

"She's only getting the two," Forest muttered, digging through his suitcase for the pair of jeans he knew he'd packed in its voluminous interior. "Shit, I didn't even give birth to them and I feel every single damned stretchmark and worry line a mother's got. No more. We're not having any more."

"Babe, why not?" Connor called out from the depths of their ensuite bathroom. His deep voice was muffled, dampened by the heavy Irish rain hitting the slate roof and the cottage's thick plaster walls but not so much that Forest didn't hear the humour in his husband's voice. "What's one more?"

"What's one more? If it's tiny, then there's feeding. Around the clock feeding. Did you forget that?" Unable to find the jeans, he began to unpack the whole case onto the bed then realized halfway through his digging, the clothes in it were about two sizes larger than what he normally wore. "Fuck, these are Con's. Where the hell is my suitcase?"

A weathered three bedroom cottage perched on the sloping coast along Dunworley Bay in County Cork probably wasn't the first place most men thought of when they wanted to get away on their honeymoon but Forest hadn't married a typical man. Connor Morgan was as Irish as the wind sweeping up the cliffs outside, teasing out a keening moan from a nearby watch tower ruins' sentry stands cut through the crumbling stone. The island called to him, a birth place siren he felt pulling at him even as he built his life in a city halfway around the world from the wild, rolling hills he'd rambled through on long endless summer days.

Forest *felt* Connor's slight inhale of breath when he'd answered Ireland to his then-clandestine husband's query about where they should go after Brigid Morgan dragged them up the aisle to be married in front of God and all He created then caught the full force of Con's sweet, sexy smile before he gathered Forest up into a tight hug. No one in the family questioned them taking yet another honeymoon once Con had a long period of free time and most of them had gone out of their way to smooth over any bumps in their planned getaway. Relatives were called to be gently warned off dropping by the isolated cottage for a visit and a distant aunt promised to stock up the place for a two week stay before they got there, including making sure there was enough firewood to hold back the chilly Irish wintery wind when it came up off the sea.

The cottage was owned by someone in the Morgan clan but Forest had long lost track of the connections from one to another. For all he knew, it was a Finnegan who was hosting them but he'd learned from the moment Connor Morgan brought him home to meet the family for the first time, both sides were as intertwined and as tight as any bond could be, woven together by Donal and Brigid's fierce love and devotion to their brood.

They'd left SFO on Christmas Day, worn out from a morning spent opening presents and gulping down mouthfuls of food put in front of them then fell asleep on the flight over, only to be woken up by a gentle-voiced flight attendant warning them they'd be landing shortly. Stumbling out of the terminal, Forest blindly followed Connor as he maneuvered easily through the rental car stand then piled everything into a Rover barely big enough to hold Con's shoulders. A few grey, rainy hours later, Con pulled up in front of the desolate cottage and announced they were home.

A blast of warm air greeted them when Connor opened the front door after a brisk five minute search among the flower pots for the key and while Forest was imminently grateful for the heat, he'd been left speechless by the sweet scent of pine coming from the freshly cut and lavishly decorated tree someone in the family set up for them in a corner of the sea-facing living room and the logs set in the fireplace, waiting to be lit by the men who'd come to Ireland to celebrate their marriage.

"Your suitcase is over here," Con said, padding out of the bathroom wearing nothing but a pair of loose cotton pants so worn thin every line of muscle was visible the fabric and Forest instantly spot his husband wore nothing beneath them. "And what's a few feedings? It wasn't so bad. We'll just have to plan it for a time when you're not on tour and I can work it to not work night ops for a while. Do you blame Mum? She loves the wee things."

"Then she can have more of her own," Forest grumbled back. His mind was a bit upside down, torn from its moorings from jet lag and while his lust was more than willing to tackle Connor down on the huge feather bed set against the bedroom's long wall, his body didn't think he'd have the energy to do more than just curl up against Con's warm length and fall asleep. Sighing in relief when Connor swung his bag up from the ground and onto the

bed, Forest muttered in what he hoped was a conciliatory tone, "I just think we're good with the two we've got. I mean, one for you and one for me. At least at a time. If there's three, then someone's left out a bit, right?"

"You're talking to someone who grew up in a house where there was always a set of free hands," Connor admitted sheepishly. "How about if we talk about this after you get a shower and I'll put some tea on? Auntie Doreen said she'd left us a lot of food and if I know her, there's pots of cooked food in the fridge we can just heat up. Probably a good stew thick enough to stick to our ribs if you want it."

"I'll take anything I don't have to chew that hard on," Forest admitted with a sigh. "I don't know if I have the energy to do more than gum at a spoonful of mashed potatoes."

"I could chew it for you first. Like a wee bird."

"And spit it into my mouth?" He made a disgusted face, scraping his tongue across his teeth at Con. "I love you but God fucking no."

The shower felt good. Too damned good. Hot water on his aching body was a mistake. The ease of tightness in Forest's muscles slipped him too close to the edge of sleepy and after a few minutes of standing beneath the steaming shower head to rinse off, he reluctantly shut off the hot water and braced himself for the cold.

"Fuck!" The icy bite stung and Forest stood there for as long as he could take it... or at least until the shower door was jerked open and his husband grabbed him by the arms to pull him out.

"You daft idiot," Con scolded, holding a wet shivering Forest against him. "The water's well fed—"

"Really? Because it seems fucking hungry as shit to me right now. It ate my skin off," Forest chattered while Connor wrapped an enormous towel around him. "Can you check the shower? Pretty sure I just froze my dick off. It's probably on the floor. Maybe they can stitch it back on."

"God I love you." Chuckling, Con began to rub the feeling back into Forest's skin and the tingling sensation quickly turned to a prickly heat. "It's winter. The water comes from a well. Underground. Don't run it without some hot water if you're going to shower, okay? Go get some clothes and come out for some tea."

The living room was still toasty when he finally emerged, swathed in one of Con's old SFPD sweatshirts and a pair of joggers. Thick wool socks covered his feet but Forest still wasn't sure he could feel his toes. Shuffling over to the couch, he flopped down next to Connor and sighed when his husband handed him a steaming mug of what smelled like a bracing black tea with lots of sugar.

The first sip was as heavenly as the beginning of his shower and the kiss he got immediately after sealed the whole Pearly Gates and angelic choir singing deal for him. Pulling his legs up, he ducked his head when Connor swung his arm over then snugged up against Con's side. Another sip of tea and the world slowly steadied, leaving him content.

A bit of cold rolled off the long glass pane overlooking the churning seas beyond and what little light they had remaining of the day was fleeing quickly, swallowed up by the storm and the creeping dusk. The thick draperies on either side of the window probably would take care of the slight chill but Forest didn't mind the slight nip occasionally reaching him. The storm was too gorgeous to shut away and Connor loved to watch the rain.

Also, closing the curtains would mean he'd have to get back up and shifting away from his husband's heat was the last thing Forest wanted.

It was bad enough he was going to have to lean forward to pick at the salumi, breads and cheeses Connor brought out from the kitchen for them to snack on. And while his stomach was grumbling a bit, he told it to wait. He'd been hungry before, to the point of pain and desperation, it could wait a little while longer while he fed his soul.

The lightning crackled across the sky for a few minutes then Connor cleared his throat, heralding the beginning of a cajoling. There were always signs when the brawny Irishman wanted something, mostly from the expressions on his face as he worked through what he was going to say. If Con's SWAT team could see him mentally doing gymnastics before finding out a good way to get his point across, they'd have laughed, not recognizing the hardcore, gruff cop who led them through the doors of Hell every day.

But Forest intimately knew that man, the tenderness hidden beneath the steel and badge. Taking pity on his husband, he finally said, "Spit it out, Con. Just like ripping off a band-aid."

Connor frowned, clearly still uncomfortable with what he'd come up with but caught between a rock and a hard place. Clearing his throat again, he mumbled, "I think we should consider what Mum said. What's another one when there are so many out there who are in need?"

"Because our lives have gotten a hell of a lot more complicated now that Brigid's working at that shelter," Forest pointed out. "We can't take in every one who catches her heart, Con. We're the only ones she does this to—"

"Love, can you see Miki and Kane with a little one?" Con interjected. "They can barely keep the dog alive."

"I think you've got it backwards. Dude kept Miki alive," he teased. "Pretty sure he'd forget to eat if he didn't have to feed the dog every day. Kane's just as bad."

"It's just one more. It's not like we don't have the whole family to lean on when things get too much. Even Mick came by to help with the feedings and that's not a day I thought I'd ever see come up over the horizon," Connor argued gently. "It's just one more and then, after this, we're done."

Forest could feel himself cave in, the cracks forming in the hard wall he'd laid out. Sighing, he swore using a bit of the Cantonese profanities Miki taught him while they'd been on tour then shook his head, surrendering. "Fine. Fuck it. What's one more? But this is it. Just one. She's shit out of luck with us after this. She's got eight kids. It's about time the other seven adult up and do this."

"Ah, I knew you'd say yes." Connor's smile was as blinding as the lightning spearing the sky. "Told Mum you would. She bet me you'd make me wait until we got home before agreeing."

"Yeah, she doesn't know the power of a cup of tea. But I'm serious, this is the last kitten." Forest leaned his head back when Connor leaned over, his mouth warmed further by Con's hot kiss. Tempted to put the cup down, Forest knew he'd have to get some food into his belly before he dragged his husband's clothes off and made love to him while the Irish storm raged outside. Reluctantly letting the kiss fade, he took another sip of the cooling brew and sighed, "And remember, we're probably going to have a kid coming along the way in a bit. Last thing I want to do is raise more kittens while we're trying to figure out what end of the kid the diaper goes on."