

Book Star
Wedding

Boslyn Hardy Holcomb

Chapter 1

“Callie Denise Lawson, have you lost your mind?” Edith Lawson’s voice rose to octaves previously only heard on Mariah Carey albums. “What do you mean y’all aren’t going to have a wedding? Getting married at the courthouse is for folks who don’t have any people. Unless...” She lowered her voice almost to a whisper. “You aren’t in a hurry to get married before you start showing are you?”

“Mama!” Callie screeched into the phone. “I am not pregnant! You know better than anyone that I haven’t seen Bryan for weeks. When could I have gotten pregnant?”

“I know. I know, but I had to ask. Well, that’s settled, then. Reverend Tucker and everybody in that church have known you all your life. They’ll have a hissy fit if you don’t get married there.”

Callie couldn’t dispute the truth of that statement. She’d been baptized at Maple Fork Missionary Baptist church and sang in the choir since she was a child. They’d given her a scholarship when she went to college. Everyone in town would want to be in attendance; after all they were convinced that they were at least partially responsible for reuniting the wayward

couple. Callie held her tongue as her mother continued her diatribe. There was no real benefit to be gained in pointing out that not having the squirrely inhabitants of Maple Fork in attendance made a courthouse wedding even more attractive.

Callie scooted up higher against the lavishly padded headboard of the huge bed in Bryan's suite at The Mark hotel. She glanced over at Bryan who lay next to her vigorously shaking his head and mouthing 'No' at any suggestion of a wedding in Maple Fork. Given recent events any ceremony would be like chum in the water and would instigate yet another paparazzi feeding frenzy. The long Storm Crow tour had finally ended, but they'd have to be in the studio soon to record tracks for their new album, so Bryan didn't have much time. He had no intention of being separated from Callie any longer than was absolutely necessary. Callie agreed. Having come so close to losing her love, Callie didn't want any more long separations either and agreed enthusiastically with Bryan's suggestions. However, when she called her mother from New York to tell her their plans, Edith Lawson shrieked her dissent. Callie nodded to Bryan, her mother would not be amused, but she held firm. Maple Fork, as much as she loved it, was no place for a celebrity wedding.

Bryan got up from the bed, and giving Callie one last glance went into the bathroom to shower. He'd intended that Callie join him there, but it seemed she and her mother would be on the telephone for a while. He smiled to himself, she'd have to make it up to him later.

When he returned to the room twenty minutes later ready to take up where they'd left off the previous evening, he couldn't believe that Callie and her mother were still talking. Wearing only a towel, he watched the animated conversation from beside the bed. Callie was holding her own, but he knew a losing proposition when he heard one. Finally, muttering a foul oath under his breath, he removed the phone from Callie's grasp.

"Okay, Mrs. Lawson. We'll do it in Maple Fork, but you've got exactly six weeks. After

that, Callie's going back to California with me, period. We can get married in Vegas on the way. I always liked those Elvis chapels."

Callie rolled her eyes. Never in a million years would she consent to be married in one of those tacky places. A pink Cadillac wouldn't be half bad though.

Bryan held the phone away from his ear as Mrs. Lawson's voice scaled up another crystal shattering octave, "Six weeks! We can't plan a formal wedding in six weeks!"

"Take it or leave it Mrs. Lawson. I've been away from Callie too long, and I'm not waiting for my wife any longer than six weeks." He handed the telephone back to Callie, confident that Mrs. Lawson would agree.

Edith Lawson pursed her lips, poised to argue further, then reconsidered. She and Callie had more important things to discuss.

"Callie we'd better get busy working on that dress. Your Aunt Catherine's going to have to turn into your fairy godmother..."



"So, which one is it going to be Callie? Vera Wang or Armani?" Naysa pushed the sketches towards Callie across the insanely cluttered desk. "Armani's doing the guy's tuxes, and it'd be really cool if he did your dress too. Of course, Wang's sketches are incredible, but then, they always are."

Callie raised her eyes from the wreck the stylist had made of her office. Tucked in the corner of her loft apartment the office was usually a testament to Callie's almost compulsive neatness. Now it looked as though someone had set off a prêt à porter pipe bomb. Naysa had arrived in Maple Fork less than an hour ago and swept through the office like a tiny cyclone, strewing fabric swatches and sketches in her wake. Bryan still had commitments in New York, so he was sending his 'people' to help out with the wedding plans. Despite the arduous trip, Naysa

somehow managed to look as though she'd stepped out of a magazine. Even her makeup was still immaculate. Her plaid mini-skirt, combined with of all things, combat boots made her look like a schoolgirl gone commando. Somehow on her it looked edgy and trendy, not absurd. Callie shook her head, no wonder people paid good money to have her dress them. The girl had to be some type of fashion savant.

“Naysa, I don't know why Bryan sent you here. I don't really need a stylist. I told you my Aunt Catherine is going to make my dress.”

Naysa couldn't suppress a shudder. This was worse than she'd thought. “Callie, I hate to point this out to you, but you cannot have a rock star wedding in a homemade dress. The tabloids will eat you alive.” Naysa shook her head firmly, her perfectly coiffed hair in its China Doll bob shimmered with the movement before returning obediently to its place.

Callie sighed, studying Naysa's small frame from behind her desk. It seemed she was going to be condemned to a lifetime of being 'handled' by tiny women. “Naysa, on the day I was born, my aunt promised to make my wedding dress. If you really think I'm going to tell her otherwise, you've lost your mind. Besides, the tabloids have already done their worst, don't you think?”

Naysa threw up her hands in defeat. How the hell could she argue with that? Callie *had* already been tabloid fodder. How much worse could Joan and Melissa be? “Fine, Callie.”

Callie continued in a conciliatory tone, “Let Armani dress Tonya and my sisters, they'll be thrilled to death to wear designer dresses.”

Naysa almost swallowed her tongue. Ask Armani to dress the bridesmaids but not the bride? What a concept! Then again, this was shaping up to be the wedding of the year, he might go along with it. She shuddered again. Homemade and couture dresses in the same wedding? Naysa mentally cursed Bryan. Friendship be damned he was paying through the nose for this

one. She moved over to the desk where Callie was busily picking up the detritus of her arrival. Maybe she had a solution to this absurd problem. Too bad she hadn't thought of this before she made the trek to Maple Fork.

“You know, Callie, my mother owns a fabulous bridal shop back in L.A. I'm sure we'll be able to find something really great there.” Naysa felt a slight twinge of conscience. Her mother probably wouldn't appreciate having this dumped on her, especially on such short notice. On the other hand, it was the wedding of the year, even if the bride did insist on wearing a homemade dress. Her mother had been dealing with brides for more than two decades. One hillbilly/rock star wedding wouldn't faze her. Naysa surreptitiously crossed her fingers behind her back, at least she hoped not.

Chapter 2

The after-rehearsal dinner was in full swing. Maria Breedlove's delight that her 'son' was finally getting married was evident in the lavish flowers and sumptuously catered buffet. The Breedloves had insisted on complying with tradition and hosting the party, even though they weren't in actuality the groom's parents. Maria had spared no expense, and the Maple Fork Country Club had never been decorated so lavishly. Between the rehearsal dinner and the wedding the following day, all the florists in town had been tapped out. Flowers were shipped in from as far away as New York City. With Callie's encouragement, Bryan and B.T. had mended their breach. So any possibility of fireworks between the two had been averted. Unfortunately, no one had ever managed to negotiate a truce between Naysa and Twist, and they could be counted on to provide pyrotechnics on a moment's notice.

"Twist, what in the hell are you talking about?" Naysa hissed under her breath.

"You know goddamned well what I'm talking about!" Twist snarled right back. "You and that kid!"

"Kid?" Naysa frowned up at him. What the hell... "You mean Thad?"

“What other boy would I be talking about? You’ve been all over him.”

“Damnit, Twist. If you wanted to have a fight why the hell didn’t you just say so? Now you’re just making up stuff to be pissed off about.” Naysa moved to walk away.

Twist grabbed her arm, “Are you really trying to tell me that you didn’t spend almost all of the past two days with him?”

“Of course I’ve been with him for the past couple of days. It’s my job to dress him. How am I supposed to do that if I don’t spend time with him?”

“I don’t think you have to spend two days with a guy just to buy his freaking underwear!”

“Have you forgotten that I’ve spent almost this entire month here in Hillbilly Hell helping Callie with the wedding?” She paused for a moment, realizing that she was in a room full of Maple Fork residents. “No offense folks,” she said sheepishly to the room at large.

Tonya, well into her fourth, or possibly fifth, glass of champagne grinned and gave the couple a thumb’s up. Thank goodness for Naysa and Twist. For a moment there she was afraid this party would actually be sedate and dignified. “None taken,” she replied.

Naysa resumed her argument with Twist. “You guys have a new album and probably some video shoots coming up, and Thad wasn’t ready. You know how hard I’ve worked on his ‘geek chic’ look. I had to...” Naysa broke off her comments in frustration as it was clear that Twist wasn’t listening to her explanations. She raised her eyes heavenward and growled in frustration. The man was so damned thick-headed. “Look William Tennessee Duncan...”

Twist cut her off. “Did you have to call out my name like that?”

Naysa studied the veins bulging in his neck. His handsome face with its square jaw and luminous emerald green eyes had turned an unlikely shade of magenta. She paused for a moment to consider the quirk in her personality that caused her to enjoy needling him this way. Then she

shrugged, oh well, no use wondering about such things now. It wasn't like she was planning to change anytime soon. "Why not? Crazy as it is, its your name."

"Its not crazy. You know she did it because I was the third one."

"Alrighty then, that makes perfect sense. Has anyone ever bothered to ask your mother what in the hell she was thinking naming three of you William?" She snapped back knowing full well that no one bothered to ask Twist's mother much of anything. Maribel Duncan defined eccentricity, and much like her son, had a tendency to do things simply for the hell of it.

Twist threw up his hands, stalking away towards the open french doors with Naysa following close at his heels. How the hell had his mother gotten into this conversation? Personally he was just glad she hadn't named him Oklahoma. After all, she really had thing for musicals.



The fiery arguments between Twist and Naysa were so commonplace no one bothered with any pretense of politeness. Some of the partygoers watched avidly. Others had little interest in a repeat of such a frequent occurrence. The wall of french doors leading to the courtyard garden had been left open to the warm spring breezes, and the guests were moving in and out of the reception hall freely. Most returned indoors, however, once Naysa and Twist took their dispute outside. Though the party was huge, it wasn't an 'event.' Only close friends and family were present.

Callie and Bryan stood off to one side enjoying a brief respite and a glass of champagne. Intrigued by the argument between Twist and Naysa, Callie leaned over towards Bryan. "How many brothers and sisters does Twist have?"

Bryan shook his head. "I don't think anybody knows." He raised an inquiring brow towards Jon, who as usual, was accompanied by Cinnamon, the love of his life.

Jon shook his head as well. "I don't have a clue either. Every time I see them all together it looks like a big scrum of redheads. I just do my damndest to stay away from them. Hell, they all act just like Twist." Given the drummer's mercurial temperament, no one needed an explanation as to why Jon wouldn't want to spend any time with his relatives.

"No wonder dude was able to sneak off and hook up with us when he was only fifteen. He didn't even need fake ID with two older brothers with the same name. I doubt his mother even noticed he was gone," Bryan said.

Jon chuckled. "I'm sure she was glad he left!"

Callie and Bryan joined in the laughter until Twist and Naysa's loud voices made it clear that the argument had resumed in the courtyard. At this point most of the guests were pretending not to notice. But the thin veneer of politeness could not conceal the hushed silence when suddenly the tempestuous drummer yelled, "You're going to marry me and that's going to be the end of this bullshit!"

Out in the courtyard Naysa wondered how an area occupied by so many people could abruptly fall so silent. Maybe Twist had finally driven her over the edge and she was hallucinating. Had he really ordered her to marry him? She glanced up at him and from his stunned expression she could only conclude that he had.

Dumbstruck Twist walked numbly back into the living room looking frantically around the room for someone to confirm that he'd indeed demanded marriage from his irascible lover. Bryan smirked knowingly, and simply nodded his head at the questioning look.

Naysa paused for a moment reflecting on her first instinct to tell him what he could do with 'proposal.' Not to mention his nasty personality. Then again, how likely was it that he'd ever get pissed off enough to do such a thing again? In front of witnesses no less. Despite their turbulent relationship, she loved Twist and was sure, at least most of the time, that he loved her

too. If nothing else, life with him would never be dull. She followed him back to the party, and stood looking up into his startled green eyes. Then she moved closer, rose up on tiptoe and wrapped her arms around his neck with a beatific smile. “Of course I’ll marry you Twist. All you had to do was ask.” It was all she could do not to collapse with laughter as she heard the choking sounds he made against her lips.

Chapter 3

Callie pressed a hand against her stomach, hoping to calm the nerves that had suddenly kicked into overdrive. The past few weeks had been insane as everyone worked at hyper-speed to get ready for the wedding. She hadn't had time for nerves, but they were making up for their absence now. Of course, the amount of champagne she'd consumed the previous evening probably hadn't helped. Apparently it had gone to her head, but somehow hadn't managed to sedate the butterflies in her stomach. It had to just be bridal jitters because her worst fear, having her wedding become a paparazzi spectacle, hadn't materialized. B.T. had managed to pull off another miracle of manipulation. By granting *People* magazine an exclusive, they'd managed to avoid the worst of the paparazzi madness. No photographers would be allowed inside the church, but they could take pictures of the parties and various celebrities arriving and departing. They would also be allowed to take limited photographs at the reception. If they maintained their end of the bargain, they'd be given some of the official photographs of the ceremony for their cover the following week. That seemed to satisfy the press, and Callie didn't have to worry about photographers in trees and helicopters.

“What do you think of that, Callie?” Edith Lawson asked as she pushed the last decorative hairpin into Callie’s updo. The wedding itself was only moments away, and they were finishing up last-minute details in the bride’s study of the church.

“Oh, I think it looks great,” Callie said turning so that she could see her reflection in the mirror. The tiny pearl pins were scattered artfully throughout her hair giving it an ethereal effect. Callie stood up, smoothing the skirt of her gown. Even Naysa had been forced to concede that Callie’s aunt had done a brilliant job. The exquisitely simple empire waist gown suited Callie’s tall, elegant figure. The low scoop neckline and cap sleeves made the most of her delicate bosom, while the straight skirt was particularly flattering to her curvaceous hips. She moved over to her sisters to give them a final hug before the ceremony. Their deep rose-colored silk crepe gowns were designed on the same empire-waist style as Callie’s, but they were sleeveless, with sheer wraps to cover their shoulders during the church service. They all carried bouquets made up of matching rose pink tulips, Callie’s favorite flower.

“Callie.” Cynthia grinned at her sister. “Can you believe all those stars out there for your wedding? Everybody at school wanted to come!”

Callie nodded as she hugged each sister in turn. Maybe it was exhaustion from arranging everything on such short notice, but she wasn’t feeling starstruck at all.

Tonya, a bit worse for wear from the champagne she had consumed the previous evening still managed a smile as she hugged her best friend. Her gown, as maid of honor, was made of the same fabric as the younger girls, but had a fitted waist.

Callie sighed as the bridal party left the study leaving her alone with her mother, who was straightening up the clutter on the dressing table. Her nerves had eased somewhat and she gave her mother a big smile.

Edith Lawson smiled back. “I was going to ask if you’re okay, but I think I know the

answer to that. Everything's been crazy, but you've been okay ever since Bryan got here."

Bryan had returned to Maple Fork after his commitments in New York were finished. He took up residence in B.T.'s cabin, insisting that the next time he left that town she would be his bride.

Callie spun around, loving the rustling sound the silk dress made with her movements. "I never thought I could ever be so happy."

Edith grinned, embracing her eldest daughter. "Baby, I can't tell you how happy that makes me. You and Bryan have been through it. Its time for you two to have some joy. And remember, there's nothing wrong with making my first grandbaby on your honeymoon."

"Mama, I don't think that's going to happen." She looked up at the knock on the door. "That's probably the usher ready to escort you to your seat."

Edith opened the door, then blew Callie a kiss as she left the room. "Love you baby. See you in a little bit."

Callie was about to sit down again when there was another knock on the door. Knowing it was too soon for her summons she realized it had to be her father. Their relationship was still somewhat strained, but she couldn't imagine not having him escort her down the aisle.

Jesse Lawson cleared his throat as he entered the room. "Its almost time, sweetheart." Callie nodded. "Before we go out there. I just wanted to say some things." He paused.

Callie nodded again. For such a large man her father looked surprisingly elegant in his dove gray morning suit. But then, who didn't look good wearing Armani? She watched as he began to pace in the small space. Could her father actually be nervous?

Jesse stopped pacing, and took a deep breath. "This isn't easy for me to say, but I was wrong about you and Bryan. I always told you to find a man who would love you and take care of you like I did, but I've finally realized that he doesn't have to look like me, to love you like

me. I said some harsh things and I'm really sorry.”

Callie looked at her father, her emotions choking off any response as tears gathered silently in her eyes.

Jesse enveloped his daughter in his bearish embrace. Then handed her the handkerchief he'd taken out of his pocket. “Oh for goodness sakes. Don't start crying. Your mama will hurt me if you mess up your makeup,” he admonished gruffly.

“Daddy, I love you so much,” Callie murmured against her father's chest. Unbearably grateful that the only possible flaw in her perfect day was gone.



Bryan stood impatiently at the front of the church. Why in the hell had he agreed to go through all this? If they'd stayed with their original plans they'd be lying on a sugar sand beach in the south Pacific right now. He shifted restlessly and glanced at his bandmates who were serving as groomsmen. Twist, still looking somewhat shell-shocked from his declaration the previous evening, had drawn the short straw and stood with him as best man. For once Naysa had her way and all four were suitably attired in dove gray morning coats.

He inhaled sharply when he heard the string quartet strike the first notes of *Portrait*, the song he'd written for Callie at a time when they'd almost given up on their love. His bride was finally coming. His bride, man, how he loved saying that! All the guests were standing, blocking his view, and then, suddenly it was hard to breathe. How had she gotten even more beautiful? Walking tall and gracefully on her father's arm, Callie's face glowed so brightly it was impossible for him to look away. When she finally reached his side Bryan couldn't contain his excitement as he returned her smile. He felt almost overwhelmed as he stared down into her soft brown eyes and saw their future together there. They turned together to face the pastor. His bride. His wife. His mate. For life.

Chapter 4

“Naysa, I can’t believe you’re going to marry that crazy man.” Naysa’s mother paused to snip a thread from the jacket she was altering. “All you two do is fight.”

“Oh come on Mom, you like Twist and always have. You’ve always said he reminded you of Daddy.” Naysa slouched down, leaning against her mother’s sewing machine table.

Mrs. Park resumed sewing the jacket, her eyes lowered towards the sewing machine as she grieved for the husband she had lost only a year before. “Yes, Naysa, your Twist does remind me of your father, and you’re right, I do like him. He’s the only man to make you think about something other than clothes. But I do worry about all this arguing the two of you do...”

Naysa frowned. Twist made her think of something other than clothes? That couldn’t be good. She shook her head, no real point in thinking about that. “Mom, I don’t think anyone argued more than you and Daddy, and you two stayed married for almost forty years. Besides, Dad always said we wouldn’t be Korean if we didn’t fight.”

“I know, I know sweetheart. You two have been together for a while now. And I know you love him, but how can you marry him when he’s never asked you to?”

Naysa briefly regretted the impulse that had led her to confide the details of Twist's 'proposal.' Her mother had always been her confidante, a habit she couldn't seem to break. She too would've preferred a more conventional proposal, but with a man like Twist you had to take what you could get. Better to change the subject. "What about my dress Mom? For once I really don't have a clue about what I want to wear, but its got to be fabulous."

Mrs. Park studied her daughter's petite figure. After more than two decades of owning an upscale bridal boutique she was accustomed to high-strung brides. "Do you want something traditional?"

"Oh please Mom, have I ever wanted anything traditional?" Naysa asked with a giggle. "No, I want something that'll blow his tiny little mind."



The dress fit like a dream, as she'd known it would. Her mother had gone all out for her only child's wedding dress. Naysa's diminutive figure had excellent proportions and the short skirt of the dress displayed her unusually long legs, while the bustle in the back playfully emphasized her tiny waist. The dress was perfect. Indeed, everything was coming together serendipitously and with the wedding only days away Naysa knew she should be thrilled. She had spent weeks affecting a bridal glee, when in reality she was weighed down by gloom. Sleep was a thing of the past as her racing thoughts kept her awake until dawn. During the day she worked the longest hours of her life so she wouldn't have to hear the continuous loop. *Why won't he tell me he loves me? Why didn't he ever propose to me? Why didn't I ask him?* Naysa wiped a hand over her face, a gesture that revealed just how chaotic her thoughts were. Disturbing her makeup would've been unthinkable before, now she didn't even notice the smears. She'd never hesitated to confront Twist about anything before, why was she so chickenshit about the most important thing in her life? Naysa sighed heavily. Maybe because it **was** the most important

thing in her life. What if he didn't love her?

Naysa shook her head to clear her thoughts and having agreed to some minor adjustments to the dress, hurriedly picked up her oversized hobo bag, . She knew if she stayed in her mother's shop much longer she'd either say the wrong thing, or her mother, with bloodhound like instincts would sense her daughter's unhappiness.

"Naysa?" The tone was soft and inquiring.

Damn, I almost got away. Naysa turned away from the door her brow raised in inquiry.

"What's going on with you? Why are you such an unhappy bride? I thought you wanted to marry Twist?" Mrs. Park soothed, much as she had when Naysa had her childhood boo-boos. Naysa's response hadn't changed. Her mother's arms held her securely as she released tears she'd been stifling for weeks. Her mother patted her back until finally Naysa's weeping dwindled down to an occasional shuddery hiccup.

"Naysa, do you love Twist?"

"Yes, Mom, with all my heart."

"Does he love you?"

Naysa chewed her lip. "At one point I thought he did, but now, I don't know. He's never told me and he didn't really ask me to marry him."

Mrs. Park shook her head. "He's hardly the type to be doing anything he doesn't want to do."

"I don't know mama. Who knows why Twist does anything? I mean, his whole family is crazy. I think he does love me, but for some reason he doesn't want to say it. I guess he's a coward." Heat rose under her skin as she considered that statement. "Why in the hell am I marrying a man that can't even tell me he loves me?" *And who's really the coward here? He won't say he loves me, and I'm too scared to ask. Pathetic!*

All too familiar with the signs of her daughter's flaming temper Mrs. Park lay a calming hand on her shoulder. "Now, Naysa, calm down..."

Naysa brushed her hand away grabbing her bag in the same motion. She paused as though she wanted to say something, then turned and stormed out of the shop.

Mrs. Park studied the still-vibrating door for a moment, then moved back to the sewing table. She'd hear about the results of this situation eventually. No point in stressing about it now. She chuckled to herself as she considered Naysa's appearance. Was that a *stain* on her suede mini-skirt? Obviously the girl hadn't looked in a mirror for a while. Any man who could distract Naysa from her appearance was the right man for her. She could only hope he had enough sense to fix this before Naysa gave up on him.



Exhausted from her long day Naysa had intended to drive directly home as she left her mother's shop. Instead she found herself speeding towards the studio where she knew Storm Crow was laying down some tracks for their new album. Callie and Bryan had returned from their honeymoon several weeks before and the band was catching up. As she climbed out of her car she had no idea why she had come to the studio, she just knew she had to see Twist right away. She brushed past the production staff in the booth and entered the studio where the band was playing.

Taken aback by her sudden appearance, all the bandmembers halted what they were doing. Twist immediately rushed over to her.

"Honey, what's wrong? Are you okay, did you have an accident?" That was the only conclusion he could draw from her disheveled state. Her hair was mussed, her makeup was smeared and her clothes looked as though they'd been worn for several days. Naysa looked...strange.

“No Twist, I didn’t have an accident.” She took a deep breath. It was now or never. “Do you love me?”

Twist stared at her in bemusement. “What?”

“Do. You. Love. Me?” Naysa snapped off each word, her lips pursed for emphasis. “It’s a simple question Twist. It only requires a yes or no answer.”

Twist paled so much the freckles on his face stood out like specks of copper against his angular cheekbones. He looked around the room uneasily at his bandmates. “Sweetheart, can’t we discuss this at home tonight?”

Naysa crossed her arms. “That’s my answer, huh? I guess that’s why you never proposed. What were going to do, throw it back in my face some day? I can just hear you now every time we have a fight.” She mimicked him, something she knew he hated. “Well, I never asked you to marry me anyway.”

“Naysa, what in the hell—”

“I’m not marrying you, Twist!”

“What? The wedding’s Saturday—”

Naysa cut him off. “Twist, I’m not marrying a man who doesn’t love me, and hasn’t even proposed!” She turned and charged back out the door leaving the production crew staring in her wake.

Twist stood in the middle of the floor, drumsticks in his hand, struck speechless for only the second time in his life. He turned to Jon who leaned against the wall, arms across his chest.

Jon paused for a second, then shook his head at Twist as if he were a particularly slow-witted child. “Man, you are so screwed.”

Chapter 5

Twist could hardly swallow past the sick panic rising in his throat. He'd already checked the bridal shop only to find it closed for the night. He didn't dare go to Mrs. Park's home. Naysa told her mother everything and he'd be lucky if his death would be enough to satisfy her. Somehow he doubted it, and feared a horrific mutilation at her hands. Instead he steered his vintage roadster towards Malibu and the house he and Naysa had shared sporadically for the past few years. She probably wouldn't be there, but at least he would be at home and have a chance to regroup without the whole damned band looking at him as if he were still the stupid kid who had joined the band years before. He pulled his car into the driveway, surprised to see Naysa's SUV already parked there. That was a good sign, wasn't it? Unless she was in the process of burning the place down, of course. She was probably packing her things, but at least she hadn't started a bonfire with his clothes. Yet. He lingered in his car for a moment, trying to gather his thoughts. Then, motivated by the urgency of the situation he hurried into the house, only pausing briefly to consider if Naysa's daily bouts with Tae Bo qualified her as a martial arts expert. It didn't really matter. If ever in his life he'd deserved an ass-whupping it was now.

He initially started up the stairs to their bedroom, then noted that the French doors to the deck were open. Naysa had always loved the ocean at night, and he breathed a sigh of relief when he found her sitting on the steps watching the waves. Even her clothes helped reassure him. Forced by her job as a stylist to always be perfectly coifed, Naysa loved nothing more than to come home and slide into a miniscule tank top and a pair of cut-off jeans. Surely she wouldn't look so relaxed and comfortable if she was leaving him? He paused again, wondering what he could say to rectify this mess.

Sensing Twist's presence Naysa spoke up. "You know, I'm really going to miss this. I can't afford Malibu on my salary."

Twist eased down beside her on the steps. "You don't have to you know."

"Yeah, I do, if I'm to have any respect for myself. Sorry about that scene down at the studio. I was really mad at myself for not telling you to fuck-off that night at the barbecue. Its not your fault—" Naysa turned to face him.

Twist cut her off. "Not my fault? The whole damned thing is my fault."

"It really doesn't matter one way or another. We should've been done a long time ago."

Twist fought the renewed panic her words brought. "Naysa, I know I blew it, but that's no reason to ditch us. Its not like I haven't screwed up before. But how could you ever think I don't love you?"

"Gee, I dunno. Maybe because you never told me." Naysa retorted.

Genuinely bewildered Twist continued. "But I thought you knew. Jesus woman, I've been with you for six years now, what do you think that means?"

"It could mean almost anything. Maybe you just like the convenience."

"Convenient? You?" Twist couldn't contain a short bark of laughter. "Only a nutjob like me would ever want to live with you."

Naysa was momentarily miffed, and tilted her nose in the air to show her disdain for his humor. Then she sighed. She couldn't dispute his comment, besides that wasn't really the point. "Twist, sometimes you just have to say the words, okay?"

"Naysa, its always been you." Twist's said vehemently. Then he lowered his head and murmured something too softly for Naysa to hear.

"What did you say?"

Twist looked up. Naysa gasped when she saw the raw emotion burning in his beautiful green eyes. "I said its only been you."

Naysa brow furrowed as she pondered that statement. *Its only been you.* What the hell did that mean? Just as she was about to ask, her eyes widened as comprehension dawned. That couldn't be true. Could it?

"Twist you don't have to start lying,. Do you really expect me to believe you haven't been with anyone else?" She asked.

Twist moved to get up. "You know I'm not a liar, Naysa. Why the hell would I make up such a thing?"

Naysa grabbed his leg, holding him in place. She knew Twist wasn't a liar. Even when it would be better to lie he always told the direct blunt truth. "But all those groupies—"

Twist dropped back down on the deck. "Naysa, I was a kid when I joined the band. The guys didn't know it, but they knew I was pretty young. They wouldn't let me be a part of that scene. Besides, those chicks scared the hell out of me. By the time I was old enough..." He shrugged. "By then, I had you."

"But Twist, we've always been kind of shaky. During our breakups I thought you'd—"

He shook his head. "I thought about it, but usually I'd be so goddamned miserable I never got around to it. Its not like we stayed mad for very long." He rubbed his toe in the sand. "Now

do you believe I love you? Will you marry me?"

A bright smile split her face as Naysa flung herself into Twist's arms. Twist wrapped her in a bear grip. "By the way Naysa, if you tell a living soul, especially your mother, I'm burning all your clothes." Naysa gasped. "And your makeup."

Naysa moved back to stare at him, aghast. "My makeup?" She squeaked. "Why don't you just shoot me in the head?" She asked, only half-jokingly.

"Yes, your makeup. If this gets out I'll never live it down. Even Thad would make fun of me."

They continued their embrace, both almost giddy with relief. But Naysa was still puzzled. "Twist, if you were a virgin when we met, how did you get so, well, good?"

Twist smiled smugly. "Oh, so I'm good, am I?"

Naysa punched his shoulder. "You know you are. I've been whapped for a while."

Twist rubbed his shoulder. Damn, she had learned something in Tae Bo. "I guess I was just really motivated. I figured if I focused on you, everything would be okay." He grinned, then leaned over pressing his lips softly against hers. "Matter of fact, I'm feeling pretty motivated right now."

Naysa rose quickly from the deck, the previous giddiness had evolved into outright laughter. "Last one up goes down!" She gasped running towards the stairs to their bedroom.

Twist took his time following her into the house, after all, he really liked going down.



Slowed as she was by her laughter, Twist had no trouble catching Naysa halfway up the stairs. Halting her with a soft tackle from behind he kissed the curve of her neck softly before turning her over. Naysa grabbed the stair rail to brace herself in her tenuous position beneath

Twist. He paused for a moment and their eyes met. The sensuous expression on her face encouraged him to continue what he was doing, and he quickly joined his mouth to hers.

As their tongues mated, Twist slid one hand over her breast, pausing to tease the erect nipple into even greater hardness. Pleased with Naysa's moaned response he allowed his hand to continue its journey to her thigh. Easing her cut-offs and panties aside he found her soft folds. He couldn't contain his own groan when he felt the wetness that indicated her readiness for him. He quickly slid down her body and slid his palms behind her knees, easing her legs apart.

"You don't know how much I love this," Twist said, his lips lightly kissing her inner thigh. "The way you taste." Another kiss, higher. "I thought..." His hands gently nudged her legs further apart. "Of how you smell when we..." A light lick, on the inside of her thigh. "Come together..." The scent of her arousal rose compelling him to move further up to the center of her pleasure.

Naysa shuddered. Twist's head was nestled between her thighs now, the tickling sensation of his hair brushing against her sensitive inner thighs only increased her pleasure. The first kiss to her wetness startled her in its reverence. When his tongue slid against her wetness she gasped and released her tenuous hold on the rail. They began to slide down the stairs. Twist paused and then reached up wrapping her hand firmly around a spindle.

"You'd better hold on." His hands slip beneath her hips. "I wouldn't want you to break your sweet ass. Not to mention your neck." Then deciding that her cut-offs were too much of an obstruction, he lifted her hips and slid the shorts and her panties off in one motion. With her hips still raised in the air Twist leaned forward and feasted on her sweetness. He slid his tongue into her slowly easing his way down her slit. His mouth pressed gently on her, hands flexing on her legs. And then he started to move, small butterfly kisses on the lips, on her clitoris, in her hair. He slowly and softly sucked her clitoris, while his fingers slid in and out of her moist opening.

Naysa caught her breath as she felt the trembling in her thighs that signaled her orgasm. Apparently Twist did too because his movements sped up until she clasped her thighs around his head in ecstasy. Almost unbearably aroused by watching her sensual completion, Twist didn't waste a moment. He picked Naysa up and swiftly carried her to their bedroom where he tossed her none too gently on the bed. It only took him a moment to remove his own clothes, and then he was there to complete their embrace.

As she felt his thick hardness at her entrance Naysa suddenly remembered. "Condom, Twist."

Twist paused briefly to take one of the foil packets out of the bedside table drawer. She reached for it.

"Let me do it." Naysa pressed Twist back against the mattress and removed the condom from its packet. After determining the direction she began rolling the latex over the broad head of his penis. When she followed up with her caressing tongue on his throbbing member Twist arched on the bed.

"Naysa..." It was a warning.

Naysa continued with the slow descent of the condom, following the movement with her tongue as she sheathed him.

Twist grabbed her wrist and her back into his arms. "Woman, if you don't hurry up I'm going to come right in your hand!"

Naysa chuckled at his insistence as he pressed her down into the mattress. Sliding between her legs in one practiced motion, Twist brought their bodies together with an urgency she'd never sensed before. The defined muscles in his arms, formed by his long years as a drummer, were tightly bunched under her stroking hands. She held onto them as she arched her hips to meet his fierce thrusts.

Feeling her sheath begin to quiver around his throbbing penis, Twist pulled Naysa's legs up over his arms and began a slow steady grind against her clitoris. His head reared back of its own accord as his legs began to tremble in unison with hers. Naysa legs clamped more tightly around his hips as she was propelled into her second orgasm. Twist followed soon after as he gave a hoarse shout of completion and collapsed on top of her.

For a moment the sound of their labored breathing filled the room. Then, as if suddenly brought back to consciousness, Twist moved his much larger body from on top of hers.

"Yeah, I guess you really were motivated," Naysa murmured. She placed her head on his chest, her soft hand caressing the silky hair that covered his torso.

Twist took her hand in his own and raised it to his lips. "Now you know."

