fix herself another drink. She was very tired, and wasn't sure if she was ready for Kasey's anger. She took her drink to her recliner and sat down to wait.

Just as she was getting ready to finish off the drink, there was a knock at the door and she opened it.

Kasey walked past her, and then turned while Koty closed the door. "I've got one thing to say to

you Dakota. Never, and I mean never, walk away from me like that again."

Then she was in Koty's arms kissing her with a passion so raw that it made them both tremble. What seemed like an eternity later, they stopped and pulled apart.

"Show me your bedroom Koty, and don't you even think about telling me no."

In a bit of a daze, Koty took Kasey's hand and led her towards the bedroom, stopping several times along the way to kiss her, and nuzzle her neck. *'Oh Jesus, is this really happening?'*

In the bedroom, Koty's hands were shaking so bad she was having problems unbuttoning Kasey's shirt. Kissing her again, Koty got frustrated and ripped her shirt apart sending buttons popping like tiny missiles shooting at the walls causing Kasey to moan from deep within.

Koty pulled back to get a look at her and sucked in her breath. *'Oh my, no bra and so full.'* "Oh Jesus Kasey." Koty said as she took a hard nipple into her mouth. "God Baby, you are so unbelievably sexy, I've waited for so long to do this, you just don't have any idea."

Taking Kasey's other breast in her mouth, Koty let out a moan. All of a sudden her hands seemed to be everywhere on Kasey. She couldn't decide if she wanted to kiss her, or continue with her feast.

"Koty, I can't stand up much longer. My legs are getting ready to give out."

Koty slowly backed her to the bed still kissing her. She was afraid that if she let loose, Kasey would change her mind and leave. There was no way in hell she was going to release this Goddess.

They shed their clothes in record time, and Koty gently lay Kasey on the bed. She lay her body against the full length of Kasey's, and slipped her thigh between her legs. "Baby, please tell me that this isn't a dream."

Kasey didn't answer her, she just pulled her even closer to her body, and returned Koty's passion like there was going to be no tomorrow.

Koty slowly removed her thigh and slipped her hand in place of it never leaving the skin untouched. She thought that she would absolutely die when she felt how wet Kasey was.

A low growl came from Kasey as she started kissing Koty's neck. Koty slowly slid her fingers back and forth with just a slight pressure. Koty hissed, "Oh God" as Kasey sucked her neck just short of marking her.

Koty feasted hungrily on Kasey's body taking one nipple at a time into her mouth, then slowly moving all over her body with her tongue. *'Goddess, her body is even more beautiful than I thought it would be.'*

Koty just couldn't seem to get enough of her. Kasey was ready to protest when Koty went to remove her hand. But when Koty started to slide down her, she sweated with anticipation.

"I need to taste you Baby." Then Koty placed her mouth where her hand just left, and Kasey began a ride to ecstasy like none she had ever felt before in her life.

As Kasey neared the point of no return, she gripped the sheets and called out Koty's name. After catching her breath, she pulled Koty up to her and slowly kissed her. Tasting herself on Koty's lips made her heat rise again.

She would take her time making love to this woman. She would do her utmost best to make her forget all about Tina. She would do her utmost best to make her forget about any other woman period.

Slowly she rolled Koty onto her back and proceeded to show her just how she felt about her. What she couldn't say in words, she would show her by touch. "Tell me what you want Honey. Just tell me and I'll do it."

"I want you Kasey, that's all I ever wanted. I think that I will die if you don't make love to me."

Kasey slipped her hand between Koty's legs and felt her wetness. "Oh God Koty, you are so wet!" She pulled her fingers away, and slowly put one in her mouth to taste Koty's wetness.

Koty groaned loudly, and squirmed beneath Kasey. "Jesus Kasey, you are melting me!"

"Honey, I plan to do so much more than melt you. Relax, and let me have my way with you."

Kasey lifted Koty's hips, and slowly slid down her body to bring Koty to her mouth. Just the scent of Koty was enough to make Kasey wet all over again. She took Koty into her mouth and began her feast, bringing her to the point of no return.

Koty arched her back, and pulled the sheets clean off of the bed, as she reached a peak that surely made her body leave this world completely. Leaving her gasping to fill her lungs with much needed oxygen. "Jesus Kasey, oh God!"

They made love until three in the morning, when neither one of them could hardly move. Koty pulled the covers over them, and shut off the bedside light.

'This woman is absolutely incredible. Where has she been all of my life, and what did I do to deserve this?' Pulling Kasey even closer to her, she kissed her lips one more time, smiled, and then they finally slept.

Chapter Thirty

Koty awoke to Kasey kissing her neck. Groaning, Koty pulled her up on top of her cupping both of her breasts in her hands. Sliding her hands to her waist, Koty took one into her mouth, then

switched to the other. "I could do this for days." She told Kasey as she pulled a hard nipple into her mouth. "You taste soooo good."

It didn't take long before they were both wet and ready. Once again they made love several times, and for the first time in years, Kasey was late for work.

The first break that she was able to get, Kasey called Koty. "Hey Honey, you still in bed?"

"The same place, and the same way that you left me this morning. I haven't even gotten up to scrounge for breakfast and I'm starving."

Kasey laughed in that low husky voice, "I'm rather hungry myself, but I can't satisfy my craving until later."

Koty groaned. "Will you stay with me tonight Kasey?"

"Are you going to fix me dinner Koty?"

"I...uh..."

Laughing, Kasey said, "I'm teasing you Koty, I'll pick something up on my way over tonight."

Kasey sat back in her chair after hanging up the phone with Koty, and thought about the night before. Never before had a woman made her feel the way that Koty had made her feel. She had had some outstanding sex before, but with Koty, it was erotic, and each time was even better than the last. It wasn't just the sex either, it was the way that Koty had touched and held her last night. Like she had reached deep inside her soul and wrapped herself around her heart. It was like finding something she never even knew she had missed.

Kasey knew that no matter what, she wanted to hold on to this woman. She would take whatever Koty had to offer. She didn't seem to have a choice. Her body and soul had made a decision for her, and she could no longer hold back.

She was already addicted. *'No wonder Tina is still in love with her. Koty is like this dynamic drug that keeps a junky coming back for more, and never being able to completely satisfy the craving.'*

Kasey and Koty were lying in bed after making love for the second time that night. Kasey had her head lying on Koty's chest while Koty ran her fingers through Kasey's long blonde hair.

"I knew that you would be this way in bed Kasey, you would have to be. You are the most sexiest woman I have ever met."

Kasey pulled herself up to Koty and kissed her. "You are only saying that because you finally got me into your bed."

Koty pulled Kasey's chin up so she had to look her in the eyes. "No Kasey, I mean every word that I said."

Kasey lie her head back down on Koty's chest. She couldn't speak. Silent tears formed in her eyes, and she was sure that Koty could hear her heart getting ready to thump right out of her chest.

For the next two months, Koty and Kasey spent most of their nights together. They would go to dinner, the movies, stay at home and watch T.V, and make love every night, but neither one of them would speak of their love for each other.

Since Kasey had not mentioned the word to her, Koty vowed that she would not be the first to say it. Oh, she knew that she was totally gone and in love with Kasey, but somehow figured that as long as she didn't say the words, it would make it easier and hurt less if it didn't work out between the two.

Kasey had no doubts about her feelings for Koty. The more time she spent with her, the deeper her love for Koty got. It seemed to her that maybe Koty was afraid of commitment though. So she would not reveal her true feelings for fear of scaring Koty off. She would not say anything until she knew for sure what Koty's feelings were.

Then there was Tina. Tina had called several times while she was over at Koty's house. Once, Kasey had answered the phone, and Tina was very short with her demanding to speak to Koty.

Koty was always very brief with Tina, and would tell her that she was busy. She had asked Kasey to ignore the phone calls, that Tina was just trying to be a shit.

Kasey found it hard to ignore the calls, and even harder to ignore Tina. She felt though, that if Koty would just express her feelings for her, everything would be ok.

"Um, come here Baby and let me hold you until you fall asleep." Koty told Kasey as she pulled her close and lightly kissed her lips. "If we don't start getting more than just three hours of sleep a night, we are going to wither away."

Chapter Thirty-One

Jamie and Trish were having their annual Christmas party. A party where all the couples had to bring an ornament for the tree. It had been a tradition for the last five years.

Koty and Kasey stopped at the 'Christmas Shop', a cute little shop that was open only from October to the end of December. Looking around, they finally found a pretty little crystal angel sitting on a cloud.

"Oh Koty, this is so cute. I think it's perfect don't you?"

"Yes, it is very pretty. Just like you Baby." The detective grinned.

"Oh stop. Come on or we will be late."

"Asshole!" Koty yelled as yet another car pulled out in front of her. Pressing the accelerator and pulling around the vehicle, Koty said, "This is the part that I hate about the holidays, too damn much traffic."

"Koty Honey, if you don't slow down, you're going to get a ticket."

Koty reached for Kasey's hand. "That's ok baby, I know some people at the police station."

At the door, Trish and Jamie both gave Kasey a hug.

"You two make yourself comfortable. There is spiked punch and other various alcohol in the kitchen. Oh and Kasey, there is also plenty of coke if you don't feel like any hard stuff." Trish told them.

"Thanks Trish. I think that's what I'll start with." Kasey said as she turned to Koty. "I'll bring you back a drink Honey."

As Trish and Kasey went to the kitchen to make the drinks, Jamie pulled Koty aside. "Look Koty, I invited a friend from work, and she just called and told me she was bringing Tina with her. I hope that's not going to be a problem with you or Kasey."

"Kasey still doesn't do to well with all of that, but it should be ok. If Tina can't handle seeing us together then she will either have to get over it, or find some other party to go to. It should be ok, we'll see."

'Oh boy, this should be interesting. Kasey gets kinda clammy just at the mention of Tina's name. Hopefully there won't be a problem; I don't want Kasey to feel uncomfortable in any way. Please Tina, behave.'

Trish and Kasey walked up and handed them their drinks, and Trish gave Jamie a knowing glance of what Jamie had just informed Koty of. "Ok, get rid of those serious faces you two, and lets go join the party and have some fun."

An hour later, Koty and Kasey were sitting on the loveseat talking to two other couples. They both looked up at the same time as they heard someone coming in the door. Koty felt Kasey's body tense and go rigid as Tina walked in with some woman.

Setting her drink on the table beside her, Kasey turned and looked at Koty with a frown. Letting out a deep sigh, she went to stand but Koty grabbed her hand to stop her from moving.

"Kasey," she whispered quickly. "Please stay here with me. I swear to you Baby I didn't know that she was coming until Jamie told me when we got here. She said that she invited a woman from work and just found out that she was bringing Tina with her. Please Baby, sit back down."

Kasey slowly relaxed back in her seat. Without releasing Koty's hand, she listened while Koty finished her conversation with the other couples.

'Son of a bitch! Ok, get a grip Kasey. Koty is telling the truth, and you will just have to act like an adult. Shit!'

Koty refused to acknowledge the smile that Tina sent in her direction. She picked up her drink and leaned even closer to Kasey.

'Let the games begin!' "I'll be right back Baby, I'm gonna get us some more to drink." Koty said as she made her way to the kitchen.

Jamie watched as Tina followed right behind her and decided that maybe she should go stand by the door un-noticed just in case.

As Koty was fixing her drink, she felt a hand slide across her back then around her waist. In a low sexy voice, she heard, "God Koty, you are really looking good. So how have you been?"

Koty set her glass on the counter and pulled herself from Tina's grasp. "Tina, please don't try to cause any problems tonight."

Tina leaned against the counter and folded her arms across her chest. In her very famous Tina pout, she said, "I'm not here to cause you any grief Dakota, but you don't have to treat me like I have the Black Plague either." She came a little closer. "Koty, we were lovers..."

"That's just it Tina, we were. Not any more. That was before you decided that I wasn't enough for you so you had to go and spread your wings and your legs to God only knows how many women."

Tina felt like she had been slapped. As she tried to reach for Koty one more time, they both heard, "Enjoying the party guy's?"

Jamie asked, coming through the door causing Tina to drop her hand and step back away from Koty. Releasing a sigh, she sadly looked once more at Koty then turned and left the kitchen.

"Thanks Jamie."

"Think nothing of it. I saw her follow you in here and wanted to make sure she wasn't gonna try and start anything with you."

Rubbing Koty's shoulders for a minute, she turned to the cooler that was on the counter and grabbed herself a beer.

"She's still in love with you, you know."

"It's a little too late for that Jamie. She should have tried to remember that when she started fucking women behind my back."

"I know that babes. Besides, Trish and Kasey have become fast friends. I think Trish would kill you if you stopped seeing Kasey. Then she would probably come after me thinking that I should have been able to do something about it. She always got along ok with Tina, but there is something special about Kasey. I think it's maybe a shopping thing. Man has she been doing some shopping since them two hooked up. Anyway, let's go get the two sexiest women here and have some fun."

When Koty made it back to her seat, Kasey was not smiling, nor would she look Koty in the eyes.

She had seen Tina follow Koty into the kitchen and became very agitated. *'That woman has a hell of a nerve!'*

Koty was unsure of what to do at first. She sat Kasey's drink on the table, then leaned over and kissed her passionately. This made Kasey smile. *'Phew, not good Koty my girl. That was not good.'*

"Are you having fun Baby?"

"I am now, dance with me Koty."

Pulling Koty to the middle of the living room, which had been turned into a dance floor, Kasey pulled Koty close to her body and buried her face into face into her neck.

Tina must have taken the hint because for the rest of the night, she had stayed on the other side of the room away from them. Every once and awhile, Kasey would catch her watching Koty from the distance with a sad look on her face.

Koty didn't seem to notice though, and it almost made Kasey feel sorry for her. Almost. Kasey had never really been much on the jealousy thing, but Tina seemed to bring the worst out in her. *'She is still in love with Koty. Tough! She had her chance.'*

Chapter Thirty-Two

Much later that night, Koty pulled Kasey close to her, then adjusted the covers tightly around her lover. "I think winter has finally showed it's ugly face, and it's gonna be a cold one. I wonder if we'll get much snow this year?"

Virginia got a lot of snow in the winter, but not much in Virginia Beach. They were too close to the ocean and the Chesapeake Bay. Koty remembered back to the blizzard of 1980. *'Now that*

was a storm.'

She remembered that she, Jamie, and their girlfriends at the time almost got snowed in at the Norfolk Scope when the Ringling Brothers Circus had come to town. If it wasn't for Monty and his buddy, who had a huge four wheel drive truck came to their rescue, they would have had to stay with the rest of the people who were snowed in there. Still to this day, everyone jokes about it always snowing in February whenever the circus was in town.

There hasn't been a snow like that since then. Hopefully there wouldn't be for a long time as far as Koty was concerned.

"Koty, if you are cold, I know a way to warm you up." Kasey told her as she climbed on top of Koty, kissing her deeply and slipping her thigh between Koty's legs.

"Mmm."

The sound of Koty's little moan urged Kasey more, and she moved her lips down to Koty's breast.

Kasey had a way of doing something with her tongue that drove Koty absolutely wild. By the time that she got her fingers between her thighs, Koty was soaking wet.

"Jesus Kasey, what is it that you do to me? God, you take my breath away!"

"I love pleasing you Koty, you will never know how much." Kasey purred as she slid even further down Koty's body. By the time that she reached her destination, Koty was sweating and squirming.

"Oh God." Was all that Koty could say before a multitude of colors exploded behind her eyes. As she reached to pull Kasey up to her side, she barely had the strength to do so. "Baby, let me catch my breath and I'll show you just how much I love pleasing you too."

And Koty did. She took Kasey to a realm of pleasure that she had never been to before. Even with their previous lovemaking. Koty never ceased to amaze her on how she made her feel.

"Ungh, I need some water Honey," Kasey told the detective. "Ill be right back. Want me to bring you something?"

"Yeah I do, but I'll be able to get it as soon as you come back to bed."

"Down girl, I thought I was going to die just then. You need to let my body regroup after that."

She leaned over to give Koty a quick kiss that suddenly turned passionate. Kasey's body started to burn again. "Wait, wait Honey. Oh my God Koty don't touch me!" Kasey jumped from the bed and quickly left the room.

"Hey Hey." Koty chuckled watching the beautiful rear view as her lover went through the door.
"Hurry back Baby."

"You have no idea what you do to me Koty." Kasey told her as she snuggled up to her.

"If it's anything even close to what you do to me then I definitely have a clue sweetheart."

Now they were kicking the covers off, complaining that it was hot. The wind and the cold was whipping up outside, but it was rather toasty in the bed.

Chapter Thirty-Three

Koty, Kasey, Monty, and Chris had been talking about getting together and going skiing up at Wintergreen. Chris got a deal on lodging and lift tickets so she went ahead and purchased the tickets for the four of them to go.

The day before they were supposed to leave, Kasey got a call from her mother telling her that her father had been rushed to the hospital.

She had always been really close to both of her parents and didn't get to see them often since they moved to Houston ten years ago. She went to see them as often as possible, but that was only two or three times a year. Even though she talked to them three or four times a month, it wasn't the same.

Koty told Kasey that she would wait to go skiing another time when they could both go together, but Kasey insisted that she go with Monty and Chris.

"Honey, please still go with them and have a good time. I am flying out of here tonight and I wouldn't be with you anyway if I stayed behind. Besides, I promise to make it up to you when I get back ok?" She told Koty as she nuzzled her neck.

"If you keep that up Kasey, you aren't going anywhere."

"Well...we do have a little time before I have to go to the airport. Come into the bedroom Honey and let me show you how much I'm going to miss you."

Kasey flew to Houston out of Norfolk's Intercontinental Airport that evening. Her mother had told her that her brother Toby, and sister Lynn would be there to pick her up when she arrived.

Lynn had come to see her right before she had met Koty, but she hadn't seen Toby in eight months.

Toby was the only one in her family that originally had a problem with Kasey's sexual

preference. After about a year though he finally came around and told her that it didn't matter. She was his sister and he loved her no matter what. If anyone else had a problem with it they would have to deal with him.

"Besides, he confessed to her, you're way cuter than I am, and I was just afraid that you would steal my girlfriends"

Lynn, two years older than Kasey, had told her that she always knew, or at least had a suspicion about her. Even though Kasey had boyfriends from school in the past, there never seemed to be anyone who really got her attention. No one except a few girls that Kasey had ran around with. When Kasey came out to her family, no one was surprised except for maybe Kasey herself.

She realized in high school that she was looking more and more at the other girls, thinking that this one was cute, and that one was even cuter. She remembered in the ninth grade after volleyball practice when she first saw Jenny Graham in the showers. She couldn't seem to take her eyes off of her. She was mesmerized by the beauty of her body. She also remembered the flash of heat that generated between her legs at the sight of the young woman's nakedness.

Right at that moment, Kasey knew that she was hooked on the female body. No guy had ever made her body react the way that Jenny's did that day.

Then there was her first kiss. Amy Harvey. She had been tutoring Amy in math for about a month in tenth grade. They were at Amy's house in her bedroom when Amy suddenly leaned over and kissed her. God what soft lips she had.

They had started to hang out a lot after that. Going to the movies, the mall, or just hanging out in each other's bedrooms watching T.V. They had kissed and held each other often, but that is as far as it went.

Right about the time that Kasey had gotten the nerve up to ask Amy if they could go further than kisses, Bobby Johnson had asked Amy to the High School dance.

Suddenly out of the blue, Amy started dating Bobby, and stopped hanging out with Kasey. She wouldn't return Kasey's calls, and when Kasey saw her at school she would tell her she had to hurry and go. Amy had never given her an explanation as to what happened.

Her first year in collage she shared a dorm room with Emily Nelson. They were taking the same classes together, and enjoyed a lot of the same things. One night after a few of them had come back from a party, they were in their room alone.

"Kasey," Emily had said nervously as she moved closer to her. "I really want to do something, but I don't want you to hate me, or slap me for it."

*Kasey had swallowed hard. "Just tell me what it is you want Em."
"I can't tell you, I have to show you."*

"Then why... um...why don't you just show me?" Kasey had said in that sweet husky voice.

Emily had reached for her and cupped Kasey's chin in her hand. Leaning closer to Kasey, she kissed her softly. After that first kiss, neither one could hold back.

Hands and mouths were suddenly everywhere. The first time that Emily took one of Kasey's full nipples in her hungry mouth; Kasey thought that the floor was going to drop out from underneath her.

They had stopped going out as much, and their friends told them they were proud of them for spending more time with their studies and less time going out and partying. They had no clue what was going on behind their closed door.

They had been lovers for a year and a half when Emily came in one night after spending the day with her parents, crying. She had told Kasey that her family was moving overseas and they wanted her to go with them. It was an excellent opportunity for Emily to study abroad.

They had spent the night crying and making love. They promised each other to write as often as possible, and to send pictures. They kept in touch for about two years until the letters got fewer and fewer in between.

One of the last letters that Kasey had received, Emily had told her that she was a surgeon in Australia, and she and her lover had been together for five years.

Kasey had a few lovers over the years, but nothing really serious until she had met Samantha. The breakup with Sam had hurt her deeply. She used to pray that someday they would get back together, but like one of Garth Brook's song goes, 'Sometimes Gods greatest gifts are unanswered prayers.' Otherwise, she would have never met Koty.

Chapter Thirty-Four

A hand on her shoulder brought Kasey back to the present. She turned and hugged Toby then reached for Lynn with tears in her eyes. "What happened guys, how is he?"

Lynn released her after a kiss on the cheek. "He had a heart attack Kase. It was pretty scary there for a while, but he's in stable condition now. Mom is with him now, and we've already seen him so you go in and see him. "Talk to him Honey, just don't expect him to respond right now, he's still pretty out of it. Listen to me tell you, the family doctor, what to do!"

"It's ok Lynn. I'll be right back. Is mom ok?"

"She is now, and she'll be even better when she sees you. Now go."

Kasey quietly slipped into the room and walked over to her mother, putting her arm around her shoulders.

"Kasey Baby you're here." With tears in her eyes, her mother held her close for a long time. Finally releasing her she told Kasey that he was out of immediate danger, but they weren't sure yet what kind of damage had been done. "He's resting peacefully right now Baby, so why don't we join your brother and sister and we'll go down to the vending area for some coffee."

Her mother had told Kasey that her father had been out in the garage looking for a wrench when she heard a banging noise. When she went to see what had happened, she found him lying on the floor holding his hand over his heart.

"God, I just don't know what I would do if something happened to him Kasey. We've been together for forty one years, I don't know anything else."

Tears started to fill her mothers eyes once again, and Kasey reached for her hand and gave it a big squeeze. "It's going to be alright mom. I've seen patients live long and normal lives after massive heart attacks as long as they take care of themselves. He will need to watch his diet, and learn to relax more. Plus he will need to give up them damn cigars of his."

"As a matter of fact Kasey, he gave those up about a month ago, so that will be a start. He started complaining that they stunk, and were making him feel bad."

"Well I'm glad to hear that, it's about damn time."

"Watch your language young lady," her mom smiled, patting Kasey on the butt.

"Sorry mom. Lets go find Toby and Lynn, I could really use some coffee."

Kasey's father, a retired tugboat captain, smoked expensive cigars ever since she could remember. He wouldn't be caught dead smoking any cheap ones either. If all they had were cheap ones, he would do totally without until he could get what he wanted.

He was only allowed to smoke them in the den because her mother told him he wasn't going to stink up the whole house with them, and they had put one of them Ion filters in there. Most of the time though, he would go out on the porch though to smoke them.

"What's this I hear from mom about a new love interest in you're life Kasey?" Lynn asked her when they sat down with their coffee.

Kasey grinned from ear to ear. "Her name is Koty. She's a detective in Virginia Beach, and she is absolutely the best thing that has ever happened to me."

"Wow, it sounds pretty serious. So when do we get to meet this wonderful woman, and is there going to be wedding bells in the near future?" They all laughed at this.

"Toby will probably just try and hit on her when he meets her." Lynn said as she ruffled her brother's hair.

At twenty-eight, Toby was an electrician, and doing very well for himself. He still played the field a lot, but said it was because he was still looking for Mrs. Right.

Lynn was a collage professor at the University of North Carolina. Though Lynn was straight, she had a large following of lesbians that were always signing up for her classes. Lynn and Kasey looked so much alike they could almost pass as twins. When one of her students found out about Kasey, she hounded Lynn for months to get her phone number.

Kasey pulled a picture of Koty out of her wallet and passed it to Toby. As expected, Toby's eyes about popped out of their sockets when he saw her.

"Man, she's hot Kase. Does she have any sisters? I don't care how old they are. Hell, I'll even settle for a mom if she looks like your Koty."

Rolling her eyes, Kasey took the picture from him and passed it to Lynn.

"No Toby, I'm sorry. All she has is a twin brother, and he is married to one of my best friend Chris. Both of her parents died in a car accident when they were seventeen."

"She's quite beautiful Kasey." Her mother said with a smile on her face. She hadn't seen her daughter this happy in such a long time. *'I don't even think she was this happy with Samantha.'*

"I hope we get to meet her soon. We'll see how things are going when your father recuperates from all of this."

Kasey's mother insisted that they go to her house to get some rest. She promised that she would call them if there were any changes in their father's condition.

Kasey had called Koty as soon as she arrived in Houston and had picked up her rental car. Since it was so late now, she figured that she would wait until tomorrow night to call her and fill her in on what was going on.

Lying in an unfamiliar bed, Kasey tossed and turned and was unable to sleep. Getting out of bed to go get herself something to drink, she found Toby and Lynn in their fathers study having a drink.

Finding the Grand Marnier in the bottom of the liquor cabinet, she poured herself a drink and sat down to join them. *'I knew I could count on you dad to have my favorite drink here.'*

They sat for another hour talking about all of the trouble that they used to get into when they younger.

Like the time that Toby and his best friend Johnny Cowen super glued the doors to the gym shut in high school, and when Lynn got turned down for cheerleading just because the captain didn't like her, she stole her shampoo bottle and filled it with Nair. Thank God that no one ever found out about that.

They remembered when Kasey had sliced up all of the tires on Bobby Johnson's mustang just because Amy had went with him to the school dance and she was jealous.

Toby grinned, "Man, we sure did get into some good ones didn't we?"

Slapping her brother playfully on the leg, Kasey told him, "Yeah, but you still do don't you?"

"A little, but not like I used to. Hey, I'm a guy, I can get away with it every now and then."

Finishing up their drinks, they gave each other hugs then went to separate bedrooms. Kasey felt much more relaxed so she figured she would finally be able to get some sleep.

Chapter Thirty-Five

Koty, Chris, and Monty drove to the resort the following morning in Chris's Dodge Durango. The forecast for that area had been calling for heavy snow, and possibly a blizzard.

They arrived at the lodge and checked in before putting on their skiing outfits and hitting the slopes. They were able to ski that day but when they went to go out the next morning they were informed that the slopes were temporarily closed due to blizzard-like conditions.

When they peeked out the door, they couldn't even see five feet in front of them. A little disappointed that they couldn't ski, it was still kind of exciting to be trapped in the lodge.

With nothing else to do, they went to get some Irish Coffees from the bar and then went to sit by the fire. Everyone was glued to the T.V as the weatherman stated that most of the roads were being shut down due to the storm.

"It's a good thing that we already have our rooms here." Chris told them when they found out that the lodge was booked solid.

"Well, we may as well settle in and enjoy ourselves. Look on the bright side. The snow is bound to be great for skiing tomorrow, but there is going to be a lot of people stranded here because of the roads."

After a couple of more hours and several more Irish Coffee's later, Koty told them that she was going to her room to take a nap. They made plans to meet here for dinner around 6:00 o'clock.

As Koty approached the stairs she stopped dead in her tracks at what she saw. There at the foot of them with her hand resting on the rail looking right at her was Tina. *'What the hell, doesn't Tina work anymore?'*

"Koty!" Tina said genuinely surprised.

"Don't you work anymore? What are you doing here Tina?"

"Now that's a silly question. This is my three days off, and I'm here skiing, or was skiing until this damn storm hit."

Tina pointed over to some women by the bar. "Me and some of the girls from the station caught one of those tour busses up here, and now they are saying we probably won't be able to make it out of here today or tonight. Can you believe that shit?"

Koty followed Tina's gaze over to the bar and recognized some of the women that worked with Tina at the fire department. She sighed deeply and turned her attention back to Tina.

"Where are you headed Koty, and where's what's her name?"

"I am going to take a nap, and Kasey is out of town with a family emergency. Chris and Monty are here with me. Now, if you will excuse me..."

Koty walked past Tina then went up the stairs, missing the small smile that reached Tina's lips as she watched her ex-lover walk away from her.

'Jesus Koty, you look even better than you did when we were together.'

Koty was far too tired too worry about Tina right now. She closed the door behind her, stripped out of her clothes then climbed into the bed. As she lay in the quietness of the room, her thoughts turned to Kasey, putting a smile on her face as she fell fast asleep.

After a long and peaceful nap, Koty met Chris and Monty downstairs for dinner and drinks. Lots of drinks. Spirits were pretty high after all of the cocktails they consumed.

"Ya know Chris, I haven't seen Monty drink this much in a long time. I almost forgot how hilarious he is when he's drunk, this is great."

"Hey, I'm not as think as you drunk I am." Monty snorted when he realized what he had just said. "Hmm, maybe I am. Oh well, we are here to have fun."

They partied for a while longer when Chris told Koty that she was taking Monty upstairs and putting him to bed before he fell out at the table. Koty stayed to have one more drink and then headed to her room.

She had just kicked her shoes off and lay on the bed to watch some T.V when she heard a knock on the door. Thinking that it must be Chris, she jumped up and opened the door. Her smile slipped from her face. *'Shit!'*

"Tina."

"Hi Koty, can I talk to you please?"

Koty stepped aside to let her in the door before closing it behind her. *'This can't be a good idea I'm sure.'*

"What do you want Tina?"

"Look Koty, Me and the other women are stranded here because of this stupid ass snow storm. There ain't any rooms left, and there's no way to get to a Hotel. "The lodge has extra pillows and blankets for us all to sleep in the lobby, but I really don't want to sleep on any floor."

"So what is it you want from me Tina?"

"I'm asking if I can camp out in here tonight. Koty, I promise to be on my best behavior. I won't try anything, honest. Look, I know I don't have any right to even ask you this, but please don't make me sleep downstairs."

"No Tina. Why can't you sleep downstairs?"

"Koty, there are too many people down there to be even remotely comfortable. It's not so much as I don't want to sleep on the floor, but it's so crowded."

Koty knew that Tina wasn't lying about the sleeping arrangements. Against her better judgment she gave in. *'I really, really know that this is not a good idea.'*

"Alright Tina, but since you said you don't mind sleeping on the floor, you can pull the pillows off the chairs and sleep there. Don't make me regret it."

"That bed is a kingsize Koty..."

"The floor Tina, or nothing at all."

"Okay, and I promise I won't do anything to make you uncomfortable."

They were sitting on the bed watching some T.V when Koty told her she was going to take a shower. She had been in there for a while when the phone started to ring. Tina, not sure if she should answer it or not, reached over and picked it up.

"Hello?"

"Um...is this Koty Silvers room?"

"Yes it is, she's in the shower though can I help..."

"Who is this?" Kasey said before Tina could finish her sentence."

"This is Tina, who is this?" *'Oh shit!'* Then it dawned on her who it was. *'Uh oh.'*

"Tina!" Kasey repeated in a sharp tone. "Let me speak to Koty."

Koty had just come around the corner from the bathroom and asked Tina who was on the phone. "Um...I think it might be your girlfriend."

'Shit shit shit! This is all I need!'

She took the phone from Tina's out stretched hand. "Kasey?"

"Koty, just what in the hell is going on there and what is that woman doing in your room!?"

"It's a long story Baby, let me explain..."

"Oh Christ, nevermind. Don't tell me...Don't even bother Dakota, no explanations are needed at all. Don't call me, don't come to see me!" Click.

"Kasey? Kase..." Nothing but the dial tone. "Son of a bitch!" Koty yelled as she slammed the phone down, climbed on the bed lying on her stomach and pulled the covers over her head. Tina had been with Koty long enough to know that meant there would be no more conversations tonight. This was Koty's way of clamming up when there was something she didn't want to talk about.

Knowing that she had caused enough problems tonight to last a long tome, Tina turned off the T.V and went to sleep.

The next morning when Koty awoke, she realized that Tina was gone, and she was alone. Rubbing her eyes and pulling herself out of bed, she stumbled to the bathroom. When she came back out she found a note on the table.

**'Koty,
Thanks a million for letting me stay last night. I promised you that I wouldn't cause any problems, but it looks like I did anyway. All I seem to do anymore is hurt you. I am truly sorry for messing up your life like I have. You don't ever have to forgive me. Just please, please don't hate me. I wish you and Kasey, (see, I do know her name) the best. I hope that you get what you truly deserve in life, even if it is her. You are one in a million sweetheart, and I'll always be around if you ever need me to be.**

**I'll always love you,
Tina'**

Koty sat there for a while with her head down in her hands. 'Shit. Why can't anything ever go right for me anymore? What have I done so wrong to deserve this anyway?'

She got herself together and went downstairs to meet Chris and Monty for breakfast. All she wanted to do right now was to go home and wait for Kasey to return from Houston.

The roads that led out to the highway were now cleared, but the slopes would be a while before they opened, so they decided to just pack it up and go as soon as they had something to eat. When Monty got up to go pay the check, Chris turned to Koty.

"Koty, was that Tina I saw leaving your room this morning?"

Rubbing her hands over her eyes, Koty explained what had happened with Tina's sleeping arrangements, and about how Tina just happened to answer the phone while she was in the shower when Kasey called.

"Christ Chris, I swear to you that nothing happened. I made her sleep on the floor, but Kasey is never gonna believe that. She has such a problem with Tina that I'll never be able to make her understand."

"I'm sorry Koty. Why don't you let things calm down a little, and then try and explain it to her."

"She told me not to call, or go and see her. I just don't know what to do."

"What to do about what?" Monty asked as he came back to the table.

"Oh nothing," Chris said as she patted Koty on the back.

"Just another day in the life of Dakota Silvers. Come on, let's go home."

Chapter Thirty-Six

Kasey felt physically ill as she hung up the phone with Koty. She could hardly wait to talk to her and tell her how much she missed her, and that she would be returning to the beach the next day.

'What in the hell was Tina doing in her room? Face it Doc, you know damn well what she was doing there.' It didn't take a rocket scientist to figure that one out. *'Jesus.'* They had been lovers for three years, she knew all along that Tina was still in love with Koty, and was trying to get her back. *'Why in the hell am I so surprised? God what a fool I am.'*

All of the times that Kasey waited to hear Koty tell her that she loved her, now she knew why she never heard it. She never heard it because Koty didn't feel that way. She knew that Koty cared for her. That was obvious, but just as obvious, it wasn't enough. *'I guess Tina got what she wanted.'*

As devastated as she was when Sam had gone back to Annie, it seemed like high school stuff compared to her love for Koty, and the loss she was feeling now.

She knew what she had to do. As hard as it was going to be, she knew that she would have to withdraw herself from Koty completely. She loved her enough to let her be with Tina.

Kasey also knew Koty enough to know that she would try to contact her. She would just refuse

to see her, and if she did see her it would not be alone, and she would play it off like she didn't care. *'I need to do this. I need to stay away from her. I need a stiff drink.'*

Kasey flew out of Houston the next morning. Her father was doing fine and there was no real damage done to his heart from the attack, and Kasey needed to get back to work.

Lynn had asked Kasey what was wrong with her when she could tell that she had been crying. Kasey had told her that she was just really tired and still jet lagged, but Lynn knew she was lying. She did not push it though.

She had hugged everyone and told them that she loved them. She left the car in the airport parking lot for the rental company to pick up, and she boarded her flight to Virginia.

Her flight was straight through without a layover so she knew she would be home in about three hours. She would get home, unpack, take a shower, and go to bed.

Tomorrow she would go to work, come home, and make herself some dinner, take a shower, and then go to bed. She would do this day after day after day until she could get Koty out of her mind.

She knew this wouldn't be an easy task, but it was something that she needed to do. She had been afraid to get involved with Koty for this very reason to start with. After what happened with Samantha she knew not to get involved with someone on the rebound. She had told herself over and over that this was a strong possibility. When would she ever learn?

'Oh well, get over it already, what's done is done and there isn't a damn thing you can do about it but get on with your life.'

When Koty arrived home, she immediately went to the phone to check her answering machine for any messages from Kasey. Exasperated when there were none, she collapsed on the recliner.

She had called Kasey's house, and cell phone several times and left messages for her to call. She even called the clinic and the hospital. She didn't have any phone numbers in Houston for her so she figured that she would just have to wait for now. *'I know she has to be home now.'*

For a solid week she had left messages for her but to no avail. She knew that Kasey had caller I.D, so maybe she was screening her calls and when Koty's number showed up she ignored it.

Koty had driven by the doctors house a couple of times, but never saw her car. She knew that she was home from Houston now, because Monty had mentioned that she and Chris had met with the contractor for their office two days ago.

Friday while she was at work, Jamie called and asked for her to meet them at Laces for a few drinks. Needing a break, and a strong drink, she told Jamie she would be there around eight.

As Koty got out of the shower to get ready to go, she lay across the bed. *'Man am I tired.'* For a brief moment, she contemplated calling Jamie and telling her that she was just too tired to go, but changed her mind and got up to get dressed.

Koty had a very long week working ten to twelve hour days. Several times she even brought some cases home with her, which was something she had never done before. She figured that the more she worked, the less she would think about Kasey, and how much she missed her. Yes, she definitely needed to go out with her friends tonight. She needed to be able to laugh again.

Koty made her way through the massive amounts of women as she walked through the bar looking for Jamie and Trish. Finally spotting them at a corner table, she walked through the maze to their table.

"Jesus, why is it so damn crowded here tonight?"

"They have some band here tonight called 'Danger'. We didn't know until we got here," Jamie told her as she pushed a chair out for Koty.

"Danger? That's the band that played at the pig roast Kasey and I went to. They're really good. As a matter of fact, Deanne should be here tonight, her girlfriend is the lead singer."

"Deanne? Damn, I haven't seen her in a coon's age. I remember you telling us that she was there. It will be good to see her again." Jamie told her as she looked around for their old friend.

Smiling, Trish patted Koty on the back. "Yeah, and boy did she have the hots for you if I remember correctly."

Koty laughed. "That was a long time ago Trish. Her girlfriend is really hot, and has a voice to match her body. You'll see what I mean when you meet her."

Hands slid around her waist and a body pressed up to her back. "You talking about me girlfriend?"

Koty turned in her embrace and hugged Deanne. "Hey."

Jamie stood up to give her a hug, and Deanne jumped into her arms wrapping her legs around her waist.

"Wuz up gorgeous?" She said as she hugged Jamie and then Trish. "Man it's good to see you guys."

Jamie put Deanne down when a beautiful redhead with a Goddess's body walked up and kissed Deanne then smiled at the others.

"Hey Baby. Guys, this is Roxi. She introduced everyone, and when Roxi turned to Koty, she

hugged her and said. "Good to see you again Koty."

Grabbing her girlfriend's hand, Deanne turned and waved. "We need to go setup everything then I will be back to have some drinks with you guys, and a dance with you Koty."

As they turned and walked away, Trish let out a soft whistle. "Mmm, I see what you mean Koty, she is...um...wow. Come on Koty, come shake a leg with me, I love this song."

Chapter Thirty-Seven

The band was playing a slow song when Deanne came over and grabbed Koty's hand. "Come with me beautiful, let's dance."

"Is Roxi gonna get mad at you for slow dancing with me? Especially this close? I don't want to have to run and hide behind someone cause she is coming to kick my ass." She chuckled.

"Nah, Roxi is cool. She knows that we go back a long way Koty, and she also knows that I used to have the screaming hots for you."

"Really?"

"Yes really. She's the one Koty. I can feel in my bones, well, and in my jeans of course."

"Wow Deanne, so are you gonna get hitched or something?"

"Or something, but I can positively tell you that for the first time in my life, I'm totally in love."

"That's great Dee, I'm really happy for you!" Koty told her as she pulled her close for a hug.

They had danced through two slow songs, and just as they were getting ready to leave the floor, Deanne felt Koty stop and stiffen, as Koty spotted Kasey at the bar watching her.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing," Koty told her as she pulled her off of the dance floor.

"Bullshit, I may have been gone for a while Koty, but I still know you as well as I do the back of my hand, so what gives?"

"I'll tell you about it a little later ok"

"Promise?"

"I promise." Koty gave her hand a gentle squeeze then walked to the table and picked up her drink. Contemplating on what to do, she took a long draw of her drink then walked to the bar where Kasey was standing with Lee and the woman that was with them the night Koty stormed

off the dance floor.

"Kasey, can I talk to you?"

Kasey turned and just stared at her for what seemed an eternity then stepped away from her friends, but only a few feet. She was not going to let Koty corner her and break her resolve.

"What do you want Koty?" She asked in such a low voice, Koty almost didn't hear her. "What do I want? I want to know why you haven't returned my phone calls. I want to know why you hung up on me at the lodge, and why you are avoiding me now and won't even let me explain?"

"Koty, I really don't want to discuss this here."

"This is the only place that I can catch you at. Jesus Kasey, you won't talk to me anywhere else."

In a strained voice, Kasey frowned and said, "Koty, just let it go."

"Let it go?" Koty reached out and placed her hands on either side of Kasey's cheeks. "Baby, I don't want to let it..."

Kasey stopped her by placing a hand against Koty's chest, and gently pushed her back.

"Koty, please." Kasey pleaded.

Koty went to say something else, but just stared Kasey in the eyes for a moment. She dropped her hands, turned and grabbed her drink, then walked away. But not before Kasey noticed the tears in her eyes. *'Fuck!'*

Koty went to the bathroom to splash some cold water on her face before returning to the table. *'Fuck Fuck Fuck!'*

Returning to the table, Jamie was already walking towards her. "Hey, are you ok?"

She had watched Koty go over to talk to Kasey. Although she couldn't hear what was being said, she could tell that Kasey was rejecting her. The look on her best friend's face was breaking her heart.

Koty downed her drink. "I'm just fucking peachy James, and I'm ready to get drunk now."

"Good, cause I got you a double tequila so here, drink up."

"Yuk. Why do you make me drink that crap for?"

"Cuz ya love me."

Get drunk is just what Koty did. Dancing with anyone and everyone, and slamming down the

drinks. She knew that she had passed her limit two hours ago, but what the hell. *'What does it matter anyhow?'*

Kasey had watched her throughout the night being extremely careless. She had watched Koty hand Jamie her keys when they called last call, and Jamie had to place her shoulder under her arm while she helped her to the car.

Kasey had been miserable as she watched Koty slamming down the drinks like they were water. She knew that Koty liked to drink maybe just a little too much, but she had never seen it to this extent.

Several times she had wanted to go over and take the drinks from her hand and ask her to stop, but stayed planted at the bar. She knew if she had gone over to her, she would grab her and not let go.

Finishing up her drink, she told Lee that she was going to head home. Lee had asked her to join them at the I.H.O.P, but she said that she was too tired and just wanted to get some sleep.

Once she was home, she went to the kitchen to get some ice water, and to pop two aspirins. She climbed into the shower to wash away the smell of stale cigarettes and sorrow.

Letting the hot water pound on her back from the shower massager, she thought about the emotions that Koty stirred in her. There was no doubt in her mind whatsoever that she was in love with Koty, but she couldn't be with her.

'Tina knew what she was doing and there's no way I can compete with her. God I miss her so much.'

Getting out of the shower she walked to the bed and dropped her towel. Crawling under the covers, she tried desperately to will away her thoughts of Koty.

Chapter Thirty-Eight

Koty had spent the night at Jamie and Trish's house, obviously not fit to drive the previous night. She had left her car at Laces and was worried about it being there. *'You don't just leave a Jag parked in a bars parking.'*

Jamie took her to pick the car up, and Koty sighed with relief when she found that nobody had messed with it. She leaned through Jamie's driver window to give her a hug.

"What are you going to do Koty?"

"I don't really know. It's obvious that she doesn't want to see me anymore. Hell, she pushed me away and told me to let it go. I can't get her to listen to me about that night. I've been convicted without a trial."

"Koty, maybe she is just confused and hurt right now. She's upset over the phone call. Maybe she..."

"It's been a week Jamie, maybe she got cold feet. Maybe she never cared to start with. Maybe she has found someone else. I know that I would probably feel the same way if the tables were turned, but I would hear her out."

"Alright Babes, call me later if you feel up to it. For that matter, if you feel up to it come on over for dinner."

Koty told her that she would think about it, but wouldn't guarantee anything. She gave a small wave as she walked to her car and slowly got in and drove away.

With her head pounding and her stomach upset, Koty knew that this was going to be a long day. *'Christ, why did I drink so much last night? I hate hangovers.'* She was almost home when she changed her mind about her destination, then made a U-turn and headed for Kasey's house.

She had to see her. She needed to be able to explain about Tina being in her room that night. If Kasey would just hear her out, she knew that everything would be all right. She couldn't stand being away from her. *'I've got to get her back.'*

Kasey had climbed out of bed in a foul mood, and at eleven o'clock, found a bottle of scotch in the cabinet and poured herself a shot to try and calm her nerves. She hadn't planned on doing anything today so if she got drunk then so be it.

"Ugh, no wonder I normally don't drink this stuff." She had just finished her second shot when she heard the doorbell ring. Placing the shot glass on the counter, she went to look through the peephole. *'Oh God, Koty.'*

With her heart pounding, she leaned her head against the door and took a deep breath. She backed up, opened the door but just stood there.

"Can I come in for a minute? Please?"

Kasey hesitated for a moment then stepped aside to let her in. She turned to shut the door and walked into the kitchen without saying a word.

Koty followed, leaned against the counter and noticed the bottle and glass.

She watched as Kasey rested both hands on the counter briefly before reaching out and pouring herself another shot, and gulping it down.

Koty blinked. *'What the...'* "What are you doing Kasey?" She had never seen Kasey drink anything stronger than a little bit of Grand Marnier. This totally floored her.

"I'm drinking Koty, now will you please tell me what it is that you want?"

"Please Baby, put that down. You don't need this and..."

"Koty! What do you want!?"

"I don't understand Kasey. Why are you so God damn mad at me that you won't even try to listen to what I have to say? Please just let me at least try to explain!"

"Tell me Koty, what in the hell was that woman doing in your room? Will you answer me that?" Kasey yelled as she slammed her glass on the counter.

"The roads were closed off due to the snow storm that they had. She and some friends of hers from work were stranded there, and since the lodge was totally booked she needed a place to sleep."

"So," Kasey said as she turned to Koty. "She just conveniently found you and your room? Don't hand me that shit Dakota."

"Baby, it wasn't like that. It..."

"And just where did she sleep Koty?"

"Jesus Kase, she slept on the floor, but that doesn't matter. Nothing happened!"

"Look Koty, " Kasey said as she downed another shot, "I told myself in the beginning not to get involved with you. I knew that you were on the rebound, and I knew that it would be a huge mistake. I knew..."

"What are you saying Kasey? That I was a mistake?" Koty was quickly reeling out of control.

Tears welled up in Kasey's eyes as she reached into the drawer and pulled out a pack of cigarettes that Lee had left behind.

When Koty saw this she nearly lost it. "So now you have taken up smoking too? You are just full of surprises aren't you?"

"Me? I am full of surprises? You are the one who is full of fucking surprises Dakota Silvers!"

"Baby..." Koty moved closer in towards Kasey. "Please don't do this." She leaned in to kiss her, but Kasey suddenly pulled away from her.

"Please don't Koty. Please just go." She choked back with tears streaming down her face.

Koty backed away with her head hung down, and slowly walked to the door. Without turning around or looking up, she whispered softly, but loud enough for Kasey to hear. "I didn't sleep with her Kasey. I don't know what to do to make you believe me, or to make you understand."

She opened the door and left.

Kasey took her glass, drained it, then threw it at the wall, shattering it into tiny pieces. She slid to the floor with her head in her hands and cried with all she had.

There was a big part of her that really wanted to believe Koty, but she didn't know for sure if she believed that Tina slept on the floor, and not in the bed with Koty, and she just couldn't handle that.

Kasey knew how much Koty had hated the fact that Tina had cheated on her, and Koty had never giving her any real reason to believe that she would do the same thing. *'God, I just don't know what to believe.'*

She got herself together then pulled out the broom and dustpan to clean up the glass. She had no doubt about her love for Koty. She loved her more than she could ever dream was possible, but she just couldn't go through this again. *'I'm just not that strong.'*

She had died a thousand deaths that night when she called Koty's room and Tina had answered the phone. At first, she was sure that she had dialed the wrong phone number. This was definitely one upset she was sure she wouldn't recover from.

When she had seen Koty last night at the club, she wanted so badly to go to her. She had wanted her in her arms, and to have her do to her body the things that only Koty knew how to do. God was she a magician when it came to making love.

Finally done cleaning up her mess, Kasey grabbed the cordless phone from the kitchen wall, then went and plopped on the couch and dialed Lee's number.

"Lee?" She said in a choked voice. "Can you please come over here?"

Without giving Lee a chance to answer, she hung up the phone, curled up in a ball, and cried some more. "Jesus, will this never end?"

She lay there until Lee let herself in the door, and came to sit beside her. She pulled the doctor up close to her so that she could hold her. Lee gently rocked her until her sobs slowed to soft hiccups.

"Kasey, what's the matter? What happened Hon?"

"I just had a really bad blow out with Koty, and told her to leave. God Lee, I don't know what to do!"

"What if she's telling you the truth Kase?"

"I know she hasn't given me reason to think otherwise, but what if she isn't? I thought Samantha hurt me, but that just can't compare to this. I am so in love with her Lee."

"Honey, I know that you are hurting really bad right now, but maybe you need to talk to her. You know, just listen to her side of the story."

"I can't right now Lee, I'm afraid that all I will hear is nothing but lies. Maybe that is wrong of me to say but what am I suppose to think?"

"Well, when you are ready to talk to her just give her the chance, and then make your decision."

"I don't know. I just can't stand the thought of her and that woman being together. It's eating me up inside. What if she tells me she wants to get back with her? What would I do then? I can't do it just yet. I don't know if I ever can. I'm afraid."

Chapter Thirty-Nine

'Why is this fucking happening to me!?' As painful as her breakup with Tina was, that just couldn't hold a candle to this. Kasey asking her to leave was like ripping out a chunk of her heart. The only other time she could remember this kind of pain was when she lost her parents. It was a different kind of pain, but just as intense.

When she had left Kasey's house, her head was still pounding so she reached into the glove compartment, and pulled out a bottle of aspirin and popped two pills. With nothing to wash them down with, she just swallowed them as is.

As she got a little further down the road her mouth became really dry and the aspirin had left a nasty taste so she pulled up to a 7-11 for a soda to wash it all down.

Instead of turning to go down her road, she headed for the Interstate towards Nags Head, North Carolina. She decided that she would just take a drive down there and maybe just walk along the beach. She knew that she could have just driven to Sand Bridge Beach, but thought the hour and a half drive might help her clear her head.

The detective also knew that it was going to be pretty damn cold down there this time of year, but didn't care so much. At least it should be mostly deserted.

Stopping in Kitty Hawk to get some gas, she picked up a six-pack of Corona, a Slim Jim, and a pack of Denteen Ice, then continued south to Nags Head.

Sitting on the beach with her back to a huge sand dune, there was no one else around her except a man further down, tossing a frisbee with his black lab, and a flock of seagulls gliding above her.

She thought about what had happened in her life in the past year, and shook her head. *'Um, let's see. Breaking up with Tina, meeting Kasey, getting shot, breaking up with Kasey... What more could go wrong? Uh uh, don't even go there.'*

Watching the man play with his dog took Koty back to when she was nine years old and she had

a yellow lab named Jessie. Jessie was her second best friend in the whole world back then, next to Jamie.

All of the other little girls used to tease her because all she wanted to do was play with the boy's toys, and not those stupid frilly baby dolls like the Chatty Kathy. So she would get Jessie and play with her until Jamie would show up, or the boy's would let her play with them.

Jamie was the only other girl that liked the same things that Koty did. She remembered when they had climbed the fence at the old Foreman Field Stadium in Norfolk when they were closed, and played Doctor in the unlocked bathroom. Right as they were getting ready to leave, they heard a man yell.

"Hey, what are you damn kids up to!?"

They took off running to their secret entrance over the fence between the north set of bleachers and the Old Dominion University College. They didn't stop running until they hit the Tiny Giant on 48th St. and Powhatan Ave.

Collapsing under a tree, they slapped each other a high five and busted out laughing. Once they cooled off, they went inside to buy two RC cola's and two Charleston Chews.

'Man were those definitely the good old days or what?' She remembered how they would take some towels down to the Elizabeth River and lay out on the bulkhead to get suntans.

There really wasn't any beach for them to lay out on down there. The only place that had any sand was in the backyard of this really mean lady that used to try and sick her dog on them if she saw them on her property.

The river was polluted even way back then, but that didn't stop them from swimming in it. Though, it wasn't as bad then as it is now of course. All you really see there much anymore are McDonald wrappers and beer bottles along the bulkhead.

The last time she had gone down there just to reminisce, she could hardly even see the bulkhead because of the brush that had grown up around it. She did get a nice piece of driftwood that had been wedged under the pier though.

The best place to swim back then was at the pool in the new gym that the Collage had built. Her and Jamie had told some people there that their parents worked at the collage so nobody questioned them for being there. That is until a campus cop had caught them one day, and that was the end of that.

They had known even way back then that they liked girls instead of boys. They also knew that they made better best friends than anything else so they had only played Doctor that one time.

Jamie got her first girlfriend when she was thirteen, and Koty was so envious of her at the time. Koty got her first girlfriend at fifteen. The same girlfriend Sheila, that Koty had begged her

parents to come pick her up from in the snowstorm. Man would she ever stop having that nightmare?

Yeah, those were definitely the carefree and easy days when the only thing of real importance was summertime, weekends, and sleepovers. No harsh worries except for who was gonna make it as the captain of the softball team.

Chapter Forty

Koty had broken up with Sheila a year after her parents were killed. Sheila had been so good to her, but Koty was going through such a tough time then that she shunned everyone that was close to her. She was afraid that she was going to lose everyone as long as she loved them.

The only ones that refused to let her push them away were Monty and Jamie. They had made a pact between themselves to always watch over and take care of Koty. A pact that they still hold true to.

As strong as Koty seemed to be at times, there were other times that she was very fragile as well. Monty and Jamie both knew that they had their work cut out for them, but they refused to give up.

Koty would never go without someone to lean on or to talk to, no matter what the time of day or night it was. They were secretly her Guardian Angels.

Koty had been sitting in the same spot on the beach for several hours. The man and his dog had left long ago leaving her a lone figure on the sand. The only sounds that she could hear were the sounds of the seagulls around her and the waves crashing to the shore.

'God what a lonely place the beach is when it's deserted. I need to get my act together.' Slowly getting up to stretch her stiff back and legs, she stared out into the vast ocean a moment longer then trotted to her car to leave.

When Koty arrived home, she shut off the phone and the answering machine. She didn't want to talk to or see anyone right now, and wanted to be left alone.

She had pulled her car into the garage, which was something that she rarely did, just in case anyone were to drive by. They would think that she wasn't home.

She didn't even cut any lights on since there was just enough ambient light coming through the windows. Dragging herself to her bedroom she stripped off her sandy clothes, to a quick shower. Putting on a tee shirt and boxers, she sprawled across the bed and was asleep before her head hit the pillow.

She didn't awaken until eleven thirty the next morning. Waking long enough to go to the bathroom and get something to drink. Not yet ready to face the day, she took a sleeping pill and crawled right back in bed.

'Screw the world for one more day. If I ever do heal from this I am giving up on relationships. It hurts too damn much when the relationship comes to an end.' She closed her eyes to try and stop the tears and the pain.

Around seven o'clock that evening, she woke up with a bad headache, and in a very ugly mood. Sitting up in the bed, she tried to figure out what had roused her.

As she went to stand up she thought she heard a noise coming from the living room. Walking to the bedroom door, she noticed the light from the lamp by the couch was on. *'Now I know damn well I didn't turn any lights on last night when I came in.'*

She felt the tiny hairs on the back of her neck stand up, and as she slowly turned around, there in the recliner, sat Bob Wheatly. *'That's the sonofabitch that shot me!' Shit, and I made Jason stop surveillance.*

"Did you have nice nap there pretty lady? Uh uh, don't try anything stupid, and I won't have to hurt that sexy little body."

Koty noticed the gun on his lap pointing in her direction. "What the fuck do you call shooting me asshole? Ya think that didn't hurt?"

Any other time, the detective would have berated herself for being so cocky and talking to him this way. Hell, he had already shot her once. What made her think he wouldn't do it again? Well, she really wasn't in the mood for this prick and right now, she really didn't give a shit.

"So what the hell do you want from me now?" She asked with a frown.

"I need money. I need to leave the states, and I just happen to know that, that brother of yours would pay to make sure that you didn't get hurt again."

Koty turned and started to walk towards the bar.

"You have a hearing problem cop? You think I'm playing games here?"

She slowly turned to face him. "You want to shoot me asshole then shoot me. I've had a really shitty couple of weeks and I need a drink, so if you're gonna do it then do it. Otherwise, I'm making myself a drink."

He shrugged his shoulders and nodded. "Fix me one while you're at it."

Koty looked at him dumbfounded. "Sure, why the hell not. We can just make this a fucking party."

Nonetheless, she fixed them both a drink, sat his on the table in front of him, plopped on the couch and rubbed her temples. *'Shit my head hurts! This is all I need.'*

"Call your brother." He told her as he reached for his drink and took a long swallow.

Koty just looked at him, propped her feet on the coffee table and chugged her drink. " Ya know, if Monty catches up to you, he is gonna kick your ass all over Virginia Beach."

"Call your brother!" He lifted the gun and waved it in front of her.

He stood as she reached for the phone and dialed Monty's phone number. *'Man is Monty gonna be pissed at this piece of shit. Maybe he isn't even at home.'*

He snatched the phone from her hand and listened to it ring, waiting for Monty to answer.

"Hello?"

"Is this Monty Silvers?"

"Yes, who is this?" Monty felt a tingle go through his body, sensing that something was wrong.

"Look, if you don't want your pretty sister here to get hurt, you will bring me thirty thousand dollars to her house. Don't even think of doing anything stupid. Like I told her, this time I'll finish the job I started."

Monty cursed and then was quiet for a moment. *"You hurt one hair on my sister's head asshole and I'll rip you apart piece by piece with my bare hands, then feed your ass to my neighbors pit bull. You got that bud!? There won't be anyplace this side of hell, that I won't find you!"* Monty yelled into the phone.

"Don't try to be a hero brother, it ain't like I got nothing to lose."

Bob downed his drink and told Monty that he had until midnight to bring him the money, or he would shoot her only after he got himself some of that woman flesh.

Bob knew he would never do that or actually shoot her, the time before was an accident, but he was running scared and he had to make them believe that he would. This was the last thing he knew to do to get him the hell away from here.

He had nowhere else to hide and he knew that it was just a matter of time before the cops caught up with him and put him in prison. His buddies had warned him not to get hooked up with Coleman but the money was too good to pass up.

Koty sat there through the conversation thinking that she needed to get control of the situation before it got anymore out of hand than it already was. She knew Monty wouldn't hesitate to get he money, but he would try and take Bob down. She had to think of something before that

happened.

"Is it alright if I make us another drink?"

Chapter Forty-One

"Chris, call Jason and tell him to get over here now!"

Chris's hands were shaking as she dialed Jason's number. She had heard Monty on the phone and knew that Koty was in trouble. Monty was in a mood that she had never seen before in all the years they had been married, and wasn't sure what he would try and do.

"Jesus Monty, what's happened to Koty?" She had asked after she hung up with Jason. Tears filled her eyes, and fear filled her heart when she saw Monty come back into the room with his gun. He pulled her into a hug and told her what Bob was demanding and what he threatened.

"He's got her held there Chris. Holding her for thirty thousand measly fucking dollars, and he has a gun. The same gun he probably used before. He said that if I tried anything stupid he would...God damn it, where is Jason?!"

"Monty, I've got to call Kasey and let her know what's going on. She would die if I didn't tell her."

"Monty hesitated. You can call her Chris, but have her come here and tell her. I don't want her running over there and getting caught up in the middle of this."

While Monty was making more calls, Chris got her cell phone and called Kasey.

"Um...Kasey, this is Chris, look, we have a situation over here, can you come over please?"

"Chris, what's wrong?"

"I would rather not say over the phone hon, do you want me to pick you up, or do you want to just meet me here?"

"No. No, I'll be right there, just give me a few minutes."

"Alright Kasey, but please hurry."

Kasey had sensed the urgency in Chris's voice, and it made her very anxious. Still in her sweats and a faded Wynonna tee shirt, she grabbed her coat and ran out the door not even bothering to tie her tennis shoes.

She had no clue as to how many speed limits she had broken on her way over to Chris's house. All she knew was that she needed to get there, and get there fast.

When she pulled up to the curb Chris and Monty were already at their vehicles along with Jason Price. Snatching her keys out of the ignition, she jumped out of the car and ran up to Chris.

"Chris! What has happened?"

Chris grabbed her by the hand. "Get in my truck Kasey, I'll tell you on the way over to Koty's."

'Koty's? Oh Jesus!' "Chris...what's wrong with Koty?"

Koty was sitting there finishing off her drink when she looked at Bob and said, "So why did you shoot me anyway?" She knew it was a stupid question to ask but was trying to think of something that would distract him.

The guy actually looked at her sheepishly and shrugged his shoulders again. "I didn't mean to shoot you. Hell, I didn't even know that I shot you until I felt the gun go off and you fell."

"You left me there to die." Koty told him softly.

"What was I suppose to do? I was scared shitless. Besides, Coleman would have killed me if I tried to help you." He said defensively. "I've done a lot of bad shit in my life, but I ain't never hurt anyone before."

Koty leaned forward and rested her elbows on her knees. "Why don't you just turn yourself in Bob? They would go a lot easier on you if you did."

"Bullshit! It wouldn't make a damn bit of difference and you know it. I shot a cop! Besides, I ain't gonna do anymore time. I can't be closed up like that. They may as well kill me. I got locked up years ago for breaking into some dudes house, and I took a plastic knife from the chow table and broke it to where it was really sharp. Then I cut my fucking wrist, right there in front of everyone."

He leaned forward, pulled his sleeve up to his elbow and showed Koty a long jagged scar that ran about four inches up the inside of his arm. "I just can't go through that again. I just want to get the hell out of here..."

Chris filled Kasey in on what was happening as they followed Monty and Jason to Koty's house.

"Oh my God Chris, what if he hurts her?" Kasey whispered.

Chris reached for her hand and held it as she glanced over and saw tears running down her cheek.

They pulled along the side of the curb behind Monty's truck right down from Koty's house with their lights out. She turned off the engine and turned to Kasey.

"Kasey, she's going to be ok."

"God Chris. You know her temper, and I just happen to know that she is not in a very good frame of mind right now to be dealing with him. I think she has been drinking pretty heavily, and she might try and do something stupid."

"Why would you think that Kasey, has something happened?"

Kasey explained everything that had gone on since the phone call at the lodge, including the previous night.

"Hasn't she told you about this Chris?"

"I knew about the phone call, but Koty hasn't talked much to anyone here lately. So no, she hasn't said much."

"Oh shit Chris. If anything happens to her I'll feel like it's my fault!"

"Uh uh Kasey. Don't even try to go there. That's not true and you know it."

Monty walked up to Chris's window and tapped on it for her to roll it down. "You two are not to get out of this truck no matter what happens. Do ya'll understand?"

He looked over at Kasey and saw her tears. "Hey Kasey, I won't let that sonofabitch hurt her again. I promise you that."

"Monty," Chris said as she grabbed his arm, "Kasey seems to think that Koty has been drinking heavily."

'Shit.' He knew all too well what she was capable of doing if she was pissed off and drinking. *'Keep your head together sis. I need you, and losing you doesn't fit into my plans for this lifetime.'*

"Keep this window rolled up." He told them as he leaned into the window to kiss Chris. "Jason and I will take care of this ok?"

As he started to walk back to his truck, he thought about his sister. *'This guy will be so fucking sorry if he lays one finger on her.'* He would not lose another member of his family. Besides Chris, Koty was all that he had left.

His world came crashing down around him when Koty had been shot. Not even Chris knew the extent of his anguish. He had gotten pretty good at hiding his feelings when he needed to.

After the deaths of their parents, he and Jamie had made that promise at their gravesites that no harm would ever come to Koty and they would always take care of her. He felt like he had failed

that night when they got the phone call from Jamie. He always knew that Koty's line of work would keep him on his toes, but he knew that she could generally handle herself pretty well.

Monty knew that Koty was gay even before she knew it herself. He remembered how she mainly just played with the boys in the neighborhood because the girls played 'sissy games.' She wanted to play football and softball with all of his friends, and of course his friends always agreed because she was better than most of the guys, and she was normally one of the first to be picked when they were choosing teams.

Jamie was the only other girl that they all would let play because she was almost as good as Koty, and could run just as fast. Just to be fair though, they would always make them play on opposite teams.

Koty had come out to him when she started liking Shelia. All of a sudden she was spending more time with her and not the boys. He never held any disregard for Koty's sexuality; even thinking in a way that it was kind of cool because they had more in common. He had told her that she better not hit on his girlfriends.

Jason got out of the car as Monty leaned against it and pulled out his cell phone and dialed Koty's number.

"Yeah?"

"This is Monty, let me speak to my sister, and you don't need to be answering her phone."

"*You got the bread brother?*"

"Look asshole, I ain't your brother, and you don't get shit until I talk to my sister!"

Bob looked at Koty and said, "Be smart girl, your brother is really starting to piss me off."

Koty took the phone. "*Monty?*"

"Jesus Koty, are you alright?"

In a voice that sounded a little too calm, she said. "*Are you getting his money for him Mont?*"

Monty pulled the phone away from his ear for a moment and stared at it. Something wasn't quite right. '*She's up to something. I can tell it by her voice. Maybe she has a plan, but I'm not willing to chance it.*'

"Koty, has he hurt you in any way?"

"*No Monty, this man ain't gonna hurt me, he just wants...*"

Bob snatched the phone with his left hand and waved the gun at her with his right. "*Like I said*

before, where's my money?"

"Look, it's going to take a little while. That's a lot of cash to come up with in the short amount of time that you gave me. I will have it shortly though so just chill out a little why don't you?"

"Yeah? Well you have until midnight. If not, like I said earlier, I will get a piece of her before I pull the trigger... Again." Then he hung up the phone.

There were ten undercover units and a swat team surrounding Koty's house and her block, ready to do what they needed to do. Koty was one of their own, and she had far too many friends on the force for them not to be there to help her out.

Monty knew that just about anyone of these guys would probably take a bullet for Koty, just as they knew she would do for them. With the exception of a few, they were a pretty close knit family of cops.

Koty had earned their respect by dedication, hard work, and the respect that she showed everyone else. Her being gay was not a secret and for most part, nobody cared. They all watched each other's backs.

'This guy Bob had better pray the cops get to him before I do cause I'm going to rip his heart out with my bare hands. My sister has been through too much lately for him to come and add more to her grief.'

Chapter Forty-Two

It was around eleven o'clock and Koty was getting way over this whole situation, and Bob was starting to look a little too relaxed with the drinks that she had been making him. *'It's time to end this little party and get control.'*

"Hey Bob. You know, I don't hold you responsible for shooting me. That sonofabitch Coleman is the one to blame. He's the one that went and got all crazy then. And like you said, he would have killed you if you tried to help me."

"Yeah well, no one else believes that. All they know is I'm the one who pulled the trigger on a cop, and that's all that's gonna matter to them."

Koty slowly stood up. "Can I fix us one more drink? Like I said before, I've had a bitch of a week and this is what makes me relax. Do you want another?"

"Yeah, but just one more. I've gotta keep my head, and when your brother gets my money for me, I'm out of this place."

He handed Koty his glass and she walked to the bar. *'It's now or never Silvers.'* She sat her glass on the coffee table where she had been sitting and as she went to hand him his, she lunged and smashed his drink into his face, grabbing the gun in his hand at the same time.

The gun went off, hitting the window by the front door. She elbowed him in the throat with all of her might. Bob was doubled over in pain, and when she got the gun out of his hand, she hit him on the back of the head with it, knocking him to the floor out cold.

She dropped to her knees, holding the gun to his head. Her almost healed ribs screamed, and her whole body started to shake as tears suddenly filled her eyes as the night's events finally caught up with her.

At the sound of gunfire and breaking glass, Jason was the first one to run into the house with Monty on his heels. By now, Koty was doubled over and crying hard.

Monty dropped to her side and pulled her into his arms. She held her brother tightly and they both cried together. Monty didn't know what he was going to find when he heard the gun go off. His heart was beating so hard he almost lost his breath. Seeing Koty on the floor and crying, he wasn't sure if she was hurt or just shaking up.

"Hey Koty...hey, are you ok?"

"Yeah."

Four officers had Bob Wheatly cuffed, and were hauling him out of the house when Chris and Kasey came running through the door. Chris went straight to Koty, but Kasey stopped by the couch and just stared wide-eyed, not knowing what else to do.

'Oh sweet Jesus, be all right Baby!' She didn't know what she would have done if something happened to Koty, and she still felt that somehow this was partly her fault. If she hadn't pushed Koty away, maybe she wouldn't have even been here when this creep showed up.

All of the 'what ifs' kept running through her mind over and over. All she wanted to do was to go to Koty and hold her. She wished she could drive away her hurt and sorrow.

Koty stood and reached for her drink that she had made before everything went down and chugged it. Composing herself, she went to make herself another. "I'm ok guys, really."

She looked right at Kasey and felt a shiver run through her body. She would not go to her though, or fall apart in front of her. *'I will not let her see just how weak and pitiful I am.'*

Kasey stared back at Koty, and saw the fear in her eyes mixed with some other emotion, but wasn't sure what. She pulled her gaze away and leaned against the wall with her arms across her chest.

Koty left Monty and Chris talking to Jason, and told them she would be right back and walked into her bedroom. A moment later, Kasey walked in behind her and turned to see Koty shaking some pills into her hand then take them.

"Koty, what are you doing?" She gently asked.

"It's just some sleeping pills Kasey, I'm very tired and I just want to go to sleep, that's all."

"Give those to me Koty, I can't believe you would even think about taking anything with what you have had to drink."

"I just want to sleep. Can I take something for my ribs? My side hurts."

"No damn it."

It was said in a harsher tone than Kasey had meant, but she couldn't believe Koty would even consider taking anything. The doctor just turned and walked back to the living room.

Kasey felt totally helpless not knowing what to do or say. She didn't think that Koty should be alone tonight, but who was she to mention it. It wasn't her place and she needed to remember that.

Jason placed his hand on Koty's shoulder, "I just talked to the captain and he said for you to take tomorrow off."

"No."

"What do you mean no? Come on Koty, you're not Super Woman, you need a break."

"Bullshit Jason, I've had three weeks worth of a break already. I haven't even been back to work that long, I need to just work."

"Sorry Silvers. Captains orders, sooo..."

She fixed herself another drink, then changed her mind and dumped it down the sink. Scrubbing her hands over her face and through her hair, Koty looked at everyone including Kasey. "Look guys, I really appreciate everyone being here, honest, but I am just so tired and all I want to do is go to bed. I want to be alone right now."

Everyone just looked at each other not knowing what else to do or say. She was a big girl and could make up her own mind.

Monty stepped forward and said, "All right guys you heard her, let's go. "Hugging Koty, he told her to call him if she needed anything.

"Jason, I'll give my statement tomorrow ok?"

"Alright Koty, I'll see you then."

As Chris and Kasey got into Chris's truck to leave, Chris noticed the concerned look on Kasey's

face. "She's going to be alright Kase, but how about you, are you ok?"

Kasey hesitated momentarily and leaned her head against the back of the seat. *'Do I tell Chris about the sleeping pills that Koty took, or do I just forget about them? God what a night.'*

"I'm not sure how much Koty has had to drink tonight, but she was getting ready to swallow a couple of sleeping pills, but I stopped her. I'm not sure what her frame of mind is right now."

Chris reached over and gave her a light squeeze on her arm. "I know that wasn't the smartest thing for her to try and do, and she knows that. If she told you she didn't take them then, she probably won't now. Even at Koty's lowest point, she has a much better frame of mind than most people with all of their senses. "I'm sure she'll be ok but I'll have Monty run by here on his way to work in the morning to check on her. Ok?"

Starting the ignition and pulling away from the curb, she asked Kasey if she wanted to be dropped off at her house, or to go pick up her car. "Just take me to your house and I'll pick up my."

When Chris and Monty climbed into bed, Monty pulled her close and cried again. All Chris could do was hold onto him and let him get it out of his system.

She knew of Monty's grief over Koty, though Monty was probably unaware of just how much she knew. She could not be with him for all of these years and not know what his mind was thinking. He was a part of her as if they were one. What he felt, she felt.

Hopefully this was all behind them now and they could get on with their lives. Koty had been through way too much for one person. She really felt though that in the end, it would all work out ok for everyone. *'I don't know what makes me think that, but I have to believe it.'*

When Koty had chosen to become a detective, everyone was more than surprised. They originally thought the reason she chose a dangerous profession was because deep down she still felt responsible for their parent's death.

'They were on their way to pick me up because I was too damn impatient weren't they?' She had told Monty over and over.

Chris kissed Monty lightly and snuggled even closer. Finally they both fell asleep.

Chapter Forty-Three

Kasey hadn't gotten much sleep the night before. Over and over in her mind, she kept seeing Koty's eyes. Eyes that were so full of fear, of hurt, and something else.

All Kasey knew was that she could have drowned in the sadness that was there. There was definitely sadness. So much so that Kasey wanted to just grab Koty and hold onto her so tight that it would melt away from Koty's body, and she could see her smile again.

'She has the best smiles. Her seductive smile, her playful smile, and even the smile she gives when she is really upset with something. That one can stop a grown man in his place. That smile never reaches her eyes, but you could sure feel the power of it. God I miss all of those smiles.'

With mixed emotions, she also couldn't help but to keep hearing the voice on the other end of the line the night she had called Koty's room. The voice that ran her blood to a freezing point.

"This is Tina, who is this?"

Try as she might, she just couldn't shake the raw pain that she felt that night, and she couldn't seem to push that voice from her mind. This whole situation really sucked and it just wasn't fair. *'Since when is life fair Kasey girl?'*

She wanted so damn bad to believe Koty, but the vision of Tina kept popping up. Tina was a beautiful woman, and she and Koty had spent three years together.

Hadn't it been Chris who originally thought Koty wanted to get Tina back? That Koty had been devastated with the breakup? After hours of tossing and turning, Kasey had finally drifted off to sleep.

When Kasey awoke at seven in the morning, Koty was still on her mind. Unable to shake her feelings, she made a pot of coffee and contemplated calling her.

What would she say to her? Maybe Koty didn't want to hear from her. Maybe Koty would just tell her to get lost, that she needed to get on with her life. *'Fuck it.'*

She poured her first cup of coffee, grabbed the cordless phone off of the counter, sat at the table and attempted to dial Koty's number three times before she actually got the courage to complete the call.

"Hello?"

"Hi Koty...it's...um Kasey."

"Kasey? What time is it, is something wrong?"

"I'm sorry that I called so early, but I just needed to know that you were alright."

"I'm fine Kasey, really." Koty said yawning.

"Um...look Koty, last night Jason said that your captain told you to take the day off, and I wondered if you were going to?"

Koty hesitated a moment before answering. *"I don't know, why?"*

"I thought...I just thought that if you were, maybe you would have lunch with me?" Kasey asked nervously. When Koty hesitated Kasey quickly added, "It's ok if you don't..."

"No Kasey, I'll meet with you. I need to go to the station for a while, and give my statement. Meet me at the Olive Garden around twelve thirty. I'll be there."

"Ok...Ok Koty, I'll see you later then," and she hung up the phone. She was more than a little nervous about lunch, but she had to see Koty if only for a little while.

It had been a somber lunch; they had talked a little about the night before and what had happened with the whole case. They had talked about the clinic that Kasey and Chris were opening, but neither one spoke of what had happened to their relationship.

Kasey was afraid of upsetting Koty since she had been through so much, and Koty was afraid that Kasey was over her and didn't want to hear anything about it.

Kasey had given Koty a hug, and kissed her on the cheek goodbye then drove off even more confused than ever. She had wanted nothing more than to follow Koty back to her house and hold her. She had wanted to make love the way they did before. Since she had taken the rest of the day off, she decided to take a long drive to wherever it took her.

As she pulled up to her house, she found a strange car parked in her driveway. Pulling in behind it, she couldn't see who the driver was with the sun glaring down across her windshield.

Suddenly a long, jean-clad leg descended from the door, and long flowing hair, the color of the morning sun followed. Kasey sucked in her breath and her hands clenched the steering wheel.

'Oh my God.'

The woman shut her door and walked up to Kasey as she got out of her car. They both stood there momentarily just looking at each other.

"Hello Samantha, what are you doing here?"

"Hi Kasey, how are you?"

Kasey was speechless for a moment and shoved her hands in her pockets. Before she could think of anything to say, Sam spoke up.

"I was in town for a business meeting and I looked your number up in the phone book, so here I am. I still have Lee's number, but I figured that she wouldn't give it to me. I'm sure she is still very protective of you isn't she, not that, that's a bad thing."

Samantha brushed her hair off her face with her fingers and tossed it behind her shoulders.

Something that she had an unconscious habit of doing.

'She is more beautiful than she was before. God how she had loved this woman,' Kasey thought. Had. Past tense.

Kasey started up the walkway and told Samantha to come in. She unlocked the door and let her in before her.

When she shut the door, Sam turned to her. "Can I at least have a hug hello?"

They hugged and Kasey realized that it really was good to see her again. After all, they had been the best of friends before they became lovers, and Kasey had missed the times they used to sit for hours and just talk.

They both took a deep breath and finally pulled away. Samantha held her at arms length and casually looked her up and down. Grinning, she said, "You're looking really good there Kase, how's life been treating you lately?"

Kasey smiled and pulled away. "Sit down Sam, would you like something to drink?"

"Tea would be nice if you have any."

Kasey handed Samantha her tea then sat in the chair across from her with her coke. There was at least a million questions running through her head, and she finally just came out and asked, "So how is Annie doing?"

Samantha didn't answer at first. She took a long sip of her drink then smiled.

"We broke up about a year ago, for good this time." Sam laughed. "You can get that look off of your face sweetheart. I'm not here to try and win you back. I know what bridges I have burnt. I really just wanted to see you again. I was kind of hoping that maybe we could renew our friendship though; I think maybe I miss that more than anything. I've been thinking about you a lot here lately, so when this meeting came up, I thought it was the perfect opportunity to find you and see how you have been doing. So, here I am."

"You know, I'm still pretty pissed at you, and hurt. I'm not quite sure how to take you."

"I know Kasey, and you know I can't blame you one damn bit, but, you know that I was always honest with you about everthing. I never lied to you about anything. We were such great friends first, and that is what I want again. I'm not here for any other reason."

Kasey smiled and relaxed. "I would like that very much Sam, I too have really missed that friendship. We had a lot of fun times together."

"Great, can I take you to dinner then?"

Kasey stood and took the glass out of her hand. "No but I will make you dinner here. Where are you staying?"

"Actually, I had planned on driving back tonight just in case you refused to see me. I can stay over at the Holiday Inn on Newtown Rd. I don't have to be back to work until Thursday morning so I could stay there and we could play catch up."

"Look Sam, I have a guest room so why don't you stay here until you have to leave?" Kasey told her as she handed her another drink.

"I don't want to wear out my welcome Kasey and I don't want you to think that I was suggesting anything."

"It's ok Sam. Besides, it would be nice to be able to sit and talk with you again. We could pop some popcorn after dinner and watch a movie if you want."

Grinning from ear to ear, Sam said, "You're on then. Do you still have Fried Green Tomatoes?"

"Of course I do, you know it's my favorite movie."

"Well then, let me just get my bag from the car and we can have us a good ole slumber party. I hope you're not real tired cause I've really missed you and I have a feeling we'll be up kind of late talking."

"Go get your bag and I'll start dinner."

They were in the kitchen talking while Kasey was fixing their dinner. Talking with her hands, Kasey turned and spilled the barbecue sauce all over the counter, the floor, and her hands.

Samantha busted out laughing just as the phone rang.

"Shit." Kasey said with the sauce dripping off her hands. "Would you please answer that while I clean up all of this goo?"

Still laughing, Sam answered the phone. "Hello?"

"*Uh...who is this?*" Koty asked, thinking that she dialed the wrong phone number, but was sure she didn't.

"This is Samantha, do you need to speak to Kasey?"

Koty hesitated a moment before answering. "*Um...sorry, I have the wrong number.*" Then she hung up.

Kasey was drying off her hands. "Who was it?"

"She said she had the wrong number, and just hung up. I get the feeling that she had the right number, but maybe wasn't expecting me to be answering your phone."

Sam placed the phone back on the charger, and Kasey checked the caller I.D. and it showed 'number unavailable'. Koty's cell phone number never showed up on it, but neither did a lot of other numbers.

'Hmm...I wonder.' For a moment there she got a little anxious thinking that it might have been Koty. *'Nah, I'm sure it wasn't her.'*

"Look Kasey, is my being here tonight with you going to cause any problem with anyone? If it is, I can go to the hotel."

"No Sam, it's not going to be a problem really, it's ok. Come on, dinner will be done in about an hour, lets go sit down with our drinks and relax, alright?"

"Okey dokey."

Koty sat back in her chair and wondered if this was Kasey's ex. If so, what was she doing at Kasey's. Supposedly she lived up in Richmond somewhere, and Kasey had told her that she hadn't seen or heard from her since she had left to go back to her girlfriend.

She guessed that explained why Kasey was in a hurry to leave after lunch that afternoon, she couldn't wait to go see S.A.M.A.N.T.H.A. Could they be getting back together? Surely not. *'Shit! Touche Kasey!'*

Koty went to make herself something to eat and when she pulled out a can of tuna fish, she just started to eat it right from the can. Part of the way through, she looked down at the can and shook her head.

'I can't believe I just did that.' She tossed the tuna into the garbage. She had suddenly lost her appetite after hearing Samantha answer Kasey's phone. She had been starving when she had gotten home since all she did was pick at her lunch and had not really eaten it.

Her clothes were already starting to get a little loose on her since her hospital incident. Her appetite just wasn't like it used to be. Nothing seemed to taste good anymore, or she would just seem to get full fast.

'Oh well, it sure couldn't hurt to lose a couple of pounds. It ain't like I'm gonna blow away or anything.' With her solid athletic body, and almost six-foot frame, a little bit of weight didn't show too much, but for those who knew Koty, they could definitely tell.

Around twelve o'clock that night, Koty couldn't take the little nagging feeling in the pit of her stomach any longer. She grabbed her coat, and went to her car to take a trip over to Kasey's

house.

She would have called, but wasn't sure if Kasey would talk to her or not, and she didn't want to take the chance. She figured she would walk right up to the door and just knock, not giving the doctor a chance to put her off.

When she turned the corner and pulled up along the curb, she noticed a strange car in the driveway. All of the lights in the house appeared to be off. Koty suddenly got a queasy feeling. "Sonofabitch!" She yelled out loud. "This can not be happening!"

She stared at the house for a while longer and gripped the steering wheel. Obviously they didn't want any company. She pulled away from the curb so fast that she squealed the tires. She reached up and brushed the tears from her eyes. *'Fuck it!'*

She could just imagine what was going on in Kasey's house. *'Samantha's there and no lights are on. How fucking convenient.'* She tried to put the picture of Kasey and Samantha in bed together out of her mind, but it wasn't working.

"Fuck! I can't believe this. God damn it!" She yelled as she pounded on the steering wheel. *'Why would Kasey do this? Granted she never told me that she loved me but I was sure I meant a little more to her that just a fix until her girlfriend came back into the picture. I could feel it when we made love. Jesus, why couldn't she just believe in me that there was nothing going on with Tina? Is that what this is all about? Ungh...'*

Hearing the noise from some idiot squealing tires, Kasey looked out her bedroom window only to see taillights quickly disappearing down the street. Once again, she got an un-easy feeling in her stomach. *'Nah, I'm sure she's home fast asleep.'*

"What if it was Koty?" She whispered to herself. *'Why would she peel away like that, and why wouldn't she just come to the door and knock?'* Deciding that it couldn't have been Koty, she climbed under her covers and went to sleep.

Chapter Forty-Four

The next morning after her shower, Kasey walked into the kitchen and took the coffee mug that Sam handed her. She took a big swallow and slowly closed her eyes.

"Oh my God, this is orgasmic. You always did make the best coffee Sam. I still use the same brand as before, and I put the same amount of coffee in the machine, but it still doesn't taste like yours. Thank you."

"Thank you, and you're welcome. By the way, do people always drive around peeling rubber in your neighborhood in the middle of the night?"

"Actually that's the first time that I can remember anyone doing that. I looked out the window just in time to see tail lights."

She took another long sip of her coffee. "Are you going to drive back to Richmond today?"

"I haven't made up my mind yet. Like I said, I don't have to be back to work until Thursday morning. If I stay here tonight will you take me to a club?"

"I can take you to Laces when I get home from work. They have specials on Mondays to get the crowd in there, and they have great food and music. Afterwards we can have some drinks if you want. It's one of the better clubs around here."

Kasey finished her coffee, and took her mug to the sink and rinsed it out. She went to the wall where a set of keys were hanging and handed them to Samantha.

"I'll be home around five or five thirty. I'll change clothes then we can go from there. I think you'll like it there, like I said, it's one of the better places to go. See you later."

In the car, she thought about all of the good times that she and Sam had spent together. Could they make another go at it? No, she didn't think they could. They had both changed. Besides, she knew she had to get past her Koty dilemma before she could even think about going forward with her life.

Koty left work feeling anxious and very tired. Not quite ready to go home to her empty house, she decided to stop at Laces to get a bite to eat and have a drink or two. Or maybe three.

She had found it almost impossible to keep her mind focused on work today. All she could seem to think about was Kasey, and what Kasey and her ex were up to. *'It's obvious what they are up to you moron.'*

She had pulled a ten hour day today, but probably only did about a total of three hours work. She had been a desk jockey today, trying to catch up on the butt load of paperwork that she had.

She couldn't keep going this way. She was also told that starting tomorrow; she was getting a new partner. That was the last thing that she wanted, or needed. Though she knew it had been coming for a long time, she preferred to work alone.

She had gotten along pretty good with her last partner Mike, but when he just up and quit the force, saying he couldn't take it anymore, she had been alone since.

She wasn't ready for another partner, but knew there wasn't a damn thing that she could do about it. Captain Riggs had told her before she left that evening that her new partner was from Richmond. *'What in the hell is with all of these people from Richmond? What, is Richmond so bad that the whole damn city has to come to my town?'*

She pulled into Laces parking lot and sat there for a minute rubbing her eyes. Finally getting out and walking to the door, she heard her name being called. She stopped and watched Tina walking towards her.

"Um...Hi Koty, how are you?"

Tina seemed hesitant and nervous. "Look Koty, would you have a couple drinks with me? No strings, no tricks, just some friendly conversation?"

'What the hell, my life is already down the tubes, whats another bad dicision?'

At first Tina thought that Koty was going to say no since she took so long to answer, but then heard Koty softly say, "Sure, why not, have you eaten yet?"

Tina smiled and felt a little lightheaded at Koty's answer. *'Well, at least she's still talking to me.'*

"Actually I haven't, food sounds really good right now."

They walked into Laces together...

Kasey and Samantha were sitting at a corner table sipping at their drinks. They had just finished dinner and were sitting back and relaxing a bit before the D.J started the music.

Samantha, with her back to the door heard Kasey gasp, and watched as a burning look came over her face. Turning to see what had caused Kasey to react that way, she watched as two gorgeous women walked through the door together.

"Kasey, what's wrong? Who are those women, and why do you look like someone just kicked your cat?"

Kasey downed her Grand Marnier and waited for the waitress to bring another before she told Sam about herself and Koty. And, about Koty and Tina.

Koty and Tina were already sitting at the table with their drinks when Koty looked across the floor right into Kasey's eyes.

Tina had spotted them at the same time and looked at Koty to see her reaction. As she expected, there was a hard cold look in her eyes. "Ok Koty, what's going on with you and Kasey and who is that woman she is sitting with?"

"I guess that would be Samantha, her ex lover. So she says."

Koty downed the rest of her drink as she watched Tina shake her head and give her a sad look. *'How ironic is this. Both of them here, and both are my exes. I must have been a really bad person in my last life to deserve this.'*

"Look Koty, I know that we aren't together anymore. Hell, I probably even ruined our friendship, but I still care very much about what happens in your life. Wanna talk about it?"

"No, not really."

About an hour later Kasey had consumed enough alcohol to start feeling bold. "Sam, come dance with me." She said as she grabbed Sam's hand to pull her to the dance floor.

"Kasey, are you sure that this is a good idea? I mean, won't this make things even harder for you? You said that she knows about our past, maybe she will take this the wrong way or something."

"Since when did you become so damn passive Sam? It's just a dance so come on."

Koty watched them walk out to the dance floor and into each other's arms. Unable to watch it any longer she slammed her glass down, threw two twenties on the table to pay for the meals they hadn't gotten yet, took a deep breath and turned to Tina. "I can't take anymore of this shit, I'm out of here."

Tina jumped up from the table and fell into step beside Koty. Hoping to be seen by Kasey, she casually placed her hand on Koty's shoulder as they walked through the door.

As much as Tina hated to admit it, Koty and Kasey obviously belonged together, and one way or another she had to make Kasey know it as well. She didn't know how without it looking the wrong way, but she would think of something...

Kasey watched as they walked out the door together, and her body slumped into Sam's, and tears filled her eyes. Samantha just held her for a while until she settled down a little.

"Jesus Sam, what am I going to do? I love her so much, and I now know that they are either going to be or they are already back together."

"Come on, let's get our things from the table and go back to your house sweetheart. You've had enough for one night."

They went to pay their tab and gather their things and left. What had started out to be a nice relaxing evening sure ended up in the trash. They were both pretty quiet on the drive back to Kasey's.

'Jesus Christ!' Koty pinched the bridge of her nose, feeling a headach coming on. *'Will my life ever be normal again?'*

Tina had asked if Koty wanted to go to a different club, but she had declined and got into her car and left. This was after all, Tina's fault wasn't it? Wasn't she the one that caused this whole chain reaction of bad events? No, she did not want to go off to another club with her. She just wanted to go home and be alone.

With tears in her eyes, Koty pulled out of the parking lot and drove home. When she got there she went to make herself a drink, then changed her mind and walked into the living room. She plopped down on the couch then sprawled across it feeling very edgy. *'A bath. That's what I need. A long, hot, bubble bath with nothing for light except candles. Oh yeah, just what the doctor ordered. Uhng...why did I have to think Doctor?'*

Grabbing some scented candles out of the closet, she went to the bathroom to turn on the hot water and let the bathtub fill while she threw her dirty clothes in the hamper.

Samantha had left early Wednesday night after having dinner with Kasey at the Great Steak. Kasey had hugged her and told her now that they were talking again, they needed to keep in touch.

Kasey had walked Sam to her car and waited for her to get in. Before Sam pulled off she reached for Kasey's hand through the car window.

"You need to follow your heart Sweetheart. You're in love with her Kasey, please don't just let that pass you by. Right now I know you are hurt, but you are also being very stubborn. Go get her Kase, you deserve to be happy."

"Yeah? What about you Sam, what are you going to do?"

"I kind of like the single life for now, and I'm actually enjoying it. Take care of yourself Kase, and please take my advice. Bye." Then she was gone.

Chapter Forty-Five

Kasey and Chris's clinic had been up and running for about three weeks, and business was really starting to pick up. They hadn't even had the time to sit down together and have lunch since they opened.

Today, for some God sent reason they weren't that busy, and Chris walked into the break room to find Kasey sitting with her feet propped up on the table sipping her coffee.

"Glad we could find a few minutes to enjoy a cup of coffee together Kasey."

"Yeah it is. It sure has been kind of hectic hasn't it?"

"You know Kasey, with the business picking up the way it has we might want to look into hiring another doctor. What do you think? Another receptionist wouldn't hurt also."

Kasey smiled and got up to get them another cup of coffee. Handing Chris her mug, she sat down beside her. "Susan is already working three days a week, if she can't pull any more, maybe we

can talk Joanne into coming on board part time. She mentioned to me before that she might be interested. "I'll give her a call when I get home to night, and see what she says. Man my feet are killing me today."

"I know what you mean there. Joanne would be a good one to have here; she is really good with children. I worked with her a couple of times, and I really like her so see what she thinks."

"We could get one of the collage students to work the front part time. Maybe someone going for a degree, and needs a little background."

Both of them got quiet as they relaxed for a while. Chris was watching Kasey stare at the walls with a blank look on her face.

"So Kasey...how are things going with you and Koty"

Chris didn't think that Kasey was going to answer at first, and then she put her mug on the table to rub her hands across her eyes then turned to Chris. "There's absolutely nothing going on between us Chris. I think she is seeing Tina again."

"What?!" Chris was a little more than shocked. "What do you mean Kasey. Are you sure because I don't think..."

"I saw them together at Laces a couple of weeks ago."

"Well did you talk to her? I mean maybe it wasn't as it seemed?"

Chris really didn't think that this could be true. She knew Koty all too well, and she was sure that Koty was in love with Kasey. Something else must be going on, but she hadn't seen Koty in a while so she wasn't sure.

"I didn't talk to her Chris. I was there with...um...a friend."

"A friend?" Chris asked with a raised brow.

"I was there with Samantha."

"Samantha as in Samantha Samantha?" Chris almost thought that she misunderstood her until she saw the look on Kasey's face. "What on earth were you doing there with Samantha, Kasey?"

"She was in town for a meeting, got my address from the phone book, and looked me up. We had gone out for dinner and some drinks, that's all." Kasey said, feeling a little chastised.

"I'm sorry Kase, I didn't mean for it to come out the way it did. Does Koty know about her?"

"Oh...she knows about her and she definitely saw me there with her. I made sure of that. When I saw her walk in with Tina I guess my mind went a little crazy, and the angry child came out in

me. I pulled Samantha up on the dance floor with me right in front of her. I guess I was trying to throw it in her face or something. I mean, she did walk in with Tina. Like I said, the angry child came out in me, and I couldn't seem to stop it."

"Jesus Kasey, I didn't know. So does this mean you won't be seeing each other anymore? If you and Sam being together there was innocent, maybe theirs was too."

"I honestly don't know what is going on Chris. Hasn't she talked to you and told you what was going on? I thought if she were to talk to anyone it would be you."

"No, she hasn't said anything. Koty hasn't said much at all in these past couple of months, and to tell you the truth. I haven't seen her but once since that prick held her at gun point at her house. "I do know that she has been working ten to twelve hours a day, and five and six days a week. I just figured she has been busy cause she hasn't even been returning my messages."

Chris leaned back in her chair and finished off her coffee. She wasn't sure what to think about this news that she just found out, but she reached for her best friends hand.

"Kasey, maybe you and Koty need to sit down and have a heart to heart about what's going on. You need to get to the bottom of this one way or another. Neither one of you can keep going on like this."

Kasey got up to go rinse out her mug. "When I saw her at Laces she looked like she had lost a lot of weight." She said as she leaned against the counter.

"She's working herself into the ground Kasey. Well, duty calls, are you ready to face the rest of the day?"

"I am. You know, we have been working our tails off, but it's a good feeling knowing that we made our dream a reality. I know we're going to need help, but it's still a good feeling."

"Yes it is Kasey. Well let's go..."

Chris walked out of the break room thinking about what Kasey had told her about Koty. *'Why hasn't Koty called me or come by? This must be eating her up inside, and if she's not talking to me about it I hope she's at least talking to Jamie.'* Chris knew that Koty was bad about holding things inside, no matter how bad she was hurting. She also knew that Koty would come to her if it got too bad for her.

Maybe she would call her this evening and if she wasn't there, or just wasn't answering the phone, she would tell Monty on her. *'Ha, that would teach her a lesson or two.'*

Later that evening, Koty walked to the parking lot with her new partner Laney Jacobs. They had hit it off right from the start, surprising Koty more than just a little. Maybe it wasn't gonna be so

bad after all. Having a new partner might be ok.

Laney Jacobs was a classic beauty, the kind that really didn't have to wear make up with her dark features, and naturally curly hair that hung just past her shoulders. Her hair was a light brown with copper highlights that Koty wonder if it were natural, or came from a Clairol box.

Koty also didn't miss all of the men's heads turn as Laney had walked past them. Laney gave no indication that she noticed them watching her. It was almost as if she were unaware of it all. Yeah, she and Laney would get along just fine. Besides, she was a hell of a lot cuter than her last partner.

"Hey Koty?" Laney said as they stopped at her Jeep Cherokee. "If you're not in a big hurry to go home right away would you have a cup of coffee with me somewhere? I don't really know anyone here yet, and my house is still in shambles with boxes everywhere so I'm trying to stall going home right away. What do you say?"

"Sure ."

Koty was thinking that she wasn't quite ready to rush home herself. It's not like there was anyone there waiting on her. At least she didn't have to answer to anyone for not going home right away. Somehow that didn't seem to make her feel better.

"There's a Starbucks down the road a little ways off of Independence Blvd. Do you know where that is?"

Smiling, Laney told her that yes, she did know where it was, and she would meet her there in a few minutes. She got into her Jeep and pulled out of the parking lot waving at Koty.

They both arrived at Starbucks at the same time, and were able to park next to each other right up front by the door. *'Man, that's a first.'* Koty thought as she got out of her Jag.

They purchased their coffee and went to find a little table in the corner to sit at. After a moment of settling in and getting a few sips of their coffee, Laney asked Koty to tell her about the Coleman case. She had heard a few detectives talking about it.

"I hope you can handle more than one cup." Koty said with a smile. "This could take a while."

"I have nowhere that I need to be so one more cup wouldn't hurt one bit."

Koty started from the beginning where Monty had asked for her help. She told about the fire, the shooting, the hospital and Bob Wheatly showing up at her house while she was sleeping.

"I got to tell you, I'm not real sure to this day how I pulled it off with him. All that I could think of at the time was that I needed to get control of the situation somehow. Hell, as mean as I was to him, I'm suprised he didn't shoot me just to shut me up. At the time, I was going through something heavy and he just pissed me off.

Laney looked at Koty and thought for a moment then smiled. "Well, having you as a partner seems to tell me that at least I won't be bored with any of the cases."

"My life normally isn't this exciting Laney. No more than any other cop's really. Now, enough about me. Tell me something about yourself. How did you end up down here from Richmond if you don't mind me asking? Jason told me that you are married to some hot shot Lawyer up there."

"Was married. Richard and his father are partners in a big firm there. He is actually a brilliant lawyer, but he was pretty damn dumb when it came to his personal life, or his wife. He thought that he could take his little twenty three year old mistress to some of the parties at certain friend's houses and I wouldn't find out. I guess he thought that everyone liked him so much they wouldn't tell me."

Laney took a sip of her coffee then smiled and shook her head. "He never really seemed to understand that ninety percent of our friends were actually my friends just putting up with him for my benefit."

"He left you for a twenty three year old?" Koty asked a little more than surprised. "He must be an idiot."

Laney gave a small smile, a faint blush spread up both cheeks. *'Now why in the hell did that make me blush like that? I must be tired or something.'*

"Thank you, but he didn't leave me, he never would. You see, when I found out about his little affair, I'm the one that filed for divorce."

Laney finished off her coffee and went to get them both another, leaving Koty's eyes following in her direction. *'She's very beautiful, and from what I can see, nice as well. That guy really must be an idiot for screwing around on her. Ha, and she blushes easy too.'*

Koty watched as Laney paid for the coffees and made her way back to the table. Even in here she was turning heads, and not just the men's either. *'Like I thought before, she is either used to it or she really has no clue.'*

"As I was going to say, Richard was positively shocked and livid when he found out that I had filed. He just couldn't believe that I would do such a thing. You see Koty, Richard makes a very good living at what he does, but I come from an extremely wealthy family in the oil business from Texas. I knew that was really the only reason that he married me in the first place, but I was young and naive back then. When he realized that he had blown any chances of getting his hands on my money he absolutely panicked. I can still see the look on his face." She laughed at the memory.

"So, when the divorce was final, I decided that I needed a change. I needed to get away from him and Richmond so here I am."

"That must have been pretty hard on you to find out about his affair, huh?"

"I had suspected long before then that he was seeing other women behind my back. To be honest with you, I had stopped loving him long before any of this happened. I'm not sure that I even truly loved him in the beginning. Like I said, I was very young when we got married. His infidelity was actually a blessing for me. It was my way out of a very dead marriage."

Koty was smiling. "That's an incredible story Laney. It's refreshing to see the woman come out ahead of the game for once."

"Yes well, I was such a dutiful wife at first, but he totally underestimated me. He was going to try and fight me at first, but after a lot of arguing, his father finally talked him into a non-contested divorce. "His father knew that he didn't have a chance in hell to win, and all it would end up doing was embarrassing his family, and maybe even tarnish the name a bit."

Laney was quiet for a moment and seemed to get a little nervous. "Um...Koty, can I ask you something? Something personal?"

'Uh oh. Here we go, just jump right on in and ask Laney, I know what's coming.' "Sure, what do you want to know?"

"I went into work a little early this morning and this young, very pumped up rookie came up to me and asked if I was your new partner. When I told him yes, he made a smart assed comment like 'be careful bending over in front of her'. Though I knew what he was referring to, I asked him what he meant. He told me if I were afraid of dykes, his words not mine, that I might want to try and hook up with another partner."

Koty closed her eyes and sighed, not really knowing what she should say to this woman. *'And I know just who you are talking about, that little pimple faced fart.'*

"Anyway," Laney continued, "As he was running his mouth, an older officer, Officer Barnes came over and told him to shut his trap and get lost. When the kid sulked off, Barnes told me that you were one of the best he had ever worked with, and that he would have your back any day, then walked away."

"Um...Laney, are you asking me if what that rookie said was true?" Koty leaned back in her chair. "And if I said it was true, would you have any problems with that, and would you then seek out another partner?"

"Yes Koty, I guess that is what I'm asking and no, that wouldn't cause a problem at all. What you do with your life, and whom you choose to love is not a problem, nor is it any of my business. "The only reason I asked is because I'm curious, nosey, and I like to know as much about my partner as I can. I care more about knowing that my partner does their best, and has my back."

Laney placed her hand over Koty's. "This isn't a problem Koty I promise. Like I said, who you

choose to love is you're business. I heard that you were one of the best, and that's what matters to me. Ok?"

Koty smiled and relaxed a little more. She decided that she was definitely going to like working with this woman. Koty answered the few questions that Laney had then they left to go home to their solitary existence.

Chapter Forty-Six

The next few weeks went by fairly quickly with Koty and Laney solving small cases here and there. It seemed to Koty that everyone at the precinct really liked Laney. Even the young 'pumped up pimple faced fart rookie' as Laney and Koty refered to him. A little too much.

You could always find him sniffing at her heels when they were both in the building at the same time. 'That is,' until one day Laney backed him against the wall right in front of everyone, and kindly told him to back off.

Of course he wasn't too happy that she had said it in front of the other officers, but he seemed to get her drift and knew better than to try and do anything about it. Since then, he behaved like a well-trained little puppy.

"Hey Koty, why don't we stop off at Fuddruckers for lunch today, I've become rather addicted to that place," Laney said just as her stomach viciously growed.

"Jesus Laney, has that thing had all of it's shots?" They both laughed as Koty drove down Virginia Beach Blvd.

As they sat down at their table, Jamie and Trish walked up to them. Laney told Koty to invite them to sit down and join them. Koty's friends had already eaten, but sat for conversation.

Koty introduced Laney. "These are my best friends Jamie and Trish. Guy's, my new partner Laney Jacobs."

After about twenty minutes Jamie's beeper went off. "It's the station. Charlie has been really sick for the last couple of days so I told them to page me if they needed me to fill in for him. Sorry but I have to go Trish."

Laney had told them that it had been nice to meet them and maybe they could all get together some time. She waited until they had walked out the door before she turned to Koty.

"Koty, are they together? Um...you know, as in a couple?"

"Yes they are. Jamie and I have been best friends since grade school. She and Trish have been together for seven years now."

"Really?" Laney said. "They make a very cute couple, and they seem real nice."

"They are great people, and they have really good parties too, if you can handle being in a room full of lesbians. Well, there are a few straight couples that go to their parties as well. Maybe I'll take you to the one they're having this weekend. That is if you want to go?"

"I think that I can handle it Koty, and yes, I would like to go. I like meeting people no matter if they are gay, straight, black, white, purple or green. People are just people to me Koty."

"I know that Laney, but not everyone shares your point of view."

"I'm a very easy going person most of the time Koty, it takes mean people to make me not want to be around them. Then, I'm not always that nice."

Jamie had been moving some things around in her garage when a toolbox fell off of the shelf and on to her pinky. With a sickening crunch, she knew that she had broken it. "Ow, shit, mother f...!"

She knew she had better get it checked out, or Trish would have her ass so she drove over to Chris and Kasey's clinic.

Chris had walked into the little room Jamie was waiting in with the ex-ray in her hand. "Well Jamie, you did break it, but we won't need to put a cast on it, just a splint. But, you need to still be careful with it so no messing around, ok?"

"Yeah, ok Chris. I damn sure can't work with a cast on my hand so I'll be careful."

As they were walking out of the small exam room, Chris smiled, "Good. Um...have you seen Koty lately?"

"Yeah, I saw her at Fudruckers the other day when Trish and I had gone there for lunch. She was with her new partner."

Chris laughed. "Monty told me that her partner was a 'real babe' as he called it."

"He was right, she is a babe." Jamie told her right as Kasey walked up to them.

"Who's a babe?" Kasey asked as she gave Jamie a hug and kissed her on the cheek.

Not really knowing what to say, Jamie just shrugged her shoulders and said, "Koty's new partner."

Kasey arched a brow, but refused to comment. *That is something I for damn sure don't want to*

know about. Instead, she asked Jamie if they were still having their party that weekend that Trish made her promise to be at.

"Yes we are. You are coming aren't you, Trish is really counting on being able to see you even if you only show up for awhile."

"Um...yeah I'll be there." She replied not knowing for sure if she wanted to go or not.

She knew that Koty would be there one-way or another. Her feelings for Koty had not dimmed in the least. Actually the more that she was away from her the more she missed her. She wouldn't be able to handle it very well if Koty showed up with Tina. Well, with any woman actually. *'God, how petty can you get Kasey, you're the one that pushed her away.'*

The three of them spoke for a little while longer until one of their newly hired assistants walked a patient into a room for Kasey. Kasey left, leaving Chris and Jamie talking about the party. Chris and Monty had been invited as well, but had to decline. That was the weekend that they would be out of town.

Saturday night, Koty and Laney drove to Jamie's house in Koty's Jag. Koty had told her that there wasn't any reason for them both to drive and that she would pick her up.

"Nice car Koty, it suits you. How on earth do you keep it smelling so new though, it's got to be what, two years old?"

"Two years exactly, and I take it to a detailer and have them clean it at least once a month. It wouldn't smell this way if I cleaned it all the time myself. I would probably just put one of those ugly little pine trees hanging from my mirror."

Trish opened the door to find Koty there with Laney. *'Oh boy.'* She actually liked Laney, and she was sure that there was nothing between her and Koty, but she knew that Kasey was going to be here and she didn't know how Kasey would react to them being here together.

Hugging Koty and shaking Laney's hand, she led them into the kitchen to show them where the drinks were.

"You know where everything is at Koty, so I'm going to show Laney around and introduce her to a few people. I'll bring her back in a moment."

Laney turned and smiled as Koty winked at her. Lifting her hand to give a little wave, Koty said, "Bye now, ya'll come back now ya hear?"

Koty was watching her face as Trish introduced her to their friends when Jamie walked up and kissed Koty on the cheek. She watched with Koty briefly before she asked, "Koty, is Laney gay?"

"No. But she's not homophobic either, and she likes meeting people. She gets along with everyone she meets it seems."

"There's going to be a lot of women here tonight that are going to try and hit on her. You think she'll be ok with that? She's awfully cute."

"She'll be just fine James, you'll see."

After a couple of hours, Koty had, had enough to drink to keep a permanent smile on her face. Laney had walked up to her and patted her back telling her that she needed to give her the keys to her car.

"Ha, you just want to cruise in my car don't you?" She said, but handed over the keys anyway.

Laney was sitting on the couch talking to Trish while Koty was dancing with Liz. Koty felt someone grab her shoulder from behind and spin her around.

"What the...Mel! What are you doing here, and where is my girlfriend Gina?"

After pulling from Koty's tight embrace, she told her that Gina had went to hang up their coats, and fix some drinks for them. "We just got in, I had some things I had to take care of before we drove down here. So how are you? Any more drama to report?"

"Huh, how long are you here for?" Koty asked as she reached past Laney to reach her drink on the end table.

"We're just here for the weekend. Jamie called and begged us to come in for the party, and since it's been a while since we've been here, here we are."

"So how are all of your furry little creatures doing?"

They both laughed at that, and Mel stole a quick glance at the woman sitting on the couch watching Koty. *'Hmm, and who do we have here?'* She thought just as Koty introduced them.

"Mel, this is my new partner Laney. Laney, This is Mel, one of my best friends since high school."

Laney stood and reached for her hand. "It's nice to meet you. I couldn't help but to overhear some of your conversation. Did you drive in from out of town?"

"Yeah, we drove down from a small town right outside of Grafton West Virginia. Koty calls us hillbillies now."

"Grafton? I know that place pretty well. Some friends of my late grandmother lives up there. John and Lucy Hudman, they have an old farm down in the holler of Lewis's mountain."

"No shit! We know old man Hudman and his wife. Someone was poisoning some animals out at his property about a year ago, and Gina and I helped some people out up at his place. Well what do you know, small world."

At that time Gina walked up, and Mel started telling her about Laney knowing the Hudman family so they swapped stories for a while. Koty stood there and listened, not knowing who they were talking about.

Jamie handed Koty and Laney a fresh drink and said, "This seems like old times doesn't it, the only one missing is Deanne."

"Not anymore, Mel said with a huge grin on her face. "That's her coming in the door right now. God I haven't seen that girl in a coon's age!"

Koty hugged Deanne, then turned to her girlfriend Roxi and hugged her. "The whole gang is here now, what a trip."

They all stood talking for a while, then Koty grabbed her drink and went over and plopped on the couch next to Laney giving her a smile.

"You doing ok Laney?"

"Of course. Koty, you sure know a lot of beautiful women."

"I know a lot of women period, beautiful or not. They are great friends, and it's been a long time since we were all together at one place. We all went to school together with the exception of Deanne, but she came in not too long afterwards. "I hope this isn't too boring for you Laney, if it is we can go."

"Nonsense Koty. I'm really having a good time so quit worrying about me, and you don't have to keep checking on me either. Just relax and enjoy yourself Ok?"

Koty smiled and took a long sip of her drink as she watched Jamie walking up to her. Jamie knelt down by her legs and rested her hand on her knee.

"How you doing Babes?"

"Never been better. It's a great party James and it's pretty cool that the gang is together, even if it is only for one night."

"Um...Koty. You know that Trish invited Kasey tonight don't you? She said that she didn't care if you two weren't talking or not, or what either one of us thought, but she also doesn't want anyone to be uncomfortable."

Koty glanced sideways at Laney and watched her smile and take a sip of her drink, but did not say anything. *'What the hell is she gonna think about this?'* She leaned back against the back of

the couch and groaned.

"Do you think she's gonna show up Jamie?"

"Well...She's already here. Actually she's been here for about an hour. She's in the kitchen right now talking to Trish."

"Shit, she's here!?" Koty sat straight up and ran her fingers through her hair. "Man, I think I need a drink."

Jamie leaned in a little closer and hugged her. "Take it easy Koty. You going to be all right? You already have half a drink in front of you." She quietly continued so only Koty could hear, "Don't get carried away on the booze Babes just take it easy."

"Shit Jamie, you're not gonna lecture me are you?"

"No, but you're my best friend, and you're hurting pretty badly right now. We are both the same when we're hurting. We tend to hit the alcohol a little too heavily when we need to escape. Right now you are seriously trying to escape."

Jamie made Koty look at her so that she knew she heard her, then stood and patted her on the back. "Just think about what I said. Ok?"

Koty picked up her glass and finished off her drink as she watched Jamie walk away. Laney leaned in and whispered to her.

"One of these days when you feel comfortable enough to talk to me Koty, I hope you can tell me what just happened here and who this Kasey woman is because it's got you as white as a sheet right now."

Laney could sense that Koty probably wanted to be alone right now so she reached over to rub her shoulder, then stood and went to talk to some woman leaning against the wall.

Chapter Forty-Seven

Kasey stepped out of the kitchen just in time to see the woman that Trish had told her was Koty's partner lean in, whisper something to her, then rub her shoulder.

Koty looked up at that time and their eyes locked. Kasey felt something shift in her stomach at the look on Koty's face before she backed herself into the kitchen again. *'This is crazy!'*

Koty leaned her elbows on her knees for a few minutes. *'Fuck! We can't keep going on like this, something has gotta give somewhere.'* Standing to stretch her tall lean body she then walked to the bathroom.

As she turned to go down the hallway she bumped right into Kasey.

"Um...I'm sorry." Koty just stood there fidgeting. "So how have you been Kasey?"

"I've been...fine Koty. How about you, are you doing alright?"

"Well...yeah, I've been pretty good. Look Kasey..." Then she stopped.

"Yes?"

"Um...I have to go to the bathroom."

Kasey didn't say a word. She slowly stepped aside as Koty brushed by her and closed the bathroom door.

Koty leaned her head against the closed door, and shut her eyes to the tears. All she wanted to do was grab Kasey's hand and take her home. She couldn't believe the amount of tears she had shed in this past month. *'I miss her so much it's tearing me apart.'*

When Koty walked back into the living room, Mel was talking to a very somber faced Jamie who turned to look at her as she came up to them. *'Uh oh, wonder what that's all about?'*

Mel turned to Koty briefly. "I was just telling Jamie about the application that you put in with the Morgan Sheriffs Department. You had put me down as a personal reference, and Sheriff Abby called me because you forgot to put a contact number. He told me with your qualifications and reputation, he would be crazy not to have you on his team. Anyway, he wants you on board, all you need to do is call him."

Koty had completely forgotten that she even put that application in. She was pretty upset that morning about Kasey, and when she had gotten home the next week, and she and Kasey had gotten together, she totally forgot about it. *'Sonofabitch, no wonder Jamie looks like she wants to kill my dog. She thinks that I wasn't going to tell her.'*

"So, they're really interested huh?" Koty asked, then looked at Jamie who still had that, 'I'm gonna kill you' look on her face.

"Look guys, I've had way too much to drink. I'm gonna go find Laney and see if she is ready to go. Great party James." She hugged them goodbye then left them wondering what her plans were.

After Koty had left, Jamie and Mel were telling Trish and Kasey about Koty's offer with the Sheriffs Department. Kasey turned sharply and walked out of the kitchen with Trish hot on her heels.

Jamie slammed her glass down on the counter, nearly breaking it, and followed them into the living room. Kasey looked at her with a stricken look on her face.

"Jamie, what in the hell is she thinking? Is she going to accept it?"

Trish put her arm around Kasey's waist, waiting for Jamie's answer herself.

"I honestly don't know. Ninety percent of the time I can tell you exactly what Koty is thinking, but this time I just don't know. She didn't give any indication as to what she is going to do. Hell, I didn't even know that she applied so this is all news to me too."

Jamie reached for the drink that Mel handed her. "Thanks Mel. I will tell you this Kasey. If Koty feels that it's really over between the two of you, she probably doesn't think there's anything to hold her here. I wish I had a better answer than that for you."

Kasey wanted desperately to talk to Koty. Her mind was racing furiously. *'Why did she just leave out of here without telling me goodbye?' Can I let Koty walk out of my life that easily? Is Jamie right? Would Koty just leave now that we aren't together anymore? What will I do?'*

"I can't believe that Koty wouldn't tell me that she was even thinking about leaving." Jamie told Trish as they climbed into bed. "I know she's had a lot on her mind lately, but she always confides in me, why not this time?"

"I don't know Honey, but I do know that this is going to kill Kasey if she does go. I wish they would just stop this crazy argument and make up, because they are both miserable without each other."

"I've never seen Koty this down before over a woman. Kasey is the one for her. We know it, and Koty knows it, now Kasey needs to know it."

"They have both been burned in the past by ex lovers, and that makes them gun shy. I don't know what will happen Jamie, but I hope that Koty doesn't leave."

"Yeah, me too."

Trish growled at Jamie when she put her cold feet on her calve. "Remove them, or lose them." Trish squeaked.

"Aw but Baby, I want you to warm me up."

"I know of another way to warm you up Honey, but if you don't move those ice cubes, I'm going to roll over and pretend that you're not here."

"Ok, ok. I'll move them. Hee hee, come here Baby."

Sitting in a booth at Captain D's where they had stopped for lunch, Laney told Koty that she had never eaten there before, but she had always wanted to try it.

"I'm sure my arteries just went into shock, but this is wonderful," Laney moaned after another bite.

"Koty, I know that this is probably none of my business, but you seemed really upset the other night over that Kasey woman. Um...is she your lover?"

Koty regarded her for a moment then sat her drink down. "She was. She basically told me that she didn't want to see me anymore, and to let it go. She thinks that I screwed around on her with my ex girlfriend."

"Did you?"

"No I didn't. I was up at a skiing lodge with my brother and sister-in-law when we got snowed in and they shut the roads down. We had our rooms there already, but those that didn't had to sleep on the floor. Tina was there with some of her friends from the fire station, and I felt bad about her having to sleep down in the lobby with all of those other people, so when she asked if she could stay in my room, I said yes, but she had to pull the cushions off the chairs and sleep on the floor. I went to take a shower, and right before I got out, Kasey called and Tina answered the phone. Needless to say, she freaked out and doesn't seem to want to believe me when I tell her that nothing happened."

"Mmm. Look, I also overheard your friends talking about you taking that job up in Morgan. Are you serious about taking it?"

"I was at the time that I put in the application. My head was pretty screwed up, and I was looking for an escape. I was still recovering from being shot, and trying to ignore my feelings for Kasey."

"Well for what it's worth, I hope you don't take it. I kind of like having you as my partner, so now that I think about it, I will just refuse to let you go."

Koty looked her in the eyes, and at that moment, Laney felt a shift in her gut. *'What in the hell is that all about?'* Confused, she started laughing, and Koty joined in, unaware of what had just happened.

"Well I must say Koty, that Kasey is really beautiful, but she is also being a fool."

"Thanks."

"By the way," Laney said as she pushed her tray away from her, "I hear that the station has a softball team that's getting ready to start, and that you are one of their best players. I'm not too shabby myself and I signed up this morning."

"Great. We have a really good team, and were undefeated last year. We're supposed to start practicing this weekend. I can use it because I feel so out of shape from the winter. I really need to start using the gym at work again"

"Uh yeah, I can tell because you are soooo flabby."

"Smartass."

"Yeap. You ready to go?"

"Let's roll. Man, I ate too much."

"You say that every time."

They were both quiet as they got in the car and left the restaurant. It was finally starting to warm up a little during the days so Koty cracked her window to get some fresh air.

Chapter Forty-Eight

Kasey and Lee were having dinner at Laces after a long day at work. They had just finished eating, and were having a drink when they saw Tina walking up to their table.

"Oh great," Kasey mumbled.

"Excuse me Kasey, but can I talk to you for a minute?"

Lee told Kasey that she was going to say hi to Linda up at the bar and she'd be back shortly.

Getting an uneasy feeling in the pit of her stomach, Kasey just waved a hand at the seat for Tina to sit down.

"Look, I know I'm the last person on this earth you want to see or talk to, but I'll only take a minute of your time if you will just hear me out."

Kasey didn't say anything, and took a sip of her drink and a drag off of the cigarette that Lee had left burning in the ashtray. She silently waited for Tina to continue, and was sure that she really didn't want to hear anything that she had to say.

"Just for the record Kasey, nothing happened between Koty and me in her room that night. Not that I didn't want it to because I did, but Koty didn't. I would have done just about anything to get her back at the time. I really screwed up when I messed around on her. Koty was the best thing that had ever happened in my life, and I fucked it up. If you are going to push her away, don't do it because of me. Koty will never take me back, and I know that now."

Tina took the drink from the waitress, and paid her for it before she continued her story. *'I don't know why the hell I'm so nervous.'*

"I don't even know why I am telling you this because I really hated you for a long time. With you

in the picture, I knew there was no chance in hell for me to win her back. No. I'm the one that messed it up between us, so I guess you really didn't have anything to do with it. Anyway, I guess what I am trying to say is...don't let her go Kasey. Dakota Silvers is a very special woman. The kind of woman that only happens once in a lifetime. She needs someone special in her life, and unfortunately that someone isn't me. It's you, so don't throw away your chance with her. Think hard about what it is you are really mad at her about. You can't use me as an excuse because I am out of her life as far as lovers go."

Tina stood to leave then turned around and placed her hands on the table in front of Kasey. "I'll tell you one more thing. Koty is in love with you. She loves you a hell of a lot more than she ever loved me, and we were together for three years. She wasn't even close to being as devastated over me as she is with you."

"Why are you telling me all of this Tina? Did Koty send you here with these words of wisdom?" Kasey asked Tina sarcastically.

"Koty would kill me if she even knew that I was talking to you. Why am I telling you this? Well, because Koty deserves to be happy Kasey, and you are the only one that is going to be able to make her that way. Don't make the same mistake that I did and let her get away from you. You will regret it for the rest of your life."

With that, Tina turned and walked away with Kasey staring dumbfounded at her back. Lee came up to her and placed her hands on her shoulders.

"Everything ok Sweetie?"

Kasey looked up at her with tears filling her eyes. "I don't know Lee, I just don't know." She told Lee what Tina had told her.

"Maybe Kase, you might want to listen, even if it did come from Tina.

Koty went over to Chris and Monty's for dinner, not being able to put them off any longer. Chris had called and told her that if she didn't show up, she was going to come find her, and drag her ass over to the house.

She had never heard Chris so upset at her before, and felt really guilty for putting them off for as long as she had. *'What an asshole you've been Koty.'*

When she got to the door, it opened up even before she had a chance to knock.

"Get in here, sit down, and tell me what is going on Dakota," Chris said with her hands planted firmly on her hips. "Tell me what is happening with you Koty. Tell me why you have lost so much weight, and why you don't come around to see us anymore. And while you're at it, tell me that you are not taking that job up in Morgan."

"Jesus, word gets around fast. How did you find out about that Chris?"

"Does it matter how I found out? Jesus Honey, everyone is really worried about you! You are drinking like a fish, and working yourself into the ground. How can we help you if you don't tell us what's happening?"

"Chris," Koty said softly. "I'm ok really. I've got a lot going on right now and I'm just trying to sort out my life and get it back on track. I know that I drink too much and I'm sorry if you feel like I'm pushing you guys away."

Koty hung her head and sighed. "It wasn't my intention to hurt you guys."

"So then why are you even thinking about leaving here Koty? Talk to me please."

Koty saw the hurt in Chris's eyes and felt like a heel. All they ever did was care for her and be there anytime that she needed them, and here she was treating them like strangers.

"Chris, I'm not taking that job in Morgan. I'm not leaving here."

"That's not what Kasey says or thinks."

"Kasey? How in the hell does Kasey...God, Jamie has a big fucking mouth. I didn't answer yes or no, because I wanted to get a reaction out of Jamie. You know, just pulling her chain, I didn't think she would take it to heart."

"Watch your language Koty. Look, you need to let Kasey know that you're not leaving."

"Why Chris, she won't even talk to me. She's been avoiding me like the Black Plague! She couldn't give a damn if I left this fucking place or not. Hell, she wouldn't even know that I have gone!" Koty started to get very emotional and started pacing.

"Dakota, watch your language. And you're wrong, she would most definitely notice you were gone. Look Honey, Monty made a great dinner, and I don't want to spoil it any more than I already have. He went to the store to pick up some wine."

Chris pulled Koty into a tight hug. "I'm sorry for upsetting you so much, but we were just worried."

Koty relaxed in Chris's arms. "I'm sorry too Chris. I know that you're just worried, but I really am ok."

Monty showed up with the wine, and they sat down at the table to eat.

Monty was telling them about this real big contract he got for a mini mall on the south side of Suffolk. Monty asked Koty about her new partner. Apparently, he knew of her husband. "I've

never met him personally, but I have heard of him. Tommy and Bill Wade went to school with him and said that he was a real jerk."

"He is a jerk. I haven't met him either, but from what Laney has told me I'm glad I haven't had the pleasure. Laney is really cool. She's very smart, and is one hell of a detective, even better than I am. She's quick to figure things out. I never thought that I would want to work beside anyone else since Mike quit, but she's not bad."

Chris arched her eyebrows and looked at Koty.

"No way Chris, it's not what you are thinking. I'm not interested in her that way, but we are becoming fast friends and I need that right now. She'll put me in my place in a heartbeat though. She's got a lot of spunk and motivation. I think you'll both like her a lot."

Before Koty left that night she promised Chris that she would bring Laney over for dinner one night. She knew that Chris was just curious, but that was ok. Once Chris met her, she would see what Koty meant, and would instantly like her as well.

Koty lay awake that night thinking about Kasey. In such a short amount of time, Kasey had become a monumental part in her life. She never knew that love could feel so good, and hurt so bad at the same time.

She refused to believe that it was over. Somehow she had to find a way to get Kasey back into her life. Somehow she would have her back into her arms again where she belonged.

If everyone else could be happy and with the one that they loved, then why the hell couldn't she? *'I have never really needed much, but I do need her. God I miss her so much.'*

Like a video, scenes of them together played over and over in her head. She kept remembering the first night that they were together and made love. Koty had thought she had died and gone to heaven.

One way or another, she would have that heaven again.

Chapter Forty-Nine

"Kasey," Chris said as they were locking up the clinic, "Koty is playing on the squads softball team again this year, and they are having a game this Saturday. Do you want to come with me to watch them? She's really good."

Kasey hesitated for a moment before answering. "Actually Chris, I just might do that, what time is the game? Since the weather has warmed up some I've been dying to get out in the sun."

Saturday afternoon, Chris picked Kasey up from her house, and they drove to the softball field in

Chris's Durango. When they arrived at Princess Anne Park, Chris pulled two Coleman folding chairs, and a small cooler out of the back of her S.U.V.. "You can't go to a softball game and not have beer. That would be like going to the movies and not having popcorn. They both just go together."

They sat their chairs next to the bleachers facing the field, and watched the players as they warmed up. Kasey immediately spotted Koty throwing the ball to a woman. *'That woman,'* her new partner.

When Koty looked over and saw Kasey wave, her heart started pounding, and since she wasn't paying attention, got nailed in the chest by the ball that Laney threw.

Kasey stood to go over to her, but stopped when Laney reached her first.

Koty was kneeling on the ground when Laney grabbed her shoulders and knelt down in front of her. "Shit Koty, what were you doing? Are you ok?"

"I'm fine, I just got the wind knocked out of me for a minute. Let's finish throwing."

Kasey saw that Koty was indeed an awesome player when she came up to the plate and hit a line drive to left field. The ball went right through the left fielders legs, causing her to fall and miss the ball. Koty made it to third base when the base coach motioned for her to stop. The next guy up looked like he could power hit the ball over the fence, and he did, bringing Koty and himself in tying the score five to five.

As they came in, the other players were slapping them high fives and Kasey watched as Laney slapped Koty a high five then hug her. *'Now that wasn't really called for was it?'*

Noticing the glare in Kasey's eyes, Chris patted her on the knee. "Kasey, I really don't think you have anything to worry about there, they're just friends. Becoming good friends, but just friends nonetheless."

It was the last inning of the game, and the score was still tied five to five with no one on the bases and Koty on deck. She looked around and found Kasey's eyes and locked onto them, turning away only when it was her turn to bat. The guy before her had struck out leaving them with only one out left. She walked up to the plate and adjusted her feet and shoulders then swung. Strike one. She adjusted her feet again and swung. Strike two. She held her hand up to call time, and stepped out of the batters box.

Bending over to pick up some of the red dirt, she rubbed her hands together. Glancing one last time and locking eyes with Kasey, she smiled and walked back up to the plate.

She took a deep breath and adjusted her feet and shoulders one last time. *'Last chance Koty girl. This one's for you Kasey.'*

Koty swung at the ball with all she had and watched as it sailed over the fence in left field. Home

run. Game, six to five.

The crowd and her teammates went nuts. Two big burly players had Koty hoisted up on their shoulders as she slapped high fives with each player.

Kasey stood and smiled. "Damn, she is good Chris."

"Yeah, she is isn't she?"

Koty walked over and gave Chris a hug and kissed her cheek. Turning to Kasey, she smiled nervously, unsure of what to say as Chris went to put the chairs in the truck.

"Hi Kasey."

"Hi yourself, that was a hell of a game Koty, you really are good."

Koty blushed.

Kasey bent to pick up the cooler, and was getting ready to take it over and put it in the back for Chris when Koty reached out and touched her hand.

"Kasey wait. Um...will you have dinner with me tonight?"

Kasey lost her smile. "I'm sorry Koty, but I'm driving up to Lu and Dina's tonight, and I won't be back until late tomorrow night sometime." *'Shit!'*

"Oh...well maybe some other time then, take care Kasey."

With that, Koty turned and walked over to where Laney and a few of the other players were sitting and having a beer. She kept her head held high and her back straight and didn't look back.

'Shit!' Kasey felt like kicking herself. Why did she have to tell Dina that she would definitely be there tonight when Koty wanted to have dinner with her? *'Of all the rotten lousy timing!'*

Did Koty really want to spend some time with her after what she had put her through? She had looked so dejected that it tore at Kasey's heart. Kasey had wanted so badly to call her back, but instead walked over to Chris's Durango and handed her the cooler.

"You ok Kasey?" Chris asked as she put the cooler in the back.

"Yeah, I'm fine Chris."

Kasey had arrived at Lu and Dina's around five o'clock and they had stayed up late lounging around drinking Grand Marnier and talking.

That evening Kasey lie awake, unable to get the look on Koty's face out of her mind.

Was the reason that Koty had wanted to have dinner with her was to tell her that she was going to take that job at the Sheriff's Department? Chris had told her that Koty had decided that she wasn't going to go, but Kasey needed to hear it from Koty.

What would she do if Koty did move up there for the job? She couldn't figure out which was worse. Not being with Koty and seeing her at different functions and maybe even with another woman, or never seeing her again at all?

Somehow she figured that if Koty did leave she would only come down to see her brother and Chris every now and then, and Jamie and Trish, but not her. Just the thought of that felt like it was going to destroy her.

The next morning while Lu and Dina ran into town, Kasey decided to saddle up her horse and go riding for a while. She missed not being able to ride like she used to, and there was nothing like a long solitary ride in the rolling hills. The only thing better was to have someone to ride the trails with you. She could never get Samantha to ride with her, she was more afraid of the horses than Koty was. Not that that was saying much. At least, once Koty got started she seemed to relax enough to enjoy herself a little bit.

'Yeah, seems like anything I do any more reminds me of her. I wonder what she is doing today? God I really miss her.'

Kasey looked at her watch as she entered back onto Dina's property. What seemed to be only an hour or so had actually been four hours. Time always went by much too quickly when she was riding.

As Kasey was cleaning up her tack and putting it away, she decided that she needed to see Koty. She had to let Koty know where she stood. If Koty rejected her, she would just have to learn to deal with it.

Just how she would accomplish that she wasn't quite sure. She needs to know that I am so in love with her that I can't even think right anymore. I hurt too much when I am away from her, and I miss her too damn much. Screw my insecurities.'

When Kasey walked up to the porch, Dina and Lu were walking out with a platter of soup and sandwiches for their lunch. At that moment, Kasey's stomach let it be known just how hungry it was.

"Jesus, I guess we came out just in time before that beast of yours decided to release itself on us." Dina laughed as she set the platter down on the iron table and motioned for Kasey to sit down.

"I can't control the monster when it decides it's time to eat. This looks great by the way."

Lu reached over and patted Kasey's hand. "You always were known for your growling stomach and huge appetite. I've never known anyone as thin as you Kasey, eat like you can, and maintain that awesome figure."

"Well, I'm always on the go, or I would probably be as big as a house."

"Bullshit, you just have a metabolism that we are all jealous of."

"Lu, listen to you talk about fine figures. Of all the years I've known you, you don't get a day older, and you have the same figure. Dina is a lucky woman."

"Flattery will get you everywhere my dear, but I am the lucky one."

Kasey said goodbye to her friends, then headed back to Virginia Beach with Koty on her mind once again.

Picking up her cell phone she tried calling Koty's house, but all she got was the answering machine.

Tapping her fingers on the steering wheel, she tried calling her cell phone. After several rings, Koty's voicemail picked up asking the caller to leave a message, and she would get back to them as soon as possible.

'Shit, where is she?' In frustration, she tossed her phone on the passenger seat beside her. *'Oh well, I'll just go to her house and by the time I get there she should be home.'*

Chapter Fifty

Koty had invited herself, as she had done many times in the past, to Jamie and Trish's house for lunch. It was such a nice day, they decided to barbeque outside on the deck.

She had invited Laney to join her but Laney had told her she was driving up to Richmond to see her father, and wouldn't be back until late that evening.

"Koty," Trish said as she lowered the lid of the grill. "Is there anything going on between you and Laney?"

"Laney is straight Trish, so no, there is nothing going on between us other than we are friends. As much as I never thought I would want another partner, I'm glad she is. Laney is a very cool person Trish, and she has become a real good friend as well, but that is all."

"Shit Koty," Jamie said as she took a sip of her drink. "You think all beautiful women are straight. You thought Kasey was also, but we all know she ain't huh?"

"Let's leave Kasey out of this why don't we. Besides, she has her ex to run to now."

"You know there isn't anything happening there Koty. Don't ask me how I know it, cause I just do. I think that if they were seeing each other again we would be seeing more of her with Kasey, don't ya think? Besides, you had dinner with Tina that same night, and nothing happened so you say."

"Nothing happened Jamie, and you know it. We met up in the parking lot of the club and we left separately." Koty said and threw a hand towel at her.

"Yeah Koty, but you slept with her that first time you saw her again, and you ain't seeing each other anymore. Look, all I'm saying is that their dinner could have been very innocent and nothing is happening between them."

"Maybe."

Smiling, Koty added, "Besides, if you are really really nice to me, I might even let you feed me dinner. How's that?"

"Ya know Koty, why don't you just stay the night here? We could watch some movies like we use to, and you can leave from here in the morning and go to work." Trish said as she handed Koty a drink.

"Oh Yeah Koty," Jamie grinned. "We can make it into an adult slumber party. What do you say, we could have a blast!"

Laughing, Koty agreed. It did sound like fun. Besides, this way she wouldn't have to drive home after drinking, and she felt like being around her long time best friends.

"Let me just run home and pick up some clothes and all for work while the steaks are cooking, and I'll be right back."

"Oh, and Sivers, leave your cell phone in your car when you get back. You're going to relax and enjoy the evening."

Koty only lived about five minutes away from them so it wouldn't take her long to get there. After packing up some clothes for work, and making sure that all the doors were locked, she pulled out of her driveway and turned the corner, missing Kasey's Mustang pull up to her house from the opposite direction.

Sitting there with the motor running in front of Koty's house, Kasey tried once more to call her. Still there was no answer. *'Shit. Oh well, I'll just go home and take a shower and try to call her then. I have to tell her how I feel. It might be a mistake, but at least I'll know where we stand with each other.'*

On her drive back from Dina's house, she kept thinking about what everyone had been telling her. That she needed to talk to Koty, and let her explain what Tina was doing there.

The ironic thing was, that it was Tina's voice that she kept hearing the most telling her not to let go of Koty. The voice that Kasey hated the most was the one that was finally making her think. *I know that she really loves Koty because it takes brass ones to approach the new woman and say what she had said.'*

Yeah, she was afraid of what Koty's reaction would be, but Kasey was just going to have to chance it. She kept seeing Koty's reaction when she said she couldn't have dinner with her. There was something in Koty's look, and she needed to know what that something was.

After her shower, Kasey tried once again to call Koty's house, and still she got the answering machine. She tried again to call her cell phone, and was greeted by Koty's voicemail. *'Fuck, where could she be?'*

After eating dinner, sorting through her mail and watching some T.V. Kasey tried to call again. This time she left a message asking Koty to call her as soon as she got the message, and that it was important.

Kasey had fallen asleep on the couch watching a movie, and when she woke up she glanced at the clock to see that it was two thirty in the morning. When she realized that Koty hadn't called, her heart sank even more.

Restless, she got up to get a glass of ice water, and to take something for the headache that was coming on strong. Stopping mid stride a thought struck her and slammed into her stomach.

'Whose house is she at? Oh man, why do I do this to myself?' When Kasey thought about this, she got pissed all over again. *'God damn it!'*

Koty had turned down Laney's offer to have a drink after work, telling her that she had stayed up too late at Jamie and Trish's house the night before, and asked if she could have a rain check because she was really tired.

They had stayed up until three in the morning just bullshitting around, and she was up even later, not being able to sleep because she wasn't in her own bed.

All she wanted to do right now was to go home, take a shower, and kick back for a little while. Maybe she would stop at Blockbusters and rent a movie or two.

Kasey had back-to-back patients all day long, which didn't leave her that much time to think about Koty. Several times she thought about trying to call her on her cell phone, but as soon as

that thought hit, it was time for her next patient.

The little break that Kasey did get, she called her mother to see how her father was doing. Her mother had told her that she and her father were taking a two-week vacation to the Cayman Islands. She was going to make sure that he got plenty of rest and relaxation, but in truth, he was doing just fine, and that they also had plans to come and see her in May.

Chapter Fifty-One

Kasey finished up with her last patient, patted Chris on the back, and told her that she would see her in the morning. She figured that she would go home and change then once again try and find Koty.

One way or another she would find her tonight if she had to go and knock on people's doors. Even if that meant finding out where Tina and this Laney person lived.

Kasey decided that instead of trying to call Koty first, she would drive by her house and see if she was home. As she pulled up to Koty's driveway, she caught her breath. There in the driveway was Koty's car. *'Ok Kasey, you can do this. Just keep breathing.'*

The closer that she got to the door the more nervous she got. Wiping the sweat that suddenly appeared on her hands off on her jeans, Kasey rang the doorbell, and tried to calm the pounding of her heart.

For a brief moment she didn't think that Koty would answer the door, because it seemed like it took forever. Suddenly the door slowly opened, and Koty appeared in a terry cloth robe and a towel on her head.

"Um...hi Koty. Can I come in for a moment or is this a bad time?"

Koty didn't answer, but backed away from the door to let Kasey pass by her into the living room. She turned and shut the door behind her, and held her breath for a moment before facing Kasey.

"Are you sure this isn't a bad time? I tried to call, and I left messages on your machine."

"No. Um...no, it's ok. I haven't checked my messages since I've been home. Sorry. Do you want a drink or something? I have some Grand Marnier."

'God, she sounds so terrified.' "Actually I would Koty, thanks."

"Um...just let me go and change, and I'll make us both one."

"Koty, if it's ok with you, I'll make them while you change."

"That's fine, I'll be right back."

Kasey watched as Koty walked away from her, and admired the way her short robe rode up her powerful thighs as she walked. *'Jesus I have missed those legs.'* Flushing, Kasey turned to go make their drinks.

When Kasey walked back into the living room from making the drinks, Koty was just sitting down in the recliner. She handed Koty her drink, and noticed her hands slightly shaking when she reached for it.

Koty emptied her glass in one swallow then looked over to Kasey and watched her do the same. Which was unusual for Kasey, normally she just sipped her drink slowly.

"Can I ask why you are here Kasey?" Koty asked as she got up to go get the bottle of Grand Marnier.

"Well, I just needed to see you, and talk to you...and... to tell you that I am sorry for not giving you the chance to explain about Tina. I am also so, so sorry that I pushed you away and hurt you."

"I don't know what else to tell you Kasey that I haven't already said and I..."

"I know Koty, and I also know and believe you that nothing happened that night. I can't say I'm sorry enough, but I am. I guess that I was really scared to lose you, and had flashbacks of what Samantha did.

"That's not an excuse I know Koty, but knowing that Tina was trying to get you back, I guess that I just freaked and didn't know how to handle it."

Koty leaned forward and sighed, trying desperately not to let the tears that were threatening to spill over show. Unsuccessful, she brushed a stray tear away with the tips of her fingers. *'Ah shit Silvers, don't fucking do this in front of her.'*

"Jesus Kasey, I love you and it's..."

"What? What did you say Koty?"

"I...I said...I said that I love you."

Tears immediately welled up in Kasey's eyes. "Oh God Koty," she whispered. "I didn't know. You have never said those words to me so I didn't know."

"I know that I never said it Kasey. I was terrified that it was just a fling for you, and...I mean, I knew that you cared for me, but..."

"Oh Honey, I've loved you for so long, and it's been slowly destroying me to not be with you." Kasey told her as she got up and went to kneel by her legs. "I don't know if you can ever forgive me, but I am soooo sorry for hurting you."

Koty sucked in her breath, then let out a sob as Kasey reached up to pull her into a hug. Koty pulled Kasey onto her lap, and held her as if her lifeline depended on her. And it did.

"God Baby, I love you so much. It's never been this strong before, not even with Tina. I didn't know what to do when you hung up on me then refused to see me."

"I know Koty, please forgive me?"

"Yes." Koty said as she leaned in closer and sought out Kasey's lips."

Now it was Kasey's turn to suck in her breath and let out a sob, as she heard Koty say that one simple word. Yes.

'Oh God, is this really happening? Please tell me that this isn't a dream, Kasey silently pleaded.'

Koty slipped one hand under Kasey's thighs, and the other under her arms as she lifted her up and walked them to the bedroom never releasing the hold on Kasey's lips.

Kasey let out a deep moan when she felt her back land softly on the bed. Koty swiftly lifted the black tee shirt up and over Kasey's head, and leaned down to take a hard nipple in her mouth.

Slowly moving her mouth down to Kasey's belly, Koty reached up to unsnap the buttons on Kasey's button fly Levi's. Unable to control her pace, Koty quickly removed the unwanted barrier that separated her from what she desired the most at that moment.

She haphazardly slung Kasey's jeans across the floor when she caught the scent of Kasey's own desire. *'She is so beautiful. How have I been able to survive this long without her?'*

"Please Koty, I need to feel your skin!"

Koty lifted herself off of the bed, and quickly rid herself of her clothes. Gently she placed her body over Kasey's, and pulled her lips into her mouth while running her hands up the smooth surface of Kasey's thighs.

Koty felt like she would spontaneously combust if she didn't get a taste of heaven. Kasey's heaven. Softly kissing and nibbling her way along Kasey's thigh, Koty found her way home.

"Oh God Honey, come up here." Kasey said breathlessly, and pulled Koty in for a long lingering kiss, and tasted the evidence of her own desire. In a flash, the heat registered in the lower regions of her abdomen.

"I want to take you where you just took me Koty. I don't know what kind of magic you hold in those lips and that tongue, but I can only hope that I can please you half as much as you do me."

"You do Baby, more than you could ever know. There is no one who could compare, I am fully

yours."

"Then let me show you how much I am in love with you." And she did.

Koty awoke the next morning with Kasey wrapped around her like a cocoon. Glancing down she saw the peaceful smile planted on her lovers face and couldn't resist leaning down and lightly kissing that smile.

"Mm...Hi." Kasey said as she tightened her hold on Koty. "What time is it?"

"It's just after six Baby but I guess we need to get up and get ready for work. Do you want to take a shower with me?"

"Ooh. I'd race you to the shower, but I'm not so sure that I can move that fast this morning."

"Well come on grandma, and I'll help you. Ya want me to carry you?"

"You know Koty, one of these days you're going to pull something in your back lifting me up like that."

"Yeah right, come on fatty."

With only a few minutes to spare since the shower took much longer than it should have, they were leaning against the counter finishing off a cup of coffee.

Koty had been a little quiet for the past five minutes or so, and Kasey watched her until she started to feel a little uneasy. *'I can't tell what she is thinking, and the look on her face tells me she is definitely thinking about something.'*

"Penny for your thoughts Sweetheart."

"Um, Kasey...are you...oh man." *'Just ask her Koty.'* "Is there anything still between you and Samantha?" *'There, I said it!'*

Kasey chuckled and set her mug in the sink, then turned to Koty to pull her into a hug. She reached for Koty's cup and sat it on the counter before she answered Koty's question.

"Honey, Sam just stopped by when she came into town with her job. There is absolutely nothing between Samantha and myself so you have nothing to worry about. You are the only one that I want and love."

Koty breathed a sigh of relief, then pulled Kasey closer for another lingering kiss. She pulled away from Kasey as her desire started to overwhelm her once again.

"You can't kiss me like that Baby if I have to leave for work. I'm gonna say to hell with work and take you back to bed if we don't stop now." Koty said as she leaned her forehead against Kasey's.

Kasey chuckled and ran her thumb across Koty's bottom lip. "I don't want to leave you right now but I have to or your sister-in-law will be hunting me down."

"Kasey, will you stay with me? I mean stay with me here...for good?"

"I don't know Koty. Will you cook me dinner tonight?"

"Um...I..."

"Joke Koty, that was a joke. I love you."

"And I love you Baby, let's go to work..."

The End
