

Chapter 1

“I thought I told you no one can go in there.”

“It’s *my* house!”

The tall, broad shouldered man in the gray suit stood on the porch of the white, plantation style home with one very angry, very petite brunette—the owner of the previously mentioned home.

“It’s a crime scene, Buttercup,” he said, his voice only rising a little. He was tired and achy after a long drive in from Dallas.

“Don’t patronize me, G-man,” Case McCann replied, squaring up her stance to the much larger gentleman. “It’s been like, 2 months. You haven’t found out *anything* about my brother, Jackson. All of my stuff is in there. I need my stuff. I need my house!”

“Again, *Miss* McCann, I’m a federal crime scene investigator. I have to pick through every fiber in that house to find clues. Then I have to send things off to the lab at Dallas FBI Headquarters to be analyzed. That takes time.”

“What happened to the short fat one?” she grumbled, folding her arms and looking up at the agent with a frown. That first guy, Agent Longfellow, was slow and she could get around him, usually only getting caught after rummaging in her closet for a pair of shoes and jeans.

“It doesn’t matter. I’m here and I don’t want to catch you on this porch again. No crossing the yellow tape! You hear?” He used his forceful government agent voice which usually scared people. He wasn’t so sure this tenacious little girl frightened easily.

“So are you living here or something?” she asked, leaning in and reading the name inside the leather wallet he’d flipped open when he’d caught her unlocking the kitchen door. “Agent Beckendorf?”

“You don’t need to worry about that. Now scram,” he sighed, shoving his wallet and shield back into his pocket and wiping the sweat off his brow. He needed to get out of that suit and into more appropriate South Texas-in-August clothes.

Her demeanor quickly changed as she fisted her hands at her sides and her cheeks flushed with anger.

“Are you sleeping in my parents’ bed?” she quietly asked, not breaking eye contact.

Exhaling and shaking his head, he relented a little. The kid had a pretty sad story. and couldn't seem to be able to catch a break. He didn't need to make things worse for her.

"Look, Miss McCann..."

"Call me Case," she evenly said, still staring up at him.

"Case," he nodded, pulling the sides of his suit jacket back as he rested his hands low on his hips. "I couldn't stay in this house even if I wanted to. It's a crime scene. I'm staying over in that place down the dirt road."

She glanced over her shoulder down the winding white caliche road at the white 2-story clapboard house.

"The guest house?" she asked, frowning.

"That 4000 square foot mansion is your guest house?" he asked, raising his brow. He was about to counter with a remark when she suddenly slapped his arm.

"But! It was covered in yellow tape! I didn't know we could stay there! I want to stay there! You move out!" she ordered, pointing her finger at him.

"All of my equipment and files are in there. And my director signed off on it. So... no," he replied, becoming extremely amused by her rising temper.

"Listen here, Agent Breckindork..."

"Call me Waller," he grinned, liking her policy of candor and persistence. In any other circumstance, they may have been friends.

"Waller," she said between her teeth, trying to find a place of serenity as the anger whirled around her. "You have until sundown to grab your gear and clear out of my house, and if you do not comply, I'm sorry but I will be forced to take legal action!"

"According to your file you've already got a pretty little place to live in University Park right next to SMU," he replied, watching the emotion wipe right off of her face, replaced, finally, by a look of fear.

"You... you have a file on *me*?"

"We always rule out the family as suspects first, Cupcake. Don't look so worried."

She straightened her shoulders again and tried to regain a foothold in her argument. "So. I'm not a suspect. Now you have to move or I will get the authorities involved."

"I *am* the authorities," he quietly said, taking a step towards her to see if she'd back down. Her mouth dropped open a little and a small line appeared between her eyebrows, but she

otherwise was not going to concede very easily. Luckily, he didn't have to see how far things would go before he had to arrest her for assaulting a federal agent. Backup arrived.

"Beck?"

"Hall?"

Case stepped back and looked behind her, just in time to see Hall rounding the corner from the front of the house, all hot in his worn jeans and button down, hair a mess from driving with the windows down. He'd always be able to take her breath away. She frowned at the familiarity in the greeting, though.

"Wait, you two don't know each other... do you?"

"Harvard," they both replied, shaking hands.

"So you're assigned to Jackson McCann's case?" Hall asked, drawing his little girlfriend to him and kissing the top of her head.

"Yeah," Waller nodded, noting how they were acting. "So you're dating my lead suspect?"

"What?" Case squealed, stepping towards him as he held his hands up and joined Hall in a good laugh at her expense.

"Kidding," he grinned, shaking his head. "Your little lady and I were just discussing the finer points of eminent domain."

"You'll get to move back in soon enough, Case," Hall smiled indulgently at her, brushing a loose strand of hair behind her ear. "Are you that eager to move out of my place?"

"No. No, of course not," she sighed, looking down at the toe of her dirty white tennis shoe. "I just...I want my stuff. I want my home. I still feel like a guest in your house, Hall."

"Anything new on the hunt for Jackson?" Hall asked, wrapping his arms around Case and pulling her into him.

"Nothing I can disclose," Waller shrugged, looking apologetic. "And, I'm sorry that y'all can't move back in, but you just can't. If we retrieve Jackson and take the suspects to court, we don't want the defense to accuse anyone of tampering with evidence. So no entering the house. Not yet. And no more sneaking in either, Buttercup. I mean it."

"You tried to sneak in again?" Hall asked, holding her shoulder. It was the third time in a month. He knew she had been taking way too long to pick up milk.

“Caught her right here about half an hour ago,” Waller grinned, watching her cheeks flush as his friend gave her an annoyed look. She had spunk and she was cute. Two things his good friend deserved in his life. There had just been too many sad stories in this small town.

“He’s living in the guest house. I want to live there!” Case pouted, pointing at the house down the road.

“He needs it so they can find your brother,” Hall said, taking a step down off of the porch. “Now come on. It’s getting late.”

“No!” she replied, backing up.

“I’ll see you, Hall,” Waller smiled, putting his Ray Bans on and walking down the road towards the McCann guest mansion.

“Later, Beck. Now come on, Baby Girl, you’re in enough trouble as it is.”

Waller shook his head and laughed as he strolled away, pausing only briefly as the argument escalated. He glanced back.

“Get in the car!”

“I’m getting in that house! And besides, I brought the 4 wheeler so I am not getting into your car!”

“You’re asking, no, *begging* me to spank you, Case.”

“God, shut up! He’ll hear you!”

“And he’ll probably hear this,” Hall stated, holding her arm and swinging his hand around to her backside. The smack echoed, as did her startled squeal, and Waller had to force himself to turn and keep walking. A spanking? So that was how a guy like Hall kept a girl like Case around.

The arguing, spanking, and squealing continued as he walked away. The whole exchange had been fascinating. Appealing. Even stimulating. He washed away the day in a hot shower, but kept their little fight on deck so he could relieve his aching erection. He was a little surprised at his arousal since no woman had piqued his interest in the past year at the Bureau, but he realized it wasn’t the girl, really. It was the argument. The action. The sound. He came hard as the water washed over him. His relief wasn’t enough to leave him satisfied, though, so he was about to let the shower run a little longer when he heard the front door.

He quickly turned off the water, grabbed his Glock, and carefully stepped out of the downstairs master suite to the living area.

Chapter 2

The house was beautiful. White, with dark shutters, two-stories, and very welcoming. The night was cool and stormy for August in Texas. She'd made it. Federal grant money was burning a hole in the pocket of Ellison Holliday's tight acid washed jeans, and she was proud of it. It took three long years of grad school and a lot of ass kissing, but she'd won the approval of her professor and a grant from the government. She eyed her cousin's large entryway and living area, remembering her visits as a young girl fondly. Her life just couldn't get any better.

"Down! Down on the ground!"

Startled into losing her breath, she found that surprise at the loud voice wasn't the only reason she couldn't breathe. A very tall, very naked wet man was standing by the back wall... aiming a gun at her.

"Hands where I can see them!" he demanded, watching the small figure in the dark jacket stand motionless by the front door, large bag straps crisscrossed and hanging heavily. "Do it!"

"W-well... do you want me on the-the ground or do you want my hands up?" she softly asked in her usual husky voice, a little crack to it from her fright at the gun pointing at her head... and the semi-erect cock bouncing up and down at the man's every step.

"On the ground," Waller ground out, cautiously stepping forward towards the intruder. No other agents were scheduled to come out to the ranch. It had been him alone for a month, and would be for an indeterminate amount of time. This was a trespasser. "Hands on the back of your head. Fingers threaded."

"I... okay," she complied, dipping her shoulder and carefully dropping a bag to the Saltillo tile floor. She did the same with the others, careful not to slam anything down.

"Hustle!" he ordered, stepping in front of her, muscles flexing from gripping his service weapon. His other weapon was begging to be serviced as he caught her face finally. Dirty blonde hair a mess, pulled up into a sloppy bun with bangs wisped down on her forehead. Green eyes like sea grass. Bow shaped lips pouty in thought.

"I can't just drop these bags," she calmly said, setting the last one down and getting on her knees. "It's borrowed equipment. I break it, I buy it."

He watched her lay flat on her stomach and lace her fingers on top of that messy blonde bun. Wiping the water out of his eyes and dropping his Glock to his side, he quickly stepped

over her and began feeling up and down her body underneath that raincoat. Sides. Front. Nice little tits. Back. Flat little white girl ass. Legs, short, scrawny. She didn't seem like much of a threat.

"I'm... I'm sorry. But, well, are you like, one of the boys' friends?"

"State your name. And your purpose. Down," he ordered, pushing in the middle of her back as she tried to rise and answer his questions.

"I've complied, okay? Answer *my* question," she bit back, face smashed into the hard sand colored tile.

"Federal agent on the Jackson McCann case," he replied, though why he wasn't sure. He had the upper hand but the fact that she was a pretty girl lying face down on the floor probably had something to do with it.

Her hands flew to the floor and she tried to roll over as she gasped, "Did you find him?"

"Hands behind your head," he ordered again, flipping her over and pushing down on her back until she obeyed. "And no, which is why I'm still here. We are still processing the scene. And if you're a reporter and that information becomes public knowledge you'll be charged with a federal crime."

"Jeez, okay, okay," she mumbled, finding the hard floor very unforgiving to her bony hips. "I'm Ellison Holliday, the McCanns are my cousins. Ask any of them."

Sighing and standing up, still with one foot on either side of her body, he relaxed a little. If she was a criminal or a reporter, she was a pretty terrible one just marching through the front door with a bunch of luggage. He eyed the bags at that moment.

"If you think you're staying here then you're wrong, Ms. Holliday. The main house is a crime scene and I have sensitive evidence in these quarters."

"Stand down, G-man," she sighed, slowly unlacing her fingers. "I have permission to be here."

"Put your hands back and listen to me," he sighed, getting to know the back of her body very well and finding that he liked it very much. "Case McCann has no authority here."

"Try the Governor," Ellison interrupted, smirking down to the floor.

"I beg your pardon?" he frowned.

"If I may?" she asked, unlacing her fingers again. "I..."

“If I have to tell you to put your hands back again you’ll regret it, Ms. Holliday,” he sternly said, liking how her hands paused.

“You already searched me! What do I have to do, get naked like you are?” she snapped, grumbling as she put her hands back on her head but defiantly did not lace her fingers.

Bad girl. In more ways than one. It was insanely attractive to him. That said, she was right.

“Roll over, cross your legs, hands on your knees,” he commanded, stepping backwards.

“*Jesus, Mary, and Joseph,*” she loudly whispered, blushing as she rolled over and quickly averted her eyes as he stood there, still naked, still dripping wet, still holding a pistol. Her stomach tightened and she licked her lips, staring at the floor.

“Waller Beckindorf, actually,” he grinned, folding his arms and tapping his gun on his shoulder as she flushed pink and refused to look at him. Shy? Embarrassed? Turned on? He was exceedingly curious as to which it could be... maybe all three.

“Agent Beckindork,” she huffed, trying to hide the emotions screaming at every nerve ending in her body. Sure, she’d seen naked men before, but this one... he was like a hard, wet, Greek god. “I-I have paperwork...”

“From the Governor?” he asked incredulously. Her pink round cheeks dimpled as she smiled at the tile floor. Or was it a sarcastic smile?

“Yeah. He’s a family friend.”

“Who can get you into crime scenes?” Waller smirked.

Her little fists clenched on her knees as she shook her head once. “Research.”

“Okay,” he sighed. As much as he loved cat and mouse and chasing beautiful women, he was tired after a long day. Kneeling in front of her, he waited until she had no choice but to look him in the eye. “Pretend I don’t know you, or where you’re from, or who your family is, or why you’re even trespassing.”

“I’m not...”

“Just answer me, Ellison,” he commanded. Her eyes turned up to his at that moment. Green. Passionate. So damned attractive. He had no doubt that she was related to the cute and pugnacious little McCann girl.

“Ellison Holliday, Anthropological Graduate Studies, Rice University, cousin to The McCann Family, daughter of Herschel Holliday, the—”

“Lieutenant Governor?” Waller interrupted, frowning as she rolled her eyes.

“It’s why I got my foot through the door, not why I’m here doing research,” she responded defensively. “I won a grant. I have a dig site. It just happens to be on this property and I just happen to have permission to lodge in the guest house.”

Standing up, her eyes following his muscled thighs and darting away from his impressive manhood, Waller shook his head. “No one told *me*, Buttercup. So that means that until I hear from my superiors, you need to pack it up and drive back to Houston.”

“What?” she asked, standing up in her oversized raincoat and frowning adorably.

“You heard me,” he said, arms still crossed over that hard chest, that wet, messy spiked brown hair looking all hot, those dark eyes looking so sexy...

“Again, agent, check the paperwork,” she repeated in a strained voice.

“Again, little girl, I need to hear it firsthand from the Bureau.”

“Seriously!” she yelled, stamping her foot. “I am not a little girl! I’m a 25-year-old grad student who has worked her ass off for 3 years to get to this point, right here, right now!”

He couldn’t help himself... and he was hoping she would lose her temper so that he could use force and touch her again.

“Sounds to me like your daddy got you where you are today.”

This time her cheeks colored out of anger. That was it. The breaking point for her. No way a high-handed naked cop was going to try and tear her down.

“There is no way a naked handed high cop is going to... I mean, a big naked...” she was stuttering, mixing up her words.

He wondered if she did that when she was flustered, angry, or just plain turned on. He longed to find out, even finding himself turned on when she leaned forward and pushed both of her hands against his chest out of frustration.

He didn’t budge. He was bigger and harder than she thought. She pushed him again but he didn’t even bat an eye. “Are you done?” he asked, a hint of boredom in his tone though he was anything but.

“I haven’t even started,” she grit through her teeth, bangs askew on her forehead.

“Assaulting a government agent will go on your permanent record. Even the Governor can’t get that expunged.”

“Stop. Patronizing. Me. And call. Your boss!” she yelled, swinging her fist at his arms and shoulders and hitting him with every word.

He suddenly startled her as he grabbed her wrist, flipped her around, and tucked her arms into her stomach. Then he easily lifted her off the ground, her back pressed to his front, and spoke very calmly into her ear.

“I’m not the one trespassing. I’m not the one throwing a hissy. All I have to do is wait for a call from any of my superiors. If you’d like to move this process along then get your pretty little ass back to town, find a payphone, call your father, and get him to work it out with the Bureau. Otherwise, you may not enter this property again without facing the full force of the law.”

Ellison was trying to catch her breath but he had her awkwardly pinned against him, squeezing her to him... and his breath in her ear gave her goosebumps everywhere. Luckily, his words set her temper ablaze.

“Let go!” she growled, swinging her wet ballet flats backwards and nailing him once on a hard thigh and once right between his thighs.

He crumbled from the flash of sharp pain. He gasped for breath. And he let her go as he gripped his battered balls. She rolled across the floor and went for her bags. If she’d been going for a gun, she might have gotten the upper hand. Still, he had to try and stop her. Rolling to his stomach, he grabbed his service weapon from the floor and clicked the hammer back.

She hadn’t been reaching for a weapon. She sat there, arms up, folded paperwork in her hands, and her face white with fear. Waller would never forget that moment. She was terrified of him. And why shouldn’t she be? He had a gun aimed at her head and all she had to defend herself was a federal grant.

She looked from the gun to his eyes. She only wanted to show him that she could legally be there. Would he really shoot her? She closed her eyes and tucked her chin into her chest, like that would stop a bullet from hurting her.

“Get out,” he ordered, standing up and gathering her and her bags.

Ellison twisted in his grip but couldn’t fight the inertia of such a tall, broad, determined man. She tried to dig her heels in but he had her and all five of her equipment bags out of the front door in seconds.

“But you can’t...”

Smack!

She squealed and rubbed her ass as she looked at him over her shoulder, all strained muscles and still naked, frowning down at her.

“Off the property. Now,” he demanded, slamming the door and locking it. He leaned against it and tried to catch his breath. That had been exciting, and infuriating, and revealing all at once.

He heard her car speed away down the old caliche road. She’d been feisty, fierce, and fucking beautiful. Christ, he had a full hard-on. He had to get her out of his head, though. His director wouldn’t even let the owner of the ranch onto the property. Why would they let a grad student initiate an excavation that could take months?