

## Bonus Scene

*Ten years later...*

“Brace, turn that game off and pick up your mess.” My husband shouts with his super serious sheriff voice from the other room. “And get dressed.”

Jeez. His tone even scares *me* and I’m not the one he’s addressing. But our son really has left an unholy mess on the floor around his gaming chair and I’m happy Bowen is addressing it now, so I don’t have to later.

Brace calmly turns off his video game and starts cleaning. “Okay, dad.”

Jasen and Rogen, our two younger sons, stare at me with wide eyes because they’re both super sensitive to Bowen’s orders. Like a little tribe of orcs that follow their leader.

I kiss and tickle them both and they giggle and run away.

All five of us are home together and it’s been a wild morning. The cat is sick, the TV is blaring, the dog is barking, and two small orc boys are running around in their underwear, fresh out of the bathtub.

Typical Saturday morning. Well, except for the cat. My baby kitty isn’t usually sick and I was truly worried for her.

And the problem is that amid this chaos, our large extended family will be here soon for a summer barbeque.

Sheriff Underwood is on vacation and our three sons are on summer break. And I’ve taken this week off work too. We decided to remain at home for a staycation and invite Bowen’s parents to come and live in our guest house for the next few weeks. They are set to arrive today too.

This time last year we got the crazy idea to fly across the country to take our boys to Disneyland in California. That was nuts. Wonderful, with many good memories, but so very exhausting. This year we're staying put with no planes, trains or automobiles to contend with, just time spent resting and gaining additional valuable moments with those we love.

But I feel unprepared for today's socializing because the cat barfed three times this morning. She was listless and I ended up taking her to the emergency vet. Luckily, I'm still a morning person and was up early anyway. She's on new meds and fine now, but there went all my free time this morning to get baking ready for the arrival of guests.

And my husband decided to kick off his vacation with an epic reorganization of the garage and storage shed, which took up the last three days of our spare time. So between the two of us we didn't get much accomplished ahead of time for this get-together.

Bowen stomps past with the sick cat in his arms, taking her to a quiet spot to ride out the influx of company.

Poor baby.

I messaged my family and warned them Bowen and I are unprepared. They said not to worry and they'd bring food. But I still worry. I had grand plans to announce that I'm pregnant again with a special cake reveal. I haven't told anyone yet, not even Bowen, so I'm a little disappointed that the cake never got made.

At least the house is reasonably clean.

Soon after I gave birth to our first son, Bowen suggested we hire a cleaning service. I instantly agreed and to this day I think it's money well spent. Each Christmas, I give those ladies a nice bonus because I'm grateful that, considering the fact that the both of us work full time,

neither Bowen or I have to kill ourselves also cleaning this large two-story house. And it forces us to always tidy up for their weekly arrival.

I pull Jasen, our youngest, into the room he shares with our middle son, Rogen and start getting him dressed. “Rogen,” I shout, “get in here and get dressed too.” Soon I’ve got two giggling boys, both dressed.

All three of my boys are adorable. These two still are on the pudgy side, but Brace is nine years old now and he’s starting to change into more muscle than fat. I’m curious to see how he’ll look as a teenager. But at least I’ve got a few more years of him still wanting to sit next to me and snuggle on the couch as we watch movies.

I step out of their bedroom and bump into Bowen in the hallway.

We exchange a heated glance, the both of us remembering how we found the time this morning, before getting out of bed, for a quickie.

He grins, with a flash of white tusk. My orc husband is barefoot and dressed in a pair of jean shorts with an unbuttoned short sleeved shirt, his typical summer attire around the house. “Sadie.” A growl rumbles in his chest and he captures me in his massive green arms.

Bowen gives me a thorough kiss and I sigh with delight because this never gets old.

He smells terrific and now that he’s ten years older he looks distinguished with some crinkles around his eyes and a hint of grey hair at his temples. And he thinks I’m as sexy as ever too, even though after giving birth to three orc sons I’ve permanently added twenty pounds to my midsection and acquired a variety of stretch marks. He says he loves my new curves though and believes I was literally “too thin” before.

I wrap my arms around him and kiss him back, thinking of the baby I'm carrying and the pregnancy reveal I'll surprise him with later. He's going to be thrilled to have another on the way. We'd always hoped to have a large family.

The boys snicker from behind us because they love it when we show affection for each other.

Bowen breaks off our kiss and reaches out to pick up two-year-old Jasen and blow air on his stomach.

There is much laughter from all the boys.

I adore this man. He loves me and his sons so much and I'm grateful to have found him.

I step back and examine my personal orc crew—Brace, Jasen, Rogen and Bowen. All of my guys are washed and dressed with clean clothes and even their tusks and teeth are brushed and shiny. But my own hair is still in a messy ponytail and I'm wearing rumpled clothes that are one step above pjs, left over from my frantic rush to the vet. “Okay, all of you are ready, so now it's my turn to get ready for reals.”

And then the doorbell rings.

We all freeze and share glances.

I let out a sigh of disappointment because they're early. My mom is always an hour early. You'd think I'd get used to it and plan ahead, but I never seem to learn.

“I'll get the door,” my husband announces.

“Thank you.”

My guys all rush downstairs to greet our guests. And I get in the shower. I try to get ready faster than ever before because my mother can't be trusted alone in my kitchen. She has a habit of rearranging things and later I can't find anything.

I get out, dry off and comb curl cream into my long, blond hair and use a diffuser to get it dry with nice waves. Then I apply a light amount of make-up and put on a cute sun dress and sandals. I twist and turn in front of a full-length mirror, assuring myself that my stomach isn't showing yet. I'm only two and half months along but I can feel my stomach getting rounded and firm. All these boys were born at around nine and ten pounds each and I know this son won't be any different.

I'm ready to go.

I arrive downstairs and find family already gathered in my house, both young and old, along with laughter and loud conversations. My in-laws have arrived, along with my parents, and both of my siblings and their families. A smile widens across my face. It's lovely. This is the life I always wanted for myself and I have it.

Bowen meets my gaze from the base of the stairs. He watches as I walk down the last few steps. He eyes me from head to toe with a look of pure admiration. I love the sexy smirk on his harsh face because I'm sure he's secretly wishing he could strip me bare and fuck me on the stairs.

I want it too.

He turns to respond to a question and I covertly grab my husband's fine ass, then get on my tip toes to give him a quick kiss on the cheek.

"Sadie," my mom shouts as I enter the kitchen. "Where is the milk?"

"I'm all out of milk."

"Dammit," she mutters.

"Oh Sadie, it's nice to see you." Rebecca, my mother-in-law gushes as she gives me a big hug. I adore Bowen's mother; we've basically become best friends. My mom likes her too and

they've also become close friends. It's a win-win situation. "I love that dress and your hair looks lovely like that. I heard all about Abby, your poor cat. I hope she feels better soon. Also, this is a lot of people descending on you at once. I'll take shopping orders and run over to the store for anything anyone needs."

"Milk. We need milk," my mother interjects.

The two women put their heads together, make a list and go out to get the odds and ends still needed. An hour later I'm in our kitchen, with all the ingredients I need, baking the cake I'd wanted to make. Meat is being barbequed, music is playing, side dishes are being made and kids are playing outside.

My boys wander in and beg to help while I bake, so I include them in the process. I like teaching them all the tricks. Brace loves to bake, and I have a feeling he's going to end up working in our bakery one day, or even charting his own path in some sort of culinary field. The other two, I don't know yet because they're so little, but they do already seem like they might be interested.

I hide the secret, special decoration for the last minute.

"Do you still show up at the bakery at dawn?" My sister-in-law, Sarah, questions. The side dishes are done and everyone else is now outside on the deck or playing ball, but Sarah remains at my side as I wait for the cake to cool. "I thought you'd stopped that long ago, but Sheri said you come in early sometimes?"

I look around, making sure Bowen isn't nearby, then lean in and whisper. "I still prefer starting the day in the bakery at the crack of dawn when I can, but Bowen put his foot down after I had the first baby. Ever since I had my kids, I can't get in there like that. But Bowen was on vacation this last week so..."

“You snuck in?”

“Yes,” I laugh. “Yesterday I was able to get in there on my own with no one the wiser. Bowen thought I was helping mom, but I was at the bakery. It was wonderful. I even turned on my old Taylor Swift playlist. I miss those old times, singing along to my favorite songs and baking alone in the commercial kitchen. Simpler times, back when all there was to think of was the next cupcake I’d invent.”

“I understand.”

And I know she does. She’s got three kids of her own to juggle, all of whom are now teenagers who rarely speak to adults and mainly tap on their phones. My sister-in-law is one of my best friends and even though my brother is an annoying jerk, the fact that Sarah loves him so much makes me realize he must not be all bad.

Sarah has become our official day care provider. She was a stay-at-home mom for her three kids when they were little, home schooling them until they got older and now they all go to the local middle school and high school. Lila paid Sarah to watch her kids too, before and after school and during the summers. And now I also pay her to watch my boys the same way when Bowen and I are at work.

And she’ll be watching Lila’s baby when she’s ready to return to work.

Sarah doesn’t know it yet, but she’ll also will be caring for my new baby too.

Basically, what would we do without Sarah in our lives as back up?

I grin. “But I do love my life now. I’m the only girl in the house, even our pets happen to be male, and it’s cute. Because of you, I still get to work, just not the long hours I used to put in that probably were a bit extreme.”

And right then the sliding glass door opens and my sister, Lila, enters, huffing loudly, with her hand on her large belly. My sis got remarried this last year and I really like her new orc husband, Urdan Overly. He's from the same commune in Maine where Bowen's orc family resides and is a distant cousin. Bowen was told to hire one more orc so he recruited Urdan, who he thought would be perfect for the position. Urdan is older than my sister, a male who apparently had given up on the idea of ever meeting his mate or having offspring, until he met my sister. Their original coming together was fraught with drama, but in the end they were able to remain together. He knocked up Lila right away and now they have a son who is set to arrive any time now.

"Too bad Urdan can't be with us today," Sarah comments. "We all miss him."

Lila rolls her eyes and points at me. "It's all her husband's fault. Bowen is on vacation, so Urdan has to work extra to cover for him."

"But don't forget," I remind her, "Bowen will be on extra duty the entire time Urdan is on paternity leave. So it all evens out in the end."

Lila nods and sighs, then waddles over to sit heavily on the couch. "Sorry, I'm only a few days from my due date and probably grouchy. I swear this baby needs to show up soon."

I still haven't told Lila yet about my own pregnancy, but I think it's darling that we're both carrying an orc baby at the same time. I would never have seen that coming that she and I would both end up with orc husbands and being pregnant at the same time. She'll enjoy us both having babies at the same time, so we can commiserate, and her son will have a cousin his same age. It will be nice.



The sliding glass door bangs opens and closes again. “Mom, there you are. Are you okay?” Both my teenage niece and nephew walk over and sit on either side of Lila, checking in on her.

I can’t handle how cute they all are together. “Just a sec, don’t move,” I say and take a few quick pictures with my cell phone and then send copies to all of them, including Urdan.

“Derek is disappointed that Urdan isn’t here,” Sarah comments.

I nod because it’s true. My brother has become good friends with Urdan, and also with my husband. The three of them often go out together. Derek, who manages a local brewery, is now hooked on the orc ale they introduced to him.

The sliding door bangs opens yet again. “The meat is ready,” my dad yells.

There’s a flurry of activity and soon everyone is served food and drink, situated in chairs, eating on a very long, extended table on the large back patio. The weather is sunny and gorgeous with a few puffy clouds, the trees sway in the light breeze and the lake sparkles in the distance. It’s wonderful, having everyone together. On one side of me sits Bowen, and on the other side is his intimidating father, Palin.

After much talking and eating, I assess that everyone might be ready for a bit of dessert. I look for a break in the conversation, then I stand up and announce, “I have a special cake to show everyone.”

“Oooh.” There’s lots of clapping and exclamations of happiness.

Sarah comes inside with me into the kitchen to help bring it out. She gazes in wonder at the secret decorations I added earlier, when she wasn’t around. “Are you...?” she gasps.

“Yep, but don’t say anything yet.”

She nods.

We bring out the tall, decadent chocolate cake with green icing and a pattern of white tusks, with a picture of a baby orc on top and the golden words “I’m pregnant” scrolled on the bottom. I boldly place it directly in front of Bowen, waiting for his reaction.

He looks up at me, crosses his arms and smirks. “You’re finally telling me?”

I gasp and stamp my foot. “You already know?”

“Sadie, I always know first. I can scent the new pheromone trail. I was wondering why you were keeping it to yourself for so long.”

“I didn’t know at first and then when I did, I wanted to surprise you with the good news.”

He smiles. “It *is* good news.”

“Well, I didn’t know you were pregnant,” my mother sniffs, “and I’m thrilled. Thank you for letting us all know with that yummy cake message.”

There’s a murmur of agreement from around the table.

Rebecca turns and hugs my mom and they both dissolve into tears.

“Wait. Wait. Are you pregnant?” Lila cries out, finally making the connection. “And we’re both going to be raising orc babies at the same time?”

“Yes. Can you believe it?”

In moments my sister lurches out of her chair and the two of us are hugging and crying tears of joy. Sarah joins in on the group hug.

Bowen is offered congratulatory pats on the shoulder and handshakes from all the men present. The kids, even the teenagers, are happy and chatting with excitement as well for yet another addition to the family.

I start cutting the cake and passing slices around.

It’s a joyous day.

Hours later the sun sets and finally they've all left for their own "domiciles" as Bowen says. And now the house is quiet. I love them all, but sometimes a girl needs her space.

For some reason, everyone thinks our house is the most comfortable and they always want to stay extremely late. We sometimes meet at Lila's house for functions because she's got a fabulous swimming pool. And often we're at my brother's house because he's on the lake with a boat. My parents have downsized and bought a small cottage next door to my brother and his wife. But despite all these other fabulous locations, they seem to congregate most often at my house because they say I've got the most room, and the best views.

Bowen's parents said goodnight earlier and are now ensconced in the separate guest suite we had built on our property. Bowen already checked on Abby and gave her more medicine. The boys are in their rooms, lights out.

"Everyone's asleep," I exclaim. "We're finally alone."

Bowen grins and pulls me into our bedroom, firmly shutting the door behind us and locking it for good measure.

I place both of my palms on his bare chest. "I really have everything I wanted."

He places his large hands on my slightly swollen stomach. "And so do I, a healthy family and another son."

"Before you and I got together during the spring charity run for the food bank, I'd wished that I had a large family of my own. And now that I have that, I wonder sometimes, how did I get so lucky?"

He pulls on the hem of my loose sundress, lifting it up and over my head, tossing it to the ground. I'm left standing in bra and panties.

“You didn’t get lucky, you picked the right male.”

I chuckle because my husband is becoming a tiny bit arrogant. I assume it’s because he’s become more self-aware of the fact that he’s pretty darn amazing. All those medals he’s been awarded helped too.

He pulls down my underwear and works on undoing my bra. “And it helps that I picked the correct female. Not all orcs scent a female that truly wants to be their mate. Many females are hit by a mating frenzy but not love and they don’t want to remain in a relationship once they discover they are pregnant. But not you.”

“Not me, I’m in it for the long haul.”

He rubs his erection against my stomach which causes heat to bloom between my thighs. Then he gently lifts me up and places me on the bed. I open my legs for him and he lays above me, bracing himself with strong arms so he doesn’t fall onto me. He kisses me gently and says his favorite line, “and I’m with you until days turn into time.”

And then we make love then fall asleep in each other’s arms.