
THE FALLING

Finding Forever - Book Three

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Published by Blushing Books
An Imprint of
ABCD Graphics and Design, Inc.
A Virginia Corporation
977 Seminole Trail #233
Charlottesville, VA 22901

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EBook ISBN: 978-1-64563-243-6

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Cover Art by ABCD Graphics & Design

This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only.
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Chapter 1

The large, British billionaire carried a sleeping Gillian into his personal master suite. Reaching the king-sized bed, John motioned for Stewart to pull back the covers before he gently laid her down in the center. Bending over her, he caressed one porcelain cheek before placing a kiss on her lips. John then pulled the cover up over her body before he cracked his thick neck and rolled his tired shoulders. Taking another look at the woman lying in his bed, John felt the tears sting the back of his eyes. Gillian could have died today. The thought made his stomach clench and twist in pain and the bile rise in his throat. John had completely underestimated Pandora and Galen and put Gillian in danger. Due to this careless mistake and lack of judgment on his part, Gillian had suffered, and John could not forgive himself. How could she ever look at him the same again?

"This poor creature," Stewart said softly, wiping a fallen tear from his own cheek as he stared at the sleeping American. The bruising that was already forming around her neck and face was horrendous to look at. When he raised his eyes to look at John, the breath caught in his throat. The Brit was fighting back his

own tears, and in all the years Stewart had known him, he had never seen John so emotional. Approaching John, Stewart put a hand on his employer's shoulder. "John, I'm so sorry. Is there anything I can do for you? Anything you need?"

Shrugging his shoulders and pulling away from Stewart, John quickly wiped at his eyes and cleared his own throat. "Whiskey, Stewart. All I need is a bottle of whiskey."

"John, I don't think whiskey will help."

"I'm not paying you to think, Stewart," John replied hatefully, his brown eyes blackening as he turned toward the smaller man. "Just get the fucking bottle and leave. Send Pat in the moment he gets here. No one else is allowed in."

Straightening his back indignantly, Stewart did as John directed. When he came back, John was sitting on the edge of the bed removing his boots. Placing the bottle on the nightstand, the butler softly said. "Sometimes you have to let others help you, John. You don't always have to carry the weight of the burden on your own."

John responded to the butler's words by opening the bottle of whiskey and taking a long drink. Hearing Stewart leave the room, he made his way around the bed while taking another swig of the warm, brown liquor. He set the bottle down long enough to pull up a chair and plop his tired frame down. The Brit desperately wanted to lie beside Gillian and wrap her up in his arms, but he didn't want to disturb her. His own personal physician had given Gillian medicine to keep her sedated so she could rest and begin to heal. John not only had Bennet examine her on the plane, but Dr. Dutch Williams had reexamined his kitten the moment they'd touched down in London. Both doctors had concluded that Gillian had physical trauma to her neck and face, but that there was no sign of anything sexual. They had also reassured John that there were no broken bones and that Gillian, after a few days of rest, would be fine. John's guard, Luther, had stayed behind in Paris to clean up the Galen mess.

Throwing the bottle back again to take another drink, John's eyes rested on Gillian's angelic, beautiful face. The tears sprang to his eyes once again as he noticed the bruising around her slender neck. He silently thanked his creator for keeping Gillian alive. Why had he agreed to let her go to the meeting without him? John had made sure she had guards with her but not his most experienced. He wouldn't make that mistake again. Now that kitten was back in his home and under his control, John would see to it personally that Gillian was always safe and protected, whether she liked it or not.

Hearing a soft gasp escape her lips, John saw her brow knitting together in pain and fear. Crawling into the bed, he reclined his massive, muscular frame beside hers as he again kissed her lips. Stroking one porcelain cheek lightly, John said, "Shh kitten. You're safe, sweetheart. I'll never let anything happen to you again." He felt a knot form in his throat and a tear roll down his cheek when he heard his name escape her lips in a sigh. "I love you too, kitten. Now sleep for me. I promise I won't leave you."

When he felt as though Gillian had drifted back to sleep, John carefully climbed out of the bed and sat back in the chair. His eyes drifted to the door of his bedroom as he heard the latch. The Brit then watched his best mate walk into the room wearing only a pair of jeans and a navy shirt. Before John could even open his mouth to speak, the Irishman lifted him up and embraced him in a loving, warm embrace. Pulling back, Patrick cupped the back of John's head. "I got here as soon as I could, mate. How is she doing?"

"No change from earlier," John responded quietly as he embraced the Irishman once more before he pulled away and sat back in his chair. He had called Patrick the moment the plane took off and told him what had happened. The Irishman, who had been in Greece on business, had immediately flown back to London. "Dutch examined her and came to the same conclusion

as Bennet. He gave her something to keep her sedated, at least for tonight."

"So, she wasn't raped?" Patrick asked, the breath caught in his throat as he waited for John's response. The Irishman had been absolutely sickened to learn what had happened to Gillian. Patrick had physically ached for his brother when he had heard the pain in the Brit's voice. He could tell that John had been crying, and that greatly worried him. John Kenric simply didn't cry or show emotion.

"No, she wasn't," John replied before taking another long drink of whiskey. "She was choked severely and hit in the face but no sexual trauma. I was lucky to find her when I did, Pat. Galen was going to rape her. I have no doubts about that."

Patrick walked around the bed so he could get a closer look at Gillian. Just like John, the Irishman was glad that the American was alive. He was not a religious man, but he had stopped by a Catholic church to thank God for protecting Gillian. Reaching out his hand, Patrick began to lightly stroke her face. It was warm and petal soft to touch. The woman was stunning to look at, with her porcelain skin and ebony hair. Because he was grateful that Gillian was alive, the Irishman leaned down and placed a kiss on her lips. At her ear, he whispered, "Don't tell Johnny, but I missed you, sweetheart. Glad the bastard finally came to his senses and brought you back."

"It was my fault kitten almost died," John announced softly, not taking his eyes off Gillian's lovely face. The guilt he felt was eating him up inside.

"What?" Patrick exclaimed as he stood up and looked at John. "Don't you dare blame yourself for this, boyo! Galen and Pandora are the sick fucks who kidnapped and tortured her, not you!"

"Pandora's dead," John said, his voice void of emotion as he took another drink of whiskey. Before Patrick could ask the ques-

tion, the Brit said, "Galen killed her before we arrived; he stabbed her in the heart."

"Good," Patrick replied coldly. "The bitch betrayed you, John, and she put her hands on Gillian. Pandora deserved what she got. Gillian never would have gone with her if Pandora had not lied about you being shot. You watched the same footage from the hospital that I did. Pandora was more than a willing participant. She was even able to manipulate Simon to do her bidding! Don't tell me you feel bad for the Greek bitch?"

"Fuck Pandora, and fuck Simon!" John said through clenched teeth as he glared at his brother. He didn't need Patrick reminding him that the guard he had with kitten had betrayed him as well. "If Galen hadn't killed Pandora and Simon, then I would have. No one hurts kitten and lives to see another day. Don't you see, Pat? Pandora never should have made it to France! I underestimated her and let her not only hurt kitten once, but twice!"

"Do you hear yourself, mate? There was no way that you could have known that Pandora would reach out to Galen!"

"I never make mistakes, Patty!" John yelled as he stood up and hit his chest with his fist. "The one time I do, Gillian almost dies! I won't make the same fucking mistake a second time! I love her, dammit! If I lost her..."

Patrick watched the man he considered a brother sit back in the chair and down another drink of whiskey. His heart was breaking for John. The Brit had a very bad habit of blaming himself for things beyond his control, and clearly, what had happened to Gillian was no exception. How could Patrick help John see that he could not have controlled the turn of events?

"Johnny," the Irishman began softly as he walked around the bed and sat down beside him. "You have got to stop blaming yourself for things you can't control. You didn't put Gillian in harm's way; Galen did. You have had our men watching Gillian's every move 24/7 since leaving Kenric Manor. There was no way

that you could have anticipated Galen making a move on her the way he did."

"What if kitten blames me, Pat? What do I do then?" John asked, unshed tears in his chestnut eyes as he looked at the Irishman. "You know that she has led a low-key life intentionally. I made her vulnerable by putting her in the media. I did that for selfish reasons, mate. I wanted the world to know she now belongs to me. I can't apologize for that."

"You won't have to, boyo. Gillian is not going to blame you for what happened. You told me, yourself, that she agreed to come back to London with you. That's not the action of a woman who doesn't want to be linked to you."

"She's not ready for our world, Pat. She said as much last night."

"Then let her go, mate," Patrick said softly as John's eyes shot to his. "If you don't think Gillian can handle it, then you need to let her go."

"I can't." John derisively laughed before taking another long drink of whiskey. "I love her, boyo. I couldn't even make it a fucking week without her."

"I know," the Irishman replied, a smile tugging at the corner of his lips as he looked at the subject of their conversation. He and John had known the American a whole week, and she had completely changed both their lives. "Gillian's strong, Johnny. She can handle this...us."

"And if she can't?"

PATRICK SAID nothing in response to John's question. The Brit was in one of his moods, and nothing he could say would matter. He only hoped that Gillian would help ease John's fears when she woke up. Standing up, Patrick stretched out his tired frame. Like his brother, the Irishman had been unable to sleep since Gillian

had left Kenric Manor. Normally, Patrick drowned himself in alcohol and pussy when he couldn't sleep, but he had been unable to do either since meeting the American. Watching his brother take another drink of whiskey, the blond-haired giant shook his head in disgust before he ripped the bottle out of John's hand and threw it across the room.

As the bottle shattered against the stone fireplace, John shot to his feet and yelled, "Why the fuck did you do that? I'm not in the mood, Patty."

"The answer to this problem is not in that bottle, mate," Patrick responded, totally unfazed by John's anger. He was not about to sit and watch the man he loved self-medicate. "You're running from your feelings, boyo, and that's not the John I know. Instead of drinking yourself into a stupor, why don't you lie down and rest?"

"No," John said in a sigh as he shook his head. "If kitten should wake up, I want to be the first person she sees. She might be scared, she—"

"Will feel you lying beside her," Patrick replied, cupping the back of John's head. "If you don't sleep, at least take time to clear your head. Give yourself time to process what happened today, mate. I'll sit here and keep my eye on her. If our little kitty cat stirs even the slightest, I'll wake you."

JOHN INHALED DEEPLY as his tired eyes once again traveled to Gillian. He wanted nothing more than to crawl in bed with her and wrap his arms around her. If she was in his bed, then he knew she was safe. Maybe Patrick was right. Drinking wasn't going to help anything. If he lay down beside kitten, maybe he could formulate a plan that would ensure her safety. John already knew his American would resist the rules, but he had to ensure that nothing like today ever happened again. His kitten would

learn to obey him just like everyone else. If not, her lovely ass would be punished.

Giving Patrick a hug, John released the Irishman to begin walking around the bed. Pulling off his t-shirt and opening the top button on his jeans, the British billionaire crawled into the bed. Before laying his head down on the pillow, he gently pulled Gillian's body onto his muscular chest. Because he needed the intimate contact, John softly kissed her mouth. A smile touched his lips when he heard kitten sigh his name again.

"I love you too, kitten," John said as he snuggled her tightly and closed his eyes. Before drifting off to sleep, he said, "You'd better be there when I wake up, Pat. If not, I'm going to beat your ass."

PATRICK ROLLED his turquoise eyes as he kicked off his boots and sat back in the chair. Propping his socked feet up on the bed, he rubbed his tired, lightly bearded face. He could not believe John had listened to him and gotten into bed. He also had no idea what he was going to do to help the stubborn bastard. He loved John, but the one thing he hated about the Brit was that he had a bad habit of going about things the hard way. Instead of talking shit out and expressing his feelings, John would fight them or simply not acknowledge them. Even with Patrick, John attempted to hide his true feelings, for fear that he might be viewed as weak. The only problem with that was John had never been able to hide anything from the Irishman.

Hearing the soft whimper escape Gillian's lips, Patrick's eyes quickly found her lovely face. A smile touched his lips when he watched her scrunch her pert nose up before cuddling closer to John. Closing his eyes, he again thanked God for bringing Gillian back to him. Patrick had not been able to sleep more than an hour since the American had left Kenric Manor. Not only had he

not been able to sleep, but his skin had painfully crawled with need and desire. It took everything Patrick had at this moment not to slip in bed with the exquisite woman. He clenched his strong, masculine jaw as his eyes drifted down her back and landed on the exposed porcelain skin of her ass covered only by a thin, strip of white lace. Patrick's mouth literally watered as his eyes feasted on the petal soft skin. Letting out a shaky breath, he chastised himself before he pulled the sheet up over her bottom.

Patrick stood up and cracked his thick, corded neck before he walked over to stand by the fireplace. Why did he have to want the same woman his brother was now in love with? Patrick wasn't surprised that he and John would fall for the same woman. John had allowed the Irishman to sample the American's talents the night of the party, but what if he changed his mind? Patrick knew he could not be near Gillian without being able to touch her, so if John cut that off, what would he do? There wasn't a man who deserved love more than John, but for the first time in the Irishman's life, he was envious of his best mate. Patrick wasn't ready to say that he loved Gillian, but he would admit, if only to himself, that he was very fond of her. He just needed to get her out of his system. Once he did that, then maybe they could at least be friends.

"Hey, mate," Duff McKay said, breaking into the Irishman's thoughts as Patrick's eyes found his. "I'm sorry to bother you, but I wanted to check and see how my girl is doing."

"Your girl?" Patrick asked, cocking one blond brow. His voice was dark and deadly as he said, "She belongs to us, Duff. You would do well to remember that."

"Oh, fuck, not you too, Patty!" Duff chuckled, shaking his head. "I knew Johnny had it bad for the American, but you?" Seeing the Irishman's eyes darken slightly, Duff threw up his hands in surrender as he said, "Look, before you start screaming at me, I was joking, mate. You and John have never been

orthodox when it comes to relationships, so why start now? Seriously, though, how is Gillian?"

"Thankfully, she's going to be all right. Those bastards roughed her up, and she will have some bruises, but Dutch says nothing is broken. She should be back to normal in a few days."

"That's good to hear," Duff said, his eyes roaming over Gillian's beautiful, porcelain skin. "Don't tell Johnny, but I happen to like the good doctor. I don't know if you've noticed, but she doesn't take his shit. I think we might be looking at the future Mrs. Kenric, Pat."

"We are," Patrick replied simply, looking at the small woman lying next to John. Could she really handle their world?

"Gillian's going to be okay, mate," Duff said, reading the concern and worry he saw etched in the lines of Patrick's tired face. "She's the toughest woman I have ever met, and as you know, I have met a few. Her life has been pure shit, Pat, and she's been completely alone through all of it. Instead of lying down and giving up, Gillian clawed her way to the top the same as we did. She's one of us, mate, probably even stronger than we are because, at least, we had each other."

Patrick said nothing as the Scottish man turned to make his way toward the door. Duff was right. Gillian Morgan's life mirrored theirs on so many levels. She had not only been abused and abandoned as a child, but she had been completely and utterly alone. That knowledge made Patrick want Gillian even more than he already did. Just like John, he wanted to possess her not only sexually, but emotionally. The problem was Patrick didn't know if Gillian felt the same. *Fuck it*, the Irishman thought as he plopped back down in the chair. He wasn't some love-sick fool who was looking for a soul mate. Gillian Morgan was John's problem and only his by association. He would help his brother and enjoy her talents, but he would leave the emotional shit to John.

Looking back at John and Gillian, Patrick let out a loud sigh.

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John looked so content lying beside the American. Leaning forward in his chair, Patrick lightly stroked Gillian's cheek. The woman instinctually rubbed her face against his palm in her sleep. "I'm going to have to guard my heart around you, sweetheart," he softly said with a smile. He then released her and eased back into the plush chair. It was going to be a long night.