

## Chapter One

Twenty-four hours into this destination wedding, and Regan Wakefield wasn't sure if she was the best friend ever—or the worst.

It had started last night at the bachelorette party. She could blame the napkin pact on the alcohol, the altitude, or the seriously hot choice of groomsmen, but the end result was a promise to hook up with one of said groomsmen this week. Her former sorority sister, Julie, had thought it was a brilliant idea. Regan had agreed at the time.

Now, faced down with the bar full of wedding guests and other people staying at Beaver Creek Resort, she wasn't so sure.

Maybe it'd been a mistake to switch the room keys on Julie. It had been a spur of the moment impulse she couldn't deny. But, when her best friend said she had her eyes set on the Best Man, Regan had seen it for the mistake it was. As much as Julie liked to kill herself aiming for perfection, she needed someone to balance her out. Groomsman Brooding, Reed, fit the bill.

She shook her head and took the shot she'd just ordered. It didn't matter. There was no point obsessing over what she could or should have done. She'd done it and Julie hadn't gone for her eyes today at dinner, so it must have all worked out well enough.

Turning to survey the rest of the room, she propped her elbows on the bar. Last night she'd laughingly picked [BRIDE]'s brother, just to see her other old sorority friend, Jessica, cringe. Anyone with one eye and half a brain could see that Jessica was holding a flame for Tyler—had been for years. And Regan might be a bitch at

times, but even she wouldn't stoop so low as to sleep with a man one of her best friends was into.

It just wasn't done.

The reality was the only groomsman who was even remotely suitable was Logan—the best man. Which was a damn shame, because he didn't appear to be planning on making an appearance at the bar tonight. Oh well. The night was young and she hadn't had a real vacation in two years. She might as well enjoy herself.

"Can I get you a drink?" The Southern drawl rolled through her like the best kind of bourbon, making a small feminine part of her swoon in delight.

It was good thing she wasn't ruled by such stupid impulses. Regan glanced over, careful to school any expression from her face. It was the other groomsman—the one who wasn't Sweet, wasn't Brooding, and wasn't the Full Package. She held up three fingers, dropping them one at a time. "Arrogant. Playboy. Ass."

"You know, I heard you do that neat little trick." He didn't look all that tore up about it. What a shame. "Darlin, you don't know a damn thing about me."

She smiled, well aware it wasn't a nice expression. "Brock McNeill. Good friend to Reed [LAST NAME]. Grew up with [BRIDE]'s soon-to-be husband, [GROOM]. From a wealthy family down in Tennessee and is the favored younger son—which sounds a whole lot like lazy and rudderless from where I'm sitting."

Instead of storming off in a huff like she'd hoped, a slow grin spread over his face. And what a face it was. His tanned skin hinted at countless hours spent in the sun—or possibly some exotic lineage. It wasn't the almost-too-long dark hair or the hazel eyes that made her stomach drop, though. It was that damn smile. Wide and

white and bracketed by laugh lines. Even his eyes lit up, as if this were a man who knew how to enjoy the pleasures life offered.

God, what was she thinking? He was entirely unsuitable. Regan made a shoo-ing motion with her hand. "Go on now, hillbilly. I already have a drink." *Did I seriously just call him hillbilly? What the hell is wrong with me?*

Brock turned to the bartender, giving her the opportunity to eyeball the way his faded gray t-shirt hugged his shoulders and, holy shit, those back muscles were nothing to sneeze at. She'd gotten herself under control by the time he turned around, but it was a close thing. For his part, his grin hadn't slipped. "Generally when a fella asks to buy a lady a drink, she doesn't respond so vehemently."

Probably not when *he* asked. Even knowing better, Regan threatened to melt every time he spoke. It didn't make sense. She'd dealt with Southern good 'ole boys more than once in her line of business, and she'd never been anything but cool and professional. Two minutes alone with this man and she alternately wanted to slap that grin off his face and bite his shoulders. *God, get ahold of yourself.* She took the offered drink. "I heard you had a reputation with the *ladies.*" Lie. But she didn't have to be a genius to realize most women would have problems being in the same room with this man without throwing themselves at him.

Brock leaned against the bar, entirely too close to her. "You seem to have heard a lot."

"You have no idea." She tended to be excellent at reading people. Her reputation as a headhunter depended on recommending the right people for the right jobs—keeping them in said jobs meant knowing it'd be a good fit going in.

“I’d like to.”

Regan took another sip of her drink, only now registering it was a cosmopolitan. Obviously he’d been watching her for longer than she’d realized to figure out her preferred drink. She propped a hip on the bar. “I bet you don’t hear the word *no* a lot.”

“It’s a dirty word. I’m not a fan of it.”

Of course not. Though he sure as hell was charming, he was also the last person she wanted to be talking to right now. Yes, he was gorgeous, but from what she could figure out, he was content to spend his life riding on his daddy’s coat tails. The man was more charm than substance. “Thanks for the drink. Now run along.”

“If you’re looking for Logan, he wandered off after dinner.”

Was she that transparent? “It just so happens that I’m looking for my friend, Jessica.” She’d been really quiet since they showed up here yesterday and, teasing aside, Regan was worried about her. Quiet tended to be Jessica’s gig, but something had changed. She wasn’t happy.

“The little redhead? She’s gone, too. I think I saw [BRIDE]’s brother follow her out.”

Tyler? Now *that* was interesting. Maybe the angsty longing went both ways with those two.

She shook her head. She couldn’t afford to get distracted with potential pair ups when Brock was standing too close, taking too much space. He exerted an almost magnetic pull, so strong it was an effort not to take that last step between them and see if his muscles felt as good as they looked. From the way the women around them

were staring, she wasn't the only one feeling that urge.

That realization shocked her back to herself. He was working her, plain and simple. This man was used to getting what he wanted, and right now he had his sights set on her. She couldn't afford to get caught up in this... Could she?

Taking another drink, she reconsidered. What was one night in the grand scheme of things? Yes, she was interested in getting to know Logan better, but he wasn't here and they'd barely exchanged two words up to this point. He might be a potential future, but the future wasn't in play right now.

Besides, the devil on her shoulder made her want to push Brock over the edge and make him beg for mercy. She finished her drink and set it on the bar, plan firmly in place. One night. No strings attached. No complications. "Let's go."

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Brock stared at her retreating back, wondering if he'd heard her wrong. Driven by curiosity and a healthy dose of anger, he followed Regan through the bar. He didn't bother to keep his eyes off her ass—everything about her, from the snazzy way she dressed to her sky-high pink heels to the calculated sexy tumble of her highlighted dark hair, was designed to draw attention. She knew she looked good, and she flaunted it. He could respect that, which was why he's approached her in the first place.

That and the way she'd completely shut him down yesterday.

What he couldn't deal with was how goddamn dismissive she'd been from the beginning. Who the hell summed up a person with three words? She might have

been right—to a point—but then she'd had to keep going and call him rudderless. It was the same argument he'd had time and time again with his big brother. He sure as fuck didn't want to have it with a near-stranger.

They left the bar, the night crisp despite it being [MONTH]. Back home, the humidity would be thick enough to cut with a knife and the lightning bugs would be making an appearance right around now. He shook off the strange homesickness threatening and grabbed her arm. "Hey."

The look she gave him would have made a lesser man feel like he was two inches tall. "What part of 'let's go' do you not understand, hillbilly?"

Christ, she was prickly. He released her arm and crossed his own over his chest. "I'm trying not to jump to conclusions. Spit it out."

"I'm more of a swallowing kind of girl."

Holy shit.

Her grin sent all his blood rushing south. She stepped back and reached up to unbutton her shirt, giving him a flash of purple lace. "That was an invitation, in case you were wondering. So why don't we get this show on the road?"

He followed her, moving even though his mind argued that this was a mistake. She already thought he was a piece of shit playboy. Sleeping with her wasn't going to help that belief. "You don't even like me, darlin."

"Who says that's necessary?" Another button opened, highlighting the swell of her breasts. They were magnificent, and she knew it.

He fought back a growl. It was necessary to him. He wasn't so goddamn desperate that he'd cozy up to a woman who thought he was a joke. "Most people

don't fuck people they hate."

If he thought she'd flinch at his language, he was sorely mistaken. Regen sidled closer and ran a perfectly manicured nail down his chest. "Well, *darlin*, I fuck who I want to, when I want to. And right now, that's you."

Even as he cursed himself for questioning this, he said, "Why?"

"Don't worry your pretty head about it." Before he could question her further, she reached down and cupped him through his slacks, the contact nearly making him groan. "*This* is all I'm worried about right now. My room or yours?"

He stared at her mouth. This was stupid. He should tell her to fuck off and go back into the bar. Sleeping with anyone else would be better than going upstairs with Regan. Even knowing that, he found himself saying, "Mine." At least if they were on his territory, he'd maintain control of the situation.

She went up on her tip-toes and nipped his chin. "Perfect."