

## Pleasure Bound

### Prologue

*Five years earlier...*

Jonas got out of Wade's truck and stared at the white ranch-style house. It was big, but not ostentatious. Wade's family home, Jonas reminded himself. He clenched and unclenched his fists, wishing for the hundredth time that he'd kept his big mouth shut when Wade had asked if he'd had plans for the day.

It was Saturday, and the only thing on his agenda had been getting in a good, hard workout at the gym. He was man enough to admit that the uncomfortable feeling skating down his spine now was fear. Pure, unadulterated fear. Jonas was damn tempted to get back in the truck and get the hell out of Dodge.

Wade and his big idea to introduce him to his family. Christ. Although, he couldn't blame his buddy entirely. Curiosity had gotten the better of Jonas and he'd caved. Wade always went on and on about his fabulous family. The brother with the new construction company, the little sister who'd just graduated from nursing school. Hell, even Wade's parents intrigued Jonas. They were wildly in love even after thirty years of marriage. In Jonas's family, a loving marriage was an oddity, considering his own parents barely tolerated each other.

Now, as he stared at the house, his palms started to sweat. Shit. Why had he decided to torture himself? He could be at home, drinking a beer and watching a game. Any game.

As Jonas stepped onto the porch, he turned and stared at Wade. He'd become like a brother to him. They'd met a few years before in the army, during basic training. For some reason that Jonas couldn't recall now, he'd called Wade a pussy. Of course, Wade had responded with an uppercut to Jonas's jaw. They'd been buddies ever since.

"Are you sure about this, Wade? I mean, I don't want to crash your family get-together."

"Don't be such a pain in the ass," Wade said as he slapped Jonas on the back and tried to push him through the front door. "You've been trying to get out of this the entire way over here. Jesus, you're getting on my last nerve!"

Jonas still didn't budge. "Why'd I let you talk me into this? It's a family picnic, Wade. I'm not family. I don't know a damn thing about families, much less family picnics."

"Blah, blah," Wade said as he rolled his eyes.

Several voices filtered through the screen door. "Who's in there anyway?"

"My parents, my brother and sister, some cousins. Uncles and aunts. You know, family."

Yep, Jonas definitely wanted to make a break for it.

Wade sighed. "Trust me. Everyone will be glad to finally meet you."

Jonas quirked a brow. "Finally?"

"I've talked about you in my letters," Wade admitted. "Mostly about what a dumbass you are. So, naturally they're curious."

Jonas chuckled. "You wrote about me? How romantic."

"Quit stalling," Wade growled.

"Fine, but I'm not staying long."

"Yeah, yeah, families give you hives. I get it. Now go."

Jonas grunted and stepped over the threshold. The house was bursting with activity. A petite woman with shoulder-length, dark brown hair sprinkled with gray looked toward them and grinned. "It's about time you showed up."

Wade closed the distance and enveloped her in a big bear hug. Jonas took a step back, all but ready to dart through the door as he watched the warm display. Wade's mother? As Jonas pondered the identity of the woman, several others surrounded the pair. Jonas felt a pang of envy for his friend. Hugs and kisses? Yeah, right. Jonas's parents didn't operate that way. The day Jonas had left for the army, his dad had awkwardly patted him on the shoulder and his mother had simply stood by, impatiently waiting and checking her watch. She'd been more concerned about being late for a business meeting than seeing her only child off to the military.

"Hey, Jonas," Wade shouted. "Come over here and meet my mom."

As Jonas shoved the shitty memory to the background, he realized everyone in the room was staring at him. He grimaced. It was going to be a long day.

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"You look like you're having a root canal."

The warm, bedroom voice tore Jonas's attention away from the bottle cap he'd been mindlessly spinning on the picnic table. The first thing to catch his gaze was the hourglass figure encased in a black one-piece swimsuit. Damn, talk about built! Jonas let himself enjoy the slow route to the woman's perfect oval-shaped face. Long, wind-tossed, dark brown hair, ruby-red lips, and sexy brown eyes gave Jonas some seriously dirty thoughts.

"Things are definitely looking up." He dropped the cap and stood. "Jonas Phoenix, and you are?"

“Deanna—and I’m late.”

Jonas froze when he heard the name. “Deanna? As in, Wade’s little sister?”

“Not so little, but yeah. You’re the friend from the army, right?”

He’d heard about Deanna quite often. Wade had talked about his sister, who’d recently graduated from nursing school. The pride and love his friend felt for Deanna had come through loud and clear. Jonas had never once imagined Deanna looking anything like the hot, curvy woman in front of him now. “Uh, the army, yeah.”

She nodded and pushed a heavy section of hair behind her shoulder. “He’s talked about you.”

“All good stuff, I hope.”

She winked and Jonas wondered if maybe he was drooling. “Mostly good. He told us you’re a whiz on the computer. I confess, I expected you to look a bit more...geeky.”

“Let me guess, you figured I’d be wearing a tie, a pocket protector, and maybe a pair of thick glasses?”

She laughed and Jonas couldn’t help grinning. Christ, even her laughter went straight to his groin. “That’s pretty close, but you actually look more like the guy in that movie I saw recently.”

Jonas cocked his head to the side. “Is that good or bad?”

“Good. The actor played a sniper out for revenge on the gang who’d killed his wife.”

He stepped closer, his voice lowering to a more intimate level as he said, “You don’t look a thing like I imagined either, Deanna.”

She quirked a brow at him. “Oh?”

“Actually, you—” A hand slapped Jonas on the back, and he wanted to curse the interruption.

Just barely tamping down the urge to search out a more private spot to continue their conversation, Jonas turned to find Wade and his brother Dean. Jonas immediately put some space between himself and Deanna. Christ, had he really just been flirting with Wade’s baby sister? What the hell had he been thinking?

“Don’t you own a cover-up, Dee?” Dean asked, frowning down at his sister.

Deanna gave herself a onceover before looking back at Dean, color staining her cheeks. “Uh, yeah, but I didn’t really think I needed it.” Her gaze shot to his as she said, “It was nice meeting you, Jonas.”

“You too.” Jonas wanted to punch Dean for making Deanna feel so self-conscious in the swimsuit. Then again, Dean could say whatever the hell he wanted to the woman, considering they were related. You’re the outsider here, Jonas reminded himself.

Offering Deanna a smile, Jonas said, “Maybe we can finish our conversation later.”

She smiled, but it didn’t quite meet her eyes this time. “Yeah, maybe.”

Jonas didn’t take his gaze off Deanna as she walked across the deck. When she disappeared inside the house, Dean muttered, “She forgets sometimes.”

Curious, Jonas asked, “Forgets what?”

“That she’s not a little girl any longer.”

No, Deanna definitely wasn’t a little girl, Jonas thought, as her image popped back into his head. She was all woman, and he had the crazy urge to possess her.

“Cut her some slack, Dean,” Wade said. “You’re too protective of her.”

“And you aren’t?” Dean asked as he turned to face Wade.

Jonas stayed silent as he listened to the two brothers argue. He couldn’t believe Dean and Deanna were actually twins. While they did share many of the same features—same dark hair and eyes, even the same height—Dean had a big, muscular build. Deanna was all soft hills and valleys and sweet, feminine curves. And damn if he didn’t wish like hell she wasn’t his best friend’s little sister.

Sometimes life just sucked.

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Deanna watched Jonas from the safety of the kitchen window. “Holy smokes, he’s hot,” she mumbled to herself.

From his shaggy, dark hair right on down to his lean, powerful frame. Everything about him appealed to her. She’d never experienced such a strong reaction to a man. It frightened her a little. There was just something in the way he’d looked at her. As if he’d wanted to devour her. Inch by inch. And Deanna knew deep down that she would’ve let him.

Then her brothers had come along and ruined the moment. Score another one for the Harrison men. Geez, what else was new? And her twin was the worst. Dean seemed to have a sixth sense where she was concerned. A guy couldn’t look at her twice without Dean sticking his big, crooked nose into the mix. When would he realize she wasn’t a little kid any longer?

Deanna moved away from the window—away from the appealing sight of Jonas Phoenix—and went to the fridge. Grabbing a bottle of water, she glanced down at her swimsuit and cursed under her breath. She didn't see anything wrong with wearing a one-piece. It's not as if she were parading around in a bikini, for crying out loud. And it was a family picnic!

"Brothers are annoying," she muttered.

"You're glaring."

The deep baritone so close to her ear made Deanna jump. Her water bottle sloshed around, and a little of it spilled onto her mother's tile floor. "Dang it," she grumbled.

"It was my fault."

The sexy voice had her looking to her right. Jonas stood there, staring at her, his lips tilted sideways. "Oh, no," she rushed to say. "I get lost in thought sometimes, that's all." So lost in her own angry musings that she hadn't even heard the back door open and close.

He leaned around her and grabbed a couple of napkins sitting in a holder on the counter. Then he bent to clean up the mess. When he looked at her from his kneeling position, Deanna's heart beat faster. He licked his lips. Deanna froze in place as his gaze roamed over her body. "I see you didn't put on a cover-up," he stated in a low voice.

"N-no. My brother can stuff it."

His sinful smile turned her legs to rubber. "I'm glad. You shouldn't let him tell you what to do."

"It's okay. I'll get him back later. I'm thinking the water hose."

He stood and went to the trash to toss out the wet napkins. Deanna couldn't help but stare at his butt. It was a really great butt.

When he came back over to her, he said, "Well, I'm sorry I startled you." He paired the apology with a delicious grin.

As he shoved his big hands into the front pockets of his jeans, Deanna felt goose bumps popping up all over her skin. Oh, yes, definitely yummy.

"Like I said, it's not your fault," she replied, hoping to sound unaffected by the six-foot-plus hottie. "We'll blame Dean for this one."

"I thought I heard you curse." He frowned. "Is there something wrong?"

"Nothing a good beating can't fix," she grumbled, still perturbed at her siblings. "My twin can be annoying sometimes."

He chuckled as he pulled a set of keys out of his front pocket. “Remind me never to piss you off.”

Deanna pointed to them. “You’re leaving already?” Her stomach sank at the thought, and she didn’t understand why. She’d only just met the guy.

“Yeah. I need to be at the other end of town for a meeting.” He looked at his watch. “I’m already running behind, I’m afraid.”

She wondered if the meeting was with a woman but quickly banished the thought. It’s none of my concern. “Will I see you again?”

Jonas stepped forward and cupped her chin in his palm. The bold move surprised her into remaining still, curious what he’d do next. “I hope so, Deanna,” he murmured.

“I hope so too,” she answered, feeling a little overheated all of a sudden. Would he kiss her? She really wanted him to kiss her.

He rubbed his thumb over her bottom lip and groaned. “Meeting you has easily been the highlight of my summer,” he whispered. Then, as if for her ears alone, Jonas leaned close to her ear and added, “I have a feeling I’m not going to forget you anytime soon either.”

Before she could reply, Jonas dropped his hand and left the kitchen. Her heart thundered in her chest as she pondered his hushed words. Something about the way he’d spoken made Deanna feel rejected—even though she hadn’t actually done any asking. Not a pleasant thought.

Right about then, Dean came in the back door. “I thought you were going to put on a cover-up.”

Deanna cursed and went outside in search of the hose.

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