

TEN

As Erik worked on her computer, she noticed him favoring his right arm and rubbing his right shoulder while rotating it.

“What did you do to your shoulder?”

He looked up, almost startled she was there. Had he forgotten where he was? “A few weeks ago, I didn’t warm up before karate class. I threw a punch at my sparing partner and got this shooting pain in my shoulder. It’s never been the same since.”

“The physical therapy exercises didn’t help?”

“The what?”

“You didn’t go to physical therapy?”

He stared at her a moment. “Was I supposed to?”

“It would have helped. If you don’t take care of it now, you could have problems with it for the rest of your life.” She prodded his shoulder.

He sucked in a quick breath.

“Is that where it hurts?”

He nodded. “How did you know?”

“It’s a common injury.”

She stood behind him and ran her thumbs down his shoulder blades. “Your right shoulder blade is slightly protruding.” She rubbed his shoulder until the muscles loosened up. His eyes were closed as she worked the stiffness out. She had him do a few simple exercises to strengthen his upper back and improve his posture. “A lot of things we do during the day are bad for our posture: slouching, hunching over a computer for long hours, and driving, among others.” She glanced at the computer parts strewn across her desk and floor. “When my computer is healed, I can print you off these exercises so you can do them at home and strengthen that shoulder and your back.”

“If those are the only ones, I can remember them.”

“Is that your way of telling me my computer is a lost cause?”

He smiled. “I can put it back together. Better than new. Don’t you trust me?”

“I ascribe to the philosophy that if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it. And my computer was working just fine.”

“A squeaky door might work just fine, but that doesn’t mean you don’t oil it so it will work better.”

He had a point. Just because something worked didn’t mean it couldn’t work better. “My computer didn’t squeak.”

“Oh, but it did.” His smile stretched higher.

She put her hand on her hips. “And I suppose only you can hear it?”

“It’s out of most people’s range.”

“Special gift, huh?”

He nodded, pinning her with his warm gray gaze. “I have many special gifts.”

What exactly did he mean by that? “Well, don’t let me keep you and your special gift from performing a miracle on my computer.”

He chuckled and went back to work.

It seemed like hours later when Erik turned in the chair. “All done. Your computer runs better, smarter, faster.”

It was late. She opened the front door for him. “Thank you for everything.”

“Everything?”

It was a bit nebulous, but she didn't want to list all his positive attributes that had nothing to do with computers and embarrass them both. "Yeah, everything."

He stepped outside and turned. "Angie and Brent invited us over next week. Tuesday."

"My sister called you to invite us over?"

"I was talking to Brent about his computer. We decided Tuesday would work for all of us. Is it good for you?"

Brent's computer? A small measure of disappointment crept in and curled around her heart. It wasn't a real date, just visiting her family. He was going to work on a computer while the two of them pretended to be dating. "Tuesday's fine."