

EXCERPT

Lindsey gave me the silent treatment on the way over to Ralston's office. "How did you know where I was? I asked.

"Slate."

"Hey, I said I was sorry. We're not all *that* late," I pointed out to her.

"It's rude to keep Dr. Ralston waiting, Trace. I don't do rude. I thought this counseling was important to you, apparently I was *wrong*."

I stopped instantly and grabbed her by the arm, pulling her around to face me. "What the fuck, Lindsey? What's up *your* ass at the moment?"

She gave me a glare. "It just seems to me that you might find more productive ways to spend your time when you're here other than flirting your ass off with the resident skank," she snapped, jerking her arm free and turning her back on me.

Fuck to the no!

"Wait one damn minute," I growled, spinning her back around to face me. "It just so happens I went to the shooting range because I've been trying to qualify to the new standards. It's a requirement for all agents to recertify. Diana's job is to ensure that they do."

"Hmmpf," she snorted derisively, "It looked pretty cozy to me, but that's neither here nor there because it sounds to me as if you plan on continuing your career with the Bureau once you're cleared."

"And why shouldn't I? It's the career I've had for years, what do you expect?" I was getting angrier by the second, and her eyes were flashing pure pissed green at the moment.

Time for a showdown.

"I don't know why I would expect any less," she snapped, "It's always been about the FBI, right? It's never been about me and the kids, has it?"

That did it.

I totally lost it when she flung those words at me. No matter how much I still didn't remember, one thing that I knew, with every fiber of my being, was that what she'd just said had no truth to it. And what really burned my ass was that she knew it too!

I grabbed her shoulders and pulled her up against me. My eyes bored into hers and without thinking, I lowered my mouth to hers and kissed her with a vengeance. It was the first time my lips had touched hers since I'd been back. There was no tenderness; it was my way of claiming her and taking possession of what was mine. She would not deny me this.

Her fists pushed against my chest, and then she attempted to pull away, but her efforts were no match for my strength and determination. My lips worked hers, and my tongue invaded her mouth and possessed it. "Stop," I growled pulling back briefly to look down at her, "Don't resist me."

It was something I might've said to a perp that was resisting arrest, but at this moment, I was saying it to my wife.

My mate.

The woman that I loved more than life itself.

And suddenly the realization that this *was* the truth overwhelmed me. My tempo slowed, morphing from anger to affection; and from frustration to need.

Lindsey felt the change and stopped struggling against me. Her arms looped around my neck, and her lips started responding to mine. It was familiar, and as my tongue once again found hers, we struck a rhythm that was ours. I could feel her anger and bitterness dissipate. It was replaced with a soft sweetness that I remembered, and that I could totally bury myself into if only she would let me.

"Taz," she moaned softly, finally pulling back a bit.

"Lindsey," I breathed against her soft lips, my heart pounding in my chest.

"Come on, we've got to make our appointment," she said softly.

And we did.

It was the first joint session that we'd had where Lindsey took her place next to me on the leather sofa, instead of her usual chair in the corner. Ralston didn't miss it either, quirking an eyebrow as his eyes met mine with just a hint of amusement.

It was a fucking start.