
Chapter 1

Allie, Jenny and Lane were enjoying the afternoon sunshine as they sat on Allie's deck. All three young women worked together in Allie's home cleaning business. The hours suited them well. They mostly worked in the mornings and had their afternoons and weekends off unless they were hired to clean up before and after a party.

The girls were grateful summer was just around the corner and that the days were growing warm and sunny. Allie was really starting to get big. She was entering her third trimester. As usual, the girls were talking babies. Jenny, who lived within walking distance of Allie and talked with her every day, looked a little sheepish as she turned to Allie and asked, "I've been holding on to this question forever, but you have to tell me the truth. Did you and Ryan get pregnant just to shut the old folks up?"

Allie laughed out loud, and she quickly glanced next door toward her in-laws' house. "If Mom hears that 'old folks' crap, she's gonna kick your butt," Allie warned. "And no. That is *not* why we got pregnant. Ryan and I talked about it for over a year, and we finally felt ready."

Jenny gave her a dubious look. Allie, Jenny and Lane were all in their early twenties. Lane stood out from her dark-haired friends with her long red, curly hair and dark brown eyes. She enjoyed the baby talk but fervently hoped the condition wasn't catching. Lane and Jenny were sisters-in-law, and each envied the other's looks. Jenny loved Lane's wild, untamed red curly mane while Lane craved the smooth, silky dark hair Jenny had. Jenny's dark hair and blue eyes were a beautiful combination.

Allie looked at her friends as she thought about Jenny's baby question. "Yeah, okay, maybe a little," she admitted. "But it's not what you're thinking. No one talked us into having a baby. But they did enter into our thinking. Cassie and Tom and the others are such a big part of our lives. I mean, they moved next door when I was sixteen. Cassie's been my hero almost since the moment I met her. They brought Ryan into my life. And all the girls' trips and adventures I've been on with Cassie, Sue and Annie... they seem more like aunts than just friends and neighbors. Well, I just can't imagine them *not* being part of our children's lives. They all seem ageless right now, but the truth is they're going to get old eventually. I don't want my kids to miss out on a life with them."

"I wouldn't worry," Lane spoke up. "Just the other day Cassie told me she thought she had at least a good four decades left. Of course, that would put her well into her hundreds, but my money's still on her."

"That would suit me fine," Allie agreed. "But just in case, I'm glad we're starting our family now."

The girls fell silent, watching the river. Allie smiled, still thinking about her mother-in-law Cassie and her friends Sue and Annie. The three women often bragged about their half-century friendship. Though much of that time they had lived with the continent between them, they kept up with one another by traveling together several times a year. Over the

past few years, the desire to be close to the only people who felt like family had become strong.

So, when a house just two doors from Cassie and Tom had become available, Sue and Steve had jumped on it. For a while, this area of the river, The Landing they'd named it, had been just the three families. Allie and Ryan had been able to buy her parents' home when they'd relocated to England. Their house was nestled in between Cassie and Sue's homes. Then just over a year ago, Annie and Andy bought the house on the other side of Cassie and Tom. Allie realized that her baby would have more than its share of grandparents and she loved the idea.

"You sure won't have to worry about babysitters," Jenny pointed out. "And I do understand what you're saying. You're right, I want my kids to know them all too. But we are not ready right now. What does it *really* feel like?"

"Well, I started out feeling mostly sleepy and horny. I'm not nearly as sleepy now. But the horny..." she told her friends as they laughed.

"Oh no! If those are the symptoms, I'm pregnant too!" Lane cried.

"Me too," Jenny agreed, "well, really just the horny part."

"I'm not kidding," Allie insisted. "During the first part of the pregnancy, when I got home after work, I could barely make it to the couch. I felt like I could curl up on the kitchen floor and nap right there because the couch was just so far away. But when Ryan walked in the door, I only had one thing on my mind."

Both Allie's friends grinned as they heard Ryan's truck pull into the drive. "In that case," Jenny told her, getting to her feet, "we'll leave you to it."

Allie heard Ryan greet the girls as they left and then smiled as he came around to the back of the house and trotted up the stairs of the deck toward her. *Damn, he's a beautiful man!* Ryan's

looks had nearly knocked her off her feet the first time she'd seen him when she was only sixteen and they had only improved with age. Ryan had a lawn design and maintenance business. He loved growing things, and his nearly constant physical work outdoors had chiseled his muscles and darkened his skin to a permanent, year-round tan, even as the sun had lightened his brown hair.

Allie got up to give him a hug and to breathe in his scent. He'd been visiting the greenhouse today. He smelled of the plants, as well as the rich dirt and mulch he worked with. It was the scent of nature and the river and Allie loved it.

"You're not getting too hot out here, are you? You don't need to be in the sun so much."

Allie grinned. Ryan was definitely a little overprotective these days and she thought it was sweet. But she could also sense he could go overboard if she didn't check him. "I'm ready to come in, but don't think you're going to be as bossy as your dad. Got it?"

Ryan grinned as he followed Allie into the house. He gave her a firm swat on the butt as she went through the door. "You're not saying my dad's overprotective, are you?"

"Well, maybe just a little," she agreed, laughing. "Do you have any ideas for supper?" Allie asked.

"Nope. Anything's fine. Right now, all I want is a shower."

Allie perked up. "You need any help with that?" she asked.

Ryan turned to her with a suddenly serious look. "Allie, I'm a grown man. I've taken showers before. *Of course*, I need help." Laughing like kids, they hurried toward their bedroom.

Allie loved the new double shower they'd installed. Redoing the bath and master bedroom had been the first order of business when they bought the house from her parents. At first, she was worried that sleeping in her parents' room might be a little creepy, but new furniture in a different arrangement was just what the suite had needed.

"Did you work hard today?" Allie asked as she unbuttoned his shirt.

"You'd better believe it. I definitely need all my muscles rubbed and massaged," Ryan told her. "And what about you? Did you do a good job cleaning all the houses on your list today?"

Allie shrugged. "Not really. I gave them all a lick and a promise. I just didn't feel much like working today."

"Allie Marie! Shame on you. We've talked about this before. What did I say I was going to do to curb your laziness?"

"Have we?" Allie replied vaguely. "I don't remember." She smothered a grin, loving their game.

"Well, I remember," Ryan told her in his sternest voice. He reached into the nightstand to pull out the thin paddleball paddle. "I told you I'd spank your butt and that's what I'm going to do." Ryan stood holding the paddle. "Take off everything you're wearing," he commanded.

When Ryan used that voice, Allie felt like putty. Her panties were already damp, and she pulled them off and dropped them on the rest of her clothes. She eagerly climbed onto the bed on all fours, her growing belly making lying over his lap no longer feasible.

He started right away with the spanking. Allie nearly giggled at the incredible *pop* it made. From the sounds the paddle made, someone not familiar with a real spanking would think this was a most horrible one. But the truth was the thin wooden implement was nearly all bark and very little bite. Ryan had been reluctant to do any spanking once he found out about the baby, but Allie wasn't going to be denied.

Ryan continued spanking and began lecturing. "You have a reputation to uphold in the community. You're a business owner. You have employees counting on your business doing well. You can't do a half-assed job on a client's home. You'll

lose customers, the business will go downhill. Is that what you want? And besides, I won't have people saying my wife is lazy!"

Allie squirmed in delight and the sting began to build. "I'm sorry," she cried. "I promise to do better."

"See that you do," Ryan told her, giving her one last loud *pop*. He rubbed her ass, which was now a lovely shade of red, as he helped her from the bed. Allie took the time to give him a meaningful kiss.

"Let's skip the shower," she suggested.

"No, ma'am! You promised me a shower. You go get it started and make it as hot as you can stand it."

Allie groaned, but moved toward the bathroom. Another hard swat on her stinging butt quickened her steps. She adjusted both shower heads and called to Ryan. As he stepped in, they both eyed the other thinking, *damn, what a body!* The swelling of Allie's stomach with their child took Ryan's breath away. He couldn't believe it made her even more beautiful.

Allie wiggled her butt as the hot water increased the sting. She poured soap in her hands and began washing Ryan's back. She rubbed and caressed his shoulders and then down his back. He had the cutest, tightest little tushie in the world. It was all she could do to keep from biting it, and occasionally she didn't try to resist and nipped away.

Going around him, Allie began washing his chest and arms. She eventually looked down to what she'd been waiting for. Ryan's erection was magnificent! Her soapy hands slid along the shaft and then gently cupped his balls, massaging ever so gently. *An iron rod, covered in silk*, Allie thought, remembering a line from one of the secret 'dirty' books she'd kept hidden in her bedroom when she was a teenager. *Cheesy* she thought, *but oh so accurate*.

Still caressing, she helped rinse him off. She looked up at him and asked, "What next?"

They stood together, the water beating on them for a moment before Ryan answered. "Put your hands on the seat." Allie eagerly turned and complied. "You learned your lesson, didn't you?" Ryan asked.

"Probably," Allie answered without conviction.

Ryan grinned as he rained down a half-dozen more swats on her stinging bottom. Then, not willing to wait another minute, he held her by her hips and plunged into her warm depths.

Again! Allie silently begged as Ryan did just that, over and over. When he reached around to stroke her clit, Allie came at the first touch. She shivered and arched her neck as she clamped Ryan like a velvet glove. The intensity of her orgasm triggered his and he cried out her name.

Then they were still, each breathing hard. Ryan concentrated on staying on his feet and trying to get a drop or two of blood to his head. Slowly, he stepped back and pulled Allie up into his arms.

After a few moments, he asked, "Are you crying?"

Allie nodded and they held one another more tightly. Ryan understood. He was nearly crying himself as he wondered how in God's name he'd gotten so lucky.