



# STUFF MY STOCKING

M/M Romance Stories that are Nice and... *Naughty*



# ***Stuff My Stocking: M/M Romance Stories that are Nice and... Naughty***

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## What you've gotten yourself into...

The stories you are about to read are the product of a very special project sponsored by the Goodreads M/M Romance group—the online community for readers who love to read about men in love (Male/Male).

The group moderators issued an invitation for members to choose a photo and pen a *Letter to Santa* asking for a short M/M romance story inspired by the image; authors from the group were encouraged to select a letter and write an original tale.

The result was an outpouring of creativity that shined a spotlight on the special bond between M/M romance writers and the people who love what they do. This book is an anthology of those letters and stories.

Whether you are an avid M/M romance reader or new to the genre, you are in for a delicious treat. So sit back, relax and enjoy *Stuff My Stocking: M/M Romance Stories that are Nice and... Naughty*.

## Words of credit and caution...

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The cover photo has been licensed for this ebook, but the original photos that inspired the stories are not. Therefore, a written description of each image is provided. If you'd like to see the real deal, please feel free to join the **Goodreads M/M Romance group ([www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com))** and visit the discussion section: ❀\*HOLIDAY STORIES\*❀ NSFW.

This ebook is published by the M/M Romance Group and is not directly endorsed by or affiliated with Goodreads Inc.

**The stories in this collection are sexually explicit and intended for adult readers;** so consider yourself warned... and lucky.

## Who's to blame...

First and foremost, this anthology is dedicated to Lori B., better known as *Moderatrix Lori*, the devoted leader of the Goodreads M/M Romance group. In 2009, Lori stumbled upon a niche genre reading group with less than a dozen participants and turned it into the epicenter for M/M Romance readers with nearly 2,000 members. Her vision transformed a simple book club into a thriving online community, where people from all walks of life and all over the world, can come together to exchange ideas, make friends and indulge in their love of books. This book is dedicated to Lori because she is dedicated to us.

Of course Lori would have had a nervous breakdown long ago if it wasn't for her equally devoted co-moderators Jen McJ and Jason B. Each and every day they selflessly volunteer their time, talent, patience and wit to make the Goodreads M/M Romance group hum. This book is dedicated to Jen and Jason just because they rock.

Finally, this book is dedicated to all the authors who put pen to paper (or more accurately fingers to keys) and created the wonderful original stories you are about to read. Thank you.

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## A SHINY NEW TOY by M.J. O'Shea

*Dear Santa,*

*I have been trying to get my best friend to notice me as more for months. I want to stuff his stocking with all sorts of naughty toys to help him realize how perfect we would be together. Perhaps a cock ring and/or anal beads. Please help me to figure out just what buttons to press to get him to take that step forward. Thanks!*

*Merry Christmas*

\*\*\*\*\*

"Ouch! Shit!"

James started hopping up and down on the sand, one foot in his hand. A piece of glass was lodged right in his arch. He'd slammed down on it pretty hard, running to get the volleyball that Quinn had launched over the net at warp speed. James lost his balance and fell in the sand, injured foot high in the air.

"What's the matter, dude?"

James' best and oldest friend came jogging towards him, folding gracefully under the volleyball net and sinking to his knees. Even through his pain, James' breath caught in his throat when Quinn leaned closer. He was hot from their game and the unseasonable warmth. He smelled like sun and sweat and like Quinn. Sexy and familiar.

Jesus. Knock it off. James squeezed his eyes shut for a second; partially because his foot really did fucking hurt, and well, because if he didn't then Quinn might see something in his eyes that shouldn't have been there. It never used to be.

James didn't know quite when it happened.

It seemed like one day he was sitting on his floor playing Star Wars with Quinn, making 'Pow! Pow!' noises with little plastic toys and laughing like a hyena at Quinn's Jar Jar Binks impersonations, and the next—well let's just say that somewhere between Jar Jar Binks and English 201 at the local college, Quinn stopped being just Quinn and became something completely...more.

"Man, that must hurt like a bitch. The glass is stuck up there really far." Quinn's face was screwed up with concern.

James groaned. "Thanks for pointing that out. I'm going to try to pull it—"

"No, wait. Let's do it back at the apartment where there's soap and that antibacterial stuff. That could get seriously infected if something gets in it."



James rolled his eyes. "Okay mister Physical Therapy degree. How am I going to get to the car?" The path from the beach to the parking lot was at least a few hundred feet.

"I've got you. Here," Quinn leaned over. "Get on my back."

"Are you serious?"

"Yeah, of course. Just consider it long overdue restitution for when you hauled me and my bike home after that ice cream truck accident."

James snickered at the memory, able to laugh because Quinn hadn't gotten hurt very badly and it happened nearly ten years before.

"All right. Here," James struggled up to his knee, planting the uninjured foot in the sand. "Scoot over a little." Then he wound his arms around Quinn's neck and was surprised by the strength used to hoist him up.

James felt awkward riding Quinn's back down the beach towards the car path. He had to hitch his legs up a few times on slim hips, but Quinn's warm skin beneath his arms, and the subtle shift of those strong abdominal muscles between his thighs made the awkwardness worth it. Oh God.

"You doing all right back there, bro?" Bro. Keep that word in mind.

"Yeah. I'm not bleeding on your leg or anything, am I?" That's right. Focus on the foot and not the fact that you can feel his ass bumping up and down underneath your crotch.

"No worries. Hey, can you hold my camera? The strap keeps digging into my finger."

James reached down and worked the camera strap free from where it was trapped by his thigh. He wanted to squeeze Quinn's fingers, lean forward and nip the back of his neck run his tongue down that muscular spine...

"You guys are adorable, do you want us to take a picture of you?" James snapped his head up. Two girls, probably in high school, and both in bathing suits and designer track bottoms were grinning at him and Quinn.

When did they get there?

"Oh we're not—"

"Sure," Quinn interrupted him. "Jamie, give her my camera."

He stretched out the arm that was holding the camera silently, not sure what to say.

"Smile!" The girl chirped brightly when she had the shot all lined up.

James hugged his arms around Quinn's shoulders, using the excuse to feel all of that sexy skin up against his chest. He smiled, although between the pain in his foot and the fact that he could barely breathe, it was a little hard to pull it off.

“Perfect,” She told them, after she checked the shot and handed the camera back. “You two have a great day.” The girl gave her friend a grin that could easily be considered naughty.

Quinn chuckled as soon as the two girls had walked out of sight. “Hey Jamie, what do you think she was picturing?” He chuckled sarcastically and squeezed James’ thigh.

James groaned. The same thing I was. “I swear girls are the biggest pervs.”

“Please, they’re never gonna steal that award from us.”

When they got to the car, Quinn laid James across the backseat before he hopped in and started the engine, ready to drive back to their apartment. James looked down at his foot and immediately his stomach went queasy. The glass was still in deep, and his foot was dripping all over the place, the bleeding showing no signs of slowing down.

“Uh, Quinn?”

“Yeah?”

“I think I’m gonna pass out.”

\* \* \* \*

It was officially the first night of Winter Break. James was lying, wrapped foot propped on the couch. It had been a pain in the ass, well foot actually, taking his last few finals with every single heartbeat throbbing in his arch. Quinn had been really helpful. Not only had he driven his unconscious friend to the ER that day and sat with him for hours until his foot was clear of glass, stitched up, and wrapped in gauze, but he’d been even nicer since. He’d done everything from carrying James’ books so he could hobble with the crutch he’d gotten at the hospital to bringing him dinner on the couch. The other guys who played water polo with them had been giving Quinn constant shit about being James’ little girlfriend, but he just laughed it off and told them they better hope they never got hurt. James had spent a lot of time reminding himself that Quinn was just begin a good friend. It didn’t feel like that.

There was a storm raging outside, wind and rain battering the coastline and making everything soggy and dark. James kind of liked the rain. He’d never quite gotten used to Florida winters after spending his first eight years in New Hampshire. It always felt like they were a little cheated—at least when the Santa stuff started showing up. It was hard to get all excited about a snow globe if it was still shorts weather.

He heard keys jingling in the front door. Quinn. James’ heart did a big kerchunk in his chest before it took off racing. He told himself to calm down for probably the millionth time. It was just Quinn...It was just—shit, no use for it. There was no such thing as ‘just Quinn’ anymore. James kept



trying to slow his pulse as Quinn came in and flopped down on the couch, careful to avoid James' wrapped foot.

"God, my bio final was brutal."

"Poly-Sci wasn't much fun either. I think I passed though."

Quinn sat there for a minute or two, looking exhausted. Then he pulled James' injured foot into his lap and started rubbing it with gentle well-trained hands. "How's this doing today?"

James didn't know if he was going to be able to talk without squeaking. The pain and pleasure pouring through his body from that one pressure point made his skin tingle all over. He wanted to arch his back and moan.

"B-better," He answered, trying to mask his stutter with a not very convincing yawn. He felt like an ass. The guy was just doing what would soon be his job. "Wanna order pizza?" He hoped that talking about food would make his insta-erection go away. Just in case, he bent his other knee so the blanket would hide anything that might be showing.

"Sure. Pizza sounds perfect. Pepperoni, onion, and pineapple?"

James nodded with a happy sigh. "I think our friendship was meant to be. No one else appreciates the perfect pizza toppings."

Quinn chuckled and fished his phone out of his pocket.

They ate their pizza and watched a few dumb action movies on HBO. The storm had gotten worse, but it lulled James. The wind and constant patter of rain on their bay window was practically sleep inducing, not to mention the continual soothing pressure of Quinn's hand on his foot and ankle. He closed his eyes for a second and leaned his head back.

"Hey, Jamie?" Quinn's voice was quiet. James wondered if he actually had fallen asleep. "You need to go to bed. You were totally passed out." Guess that's a yes. He lifted his legs from their comfortable perch on Quinn's thighs and hobbled off towards the bathroom to brush his teeth and take the last of his pain pills.

"Night, dude," He muttered to Quinn in between yawns.

"Night, Jamie."

James made a face. "Why do you still call me that? No one else has since like the sixth grade."

Quinn smiled. "Because I can. Go to bed...Jamie." He smirked and James stuck out his tongue before shutting himself in the bathroom.

James lay down in his bed and stared into the darkness, just like he did nearly every night. No matter how tired he was, as soon as he was in the near silence of his room, his mind woke up and refused to let his body fall asleep. He could hear the faint hum of the television, or maybe the radio

coming from Quinn's room. Quinn had always had a hard time sleeping in pure silence. James remembered that from their many sleepovers. He thought of Quinn, lying in bed on the other side of the wall, maybe wearing boxers, or nothing at all. His stomach tightened, breathing quickened, and as usual, he was wide awake.

Quinn...

James' eyes drifted to his nightstand drawer.

I shouldn't. Not with Quinn awake in the next room. He really, really wanted to.

He'd gone on a little fieldtrip with his embarrassingly open-minded sister a few weeks before to a big chain store sex shop. She'd wanted to get a few things for her and her boyfriend, and she'd talked James into a plug, a set of anal beads, and this sparkly red vibrator with hearts all over it that was almost too cute to be hot. He'd been dying to try it though, on himself, or maybe Quinn. Or both.

Definitely both.

The thought of pushing into Quinn with the vibrator, or his fingers, or even better, gulp, his cock, made James shiver. Decision made. He reached over and pulled the shiny new vibrator and a bottle of lube from his nightstand.

\* \* \* \*

"Jamie, are you asleep?"

James lifted his head from the pillow and stared into the darkness, trying to make his sleepy brain focus on the noise coming from the direction of his doorway. He was groggy and a little loopy from the pain medication. It was really hard to keep his eyes open.

"Quinn? What are you doing here? What time is it?"

"I don't know, late. I was messing around on my computer and the power went out. The storm's getting worse." Like he'd timed it, a clap of thunder shook the apartment.

"Just go to sleep, Quinn. It'll be over in the morning."

James felt his bed move. Quinn must have sat down at the foot. "I can't go to sleep. I don't...I don't like storms."

If that wasn't the most adorable thing ever. "Sit here for a few minutes. It'll calm down."

"Can I just sleep in here? I know I sound like the biggest loser ever but I really don't want to be in my room alone." Quinn scooted over and lifted the edge of the comforter.

"Hey, I'm naked!" James hissed—not that he minded. In his Vicodin induced haze snuggling naked with Quinn not only sounded nice, but possible too. Hey it could happen...

"It's no big deal, dude. We see each other naked every day in the showers."

James usually spent those after practice showers trying really hard not to look at Quinn. He usually succeeded. Quinn slipped under the covers and huddled closer to James.

"Okay. Just close your eyes and fall asleep."

"I will. Hey sorry in advance. I'm kind of a cuddler." Quinn's words were accompanied by an arm slung across James' midsection.

Breathe, James, breathe.

It was silent for a few minutes save for Quinn's restless wiggling. Finally his voice broke the pitch black quiet.

"What the hell is this thing poking my—" Quinn reached under the covers.

Oh, Shit! Shit! Shit! Shit! James couldn't remember whether or not he put the vibrator away before he'd passed out. Apparently the answer was no, he did not. Oh, God, naked in bed with his best friend who just found his...James wanted to crawl into the darkest corner of his room and die of embarrassment.

"Is this what I think it is James Ryan Boyle?" James could hear the grin in Quinn's voice.

"Just, give it to me!" He lunged towards Quinn, trying to grab the offending toy. He ended up sprawled across Quinn's chest with Quinn holding the toy off of the bed and out of James' reach.

"Since when are you into these?"

James gave up and flopped back down, burying his face in his pillow. "Since tonight," he mumbled miserably. It was official. He was going to die.

"Did it feel good?"

James lifted his head up and stared at Quinn, whose face was close enough to be almost clear in the absolute darkness. "Are you making fun of me or do you really want to know?"

"I really want to know."

James could feel his face color. He was glad that Quinn wouldn't be able to see it. "Yeah, it felt good. Really good actually."

"And you wanted to try it because..."

James sighed. Twelve years of experience had taught him that Quinn wasn't going to let it go until he had all of the answers he wanted. "I wanted to see what it felt like because...so that...Jesus, it's because I'm gay Quinn!" He squeezed his eyes shut and waited for some kind of blow up.

"I know," Quinn answered serenely.

That most certainly was not what he expected.

"You do?"

"Of course. I'm your best friend, dork. I've known for years."

"Why didn't you say anything?"

Quinn sputtered. "Why didn't you?"

"I don't know. Maybe I was afraid."

"Of what? This?"

Before James had a chance to react, his lips were being covered in a kiss, sweet and insistent and everything he'd barely allowed himself to dream of. His body reacted in swells of delight, gooseflesh sweeping over his skin. It was a dream. It had to be. Quinn, nipped softly at James' lower lip and drew away.

"Quinn?" James whispered when their lips parted. He was afraid to ask the question, but he needed to know.

"Yeah?" James was being kissed again, with bites and licks and a warm slick tongue trailing down his neck.

"What are you, ugh, doing?" Oh God, Oh God, Oh God...

"Kissing my best friend."

"W-why?" James had a hard time concentrating with Quinn biting and licking his neck like that. When Quinn tongued a path around the rim of his ear he couldn't help moaning out loud.

"Because I want to." Quinn whispered it in his ear, the warmth of his breath making James shudder.

"Since when?"

"I don't know, a while—but I never realized you wanted it too until earlier when we were watching TV."

James cringed. "What did I do?"

"I'll tell you later. Just kiss me."

James couldn't imagine anything he wanted to do more than kiss Quinn...so he did; he kissed Quinn's soft lips, his nipples, the line of his jaw, and the place on his neck where his pulse pounded strong and fast. Then James turned Quinn over and kissed and licked his way down Quinn's spine. He was shaking and turned on and scared of everything that might be happening. The rain pounded away outside, making his room feel like a dark warm paradise that he never wanted to leave. Quinn trembled and arched into James' touch.

"That feels amazing."

James smiled but didn't say anything, just kept going, exploring the tanned muscular expanse of Quinn's back with his seeking, thirsting mouth. When he got to the edge of Quinn's pajama bottoms he paused, but Quinn flipped over onto his back and impatiently pushed the bottoms off. Then he

reached for James, wrapping him up in what felt like miles of hot silky skin, waxed clean for the pool.

James quivered and brought his hands up to frame Quinn's face; still barely able to believe it was actually happening.

"I've wanted to do this for so long."

"Why didn't you?"

"Because you're straight—at least I always thought you were."

Quinn considered that. "I'm probably bi. I've noticed other guys but you're the first one I've ever really wanted for real. Doesn't really matter what I am though—I'm here because I want to be here. With you."

James didn't say anything, simply reached over for another kiss, reeling at the fact that Quinn wanted him. The kiss was just as emotional and explorative as the first except with full body contact that gave him a high like no other. He wasn't expecting the velvet slide of Quinn's tongue, or the hands that started to explore him, shoulders, back, the tingly skin right underneath the crease of his thighs. James wrapped his leg around Quinn's hips and pulled him closer. Quinn's hand slipped between them, testing James' nipples, the skin of his stomach...lower.

James gulped, then sighed when the calloused grip of Quinn's palm surrounded the suddenly throbbing shaft of his cock.

"Ungh...Quinn."

"You feel nice. So hard."

James couldn't help the moan that slipped out. "It's cause of you."

"Glad I could be of service."

Quinn gave James a sly smile and pushed their hips together so he could hold both of their cocks in his grip. James drifted in the delicious sensations for a few moments before he had to stop it. There was no way in hell he was going to come early and miss out on what might be next. What he didn't expect was for Quinn to hop out of the bed with a grin.

"I'll be right back," He said and bent to the floor. The next thing James knew he was staring at the empty doorway.

When Quinn returned he carried James' vibrator, shiny and newly washed, and a handful of condoms.

"I didn't know if you had any of these."

"Are we—?"

Quinn leaned closer, dropping the toy and the condoms on James' nightstand. "I really hope so," he whispered in James' ear. "But before I get inside of you, I want to try it."

"Try it?"

"The vibrator. You said it feels good. I want to try it."

James' breath caught excitedly in his throat. He smiled in the darkness before he leaned over to pick the vibrator off of his table and fish around on the floor for his lube.

"In a minute. I want to touch you first."

Quinn lay back contentedly. "Touching is encouraged."

James started slowly, revisiting Quinn's nipples, his neck, the muscular planes of his perfect flat abs. Then he drifted lower, licking up Quinn's cock before swallowing it whole. He saw Quinn white-knuckling the sheets and had to grin.

"Jamie, oh my God."

James kept sucking, licking, funneling months' worth of fantasies into that one intimate act. He stopped only to slick one finger, which he worked gently into Quinn's ass. Soon, though, he pulled away to slick up two fingers with lube and push them back inside a little bit at a time.

When he thought Quinn was ready, he covered the vibrator with lube and slowly worked it inside, watching Quinn's face.

"That thing is huge," Quinn grunted.

James angled toy so it would bump into Quinn's prostate and switched it on low. Quinn started moving his hips, trying to increase the pressure of the toy. James bent forward and took Quinn's cock into his mouth, sucking with increasing pressure and thrusting gently with the toy at the same time. He kept going, drinking in Quinn's low howls of pleasure. It didn't take long for Quinn to grab James' shoulder.

"Wait, wait. I don't want to come yet. I want to be inside of you."

James froze, panting and hot, then slid up Quinn's sweat slicked body. When he got to the top he gave Quinn a long, deep kiss.

"I think I like that plan."

James gently pulled the vibrator out of Quinn and tossed it to the side before reaching out to snag a condom from the bedside table. He rolled it onto Quinn, then flipped onto his stomach, giving Quinn a naughty look over his shoulder.

"No. Not like that. I want to look at you."

Quinn tugged until James flipped back over. He spread James' thighs and crawled between them, dousing his cock liberally with lube. He hooked his elbow under James' knee and tilted him up,

aiming for the tight pucker that James was dying to have him claim. To James it seemed like he could feel every molecule of Quinn pushing inside, filling him up, stretching, impaling. It felt like he barely had room to breathe. It was fine, though. He wouldn't miss breathing if he got to have Quinn in his bed every night.

"You okay?" Quinn looked concerned. James realized he'd been squeezing his eyes closed, but he wasn't hurt, just overwhelmed by the sensations dancing through his body.

"Yeah, I'm good." He lifted his hips. "Fuck me Quinn. I want it."

When Quinn started to move, James nearly sobbed out loud. Their sweaty skin, the deep breathless kisses, the way that Quinn nailed him in the exact right place every single damn time—it was all too much to withstand.

James came without warning, clenching down on Quinn's body and shouting out in shock.

"Jamie," Quinn panted. "God, baby, come for me."

It didn't take Quinn long either. Just a few quick strokes and he froze, fingers digging into James' hips. Quinn flopped down on top of him and sprinkled his face with happy slobbery little kisses.

"You felt amazing," he finally whispered.

James reached up to cup the back of Quinn's head. "So did you. I can barely..."

"I know what you mean."

Quinn shifted and pulled slowly out of James. He snagged a tissue from the box that was perpetually on the nightstand and wrapped up the condom before he dropped it on the floor.

James snuggled into Quinn, hoping his previous shameless cuddler status still applied after having sex with his best friend. He wasn't disappointed. Quinn bundled him up in warm arms and James floated happily there for a few minutes—but he couldn't fall asleep.

"Quinn?"

"MmmHmm?" Quinn's voice was a contented rumble against his neck.

"Was this?" A warm hand came up to cover James' mouth. Quinn bit the back of his neck gently, kissed the same spot, then wrapped James in the warmest tightest hug ever.

"Yes it was. And it will be the next time and the time after that. Does that answer your question?"

James turned to face his oldest friend and brand new lover.

"You sure?"

Quinn gave James a sleepy smile. "You worry too much. C'mere. It's like four in the morning. We should go to sleep."

"You woke me up!"

"Yeah, and you hated it, didn't you?"



"Totally."

"Quinn?"

Quinn chuckled softly. "That doesn't sound like going to sleep."

"What did I do—earlier on the couch, I mean?"

"You said my name when you were sleeping, and then you kind of arched your back and moaned. It was the way you said it, like I was giving you pleasure. I wanted to be in that dream with you so bad."

"Are you really that afraid of storms?" Come to think of it, he didn't remember Quinn freaking out that much ever before.

"No." Quinn's grin was pure magic.

"Didn't think so."

Quinn pulled James as close as they could get, legs carefully twined to avoid hitting James' sore foot, faces nestled close together on one pillow. James couldn't help doing a silent little happy dance in his head.

Merry Christmas to me, he thought. Merry Christmas to me.

**THE END**

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Also from M.J. O'Shea:

*Unintended*

*Blood Moon*

*Things I'll Never Say*

*Hunter's Moon*

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## THICK AS THIEVES by Brian Jackson

*Dear Santa,*

*I would very much appreciate it if you could stuff my stocking with these two cuties. (Then I can stuff their stockings. ;)) One is never too old to receive a Christmas present, and a tale about these two wonders would be just magnificent. And what better way to warm up during the winter than with a steaming poolside tale?*

\*\*\*\*\*

Charlie Berkus had loved Anthony Tolbert for what seemed like an eternity. In reality, it had only been since he'd first laid eyes on him in the fifth grade, standing in line on the playground waiting for class. Anthony had just moved to the town of Cedar Falls and being the same age as Charlie they shared a classroom. Charlie yearned to see more of Anthony in class that day but was seated in the front row. So, he didn't get his next eyeful until they actually met at lunchtime.

As usual, Charlie was sitting alone at a table in the far corner of the cafeteria. He nearly jumped out of his skin when Anthony, confident as all get out, plopped his tray down on the table and took the seat opposite him.


"Mind if I share?" he asked out of formality.

Charlie looked to Anthony, mouth open and full with a fresh bite of Mac and Cheese, and gawked uncomprehendingly. The face that looked back was achingly sublime. Anthony's full, red lips curled up at the corners in a smile that somehow managed to encompass his eyes. He had hazel eyes with long, black lashes. His thick, dark hair was cropped short but still managed to look mussed. If Charlie had been asked to describe Anthony's face with a single word he probably would have chosen 'sweet'. But the face also included a spark of confidence and mischief – two things that Charlie lacked in abundance.

"My name is Anthony." Always Anthony, never Tony – no one ever made that mistake twice. "What's yours?"

"Charlie."

Anthony did most of the talking that day at lunch which suited Charlie fine since he wasn't much of a talker. He did the same the next day. And Anthony always managed to be around to stick up for Charlie, so soon the bullying stopped. Charlie was almost as grateful for his defense as he was for the arm occasionally thrown over his shoulders in friendship.



Two young men, standing on the bottom step of a private swimming pool with the water mid-thigh deep. They are holding each other and kissing sensuously.

When in class, Charlie got in trouble for constantly turning in his seat trying to get Anthony's attention. Still, his grades remained high so his parents ignored the call from his teacher regarding his unruly classroom behavior. Anthony would sometimes catch Charlie looking at him and make a face in return causing both of them to laugh, which in turn caused Mrs. Graves to lose her temper and scold them both.

In short, Anthony and Charlie hit it off from the start. It wasn't until weeks later that Charlie dared to wonder if he'd actually found a friend. Charlie invited Anthony over to his house and they soon became inseparable. Charlie's mom would say that the two of them were thick as thieves which pleased Charlie to no end.

Of course, Anthony's easy charm attracted others to their lunch table and soon it was full; but Charlie always remembered that he had been first. So did Anthony. It wasn't until months later that Charlie dared to admit to others that Anthony was his best friend, but still he had a hard time admitting to himself that he was in love. That didn't come until later – much later.

Unlike Charlie, Anthony was good at athletics. So, as Charlie's best friend, he always tried to include him in the wide variety of sports at which he excelled. Anthony always picked Charlie first, even though he was the worst, which balanced the teams since Anthony was always the best. And yet they usually won which made Charlie uncharacteristically proud.

In contrast, Charlie was good at scholastics. In fact he often tutored Anthony who needed help in all subjects and even did his homework for him more often than not. For this reason, Anthony received passable grades which kept his parents out of his hair and allowed him to continue to excel at sports which he loved more than life itself. What Charlie got out of their studies was the lingering memory of lying on his bed side-by-side with Anthony, pressed close together at the hip and sharing a textbook, and occasionally having a tickle fight when Anthony got a study question wrong. Arousing feelings that he did not yet understand, Charlie feared that these feelings were to be the only thing the two of them would never share.

As the years passed, Charlie and Anthony only managed to become closer. They ate, played, and studied together. They went through Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts together. While Anthony played on the varsity football team, Charlie played in the band. They even dated together, something which Charlie participated in only so that he could double date with his friend. As the years passed, Charlie tried to look more like Anthony, wearing his hair in the same style and dressing the same. He even worked out to match Anthony's sculpted physique in the hopes that Anthony might notice. Some said they looked like twins. His mom began calling Anthony and him the Bobbsey Twins which Charlie didn't appreciate as much as being thick as thieves.

One of Charlie's most vivid memories was of a Boy Scout outing during which he shared a tent for the night with Anthony. While Anthony snored, Charlie rolled close beside him, going so far as to suspend an arm over his friend, but not so far as to allow his arm fall and embrace him. All the time, Charlie's penis was uncomfortably engorged.

Eventually he rolled away and fell asleep feeling ashamed for the feelings he harbored toward his friend who remained blissfully oblivious amidst his dreams.

Sometime later, Anthony was the focus of Charlie's first sexual experience. Lying in bed one night thinking of Anthony, Charlie's penis began to stiffen and eventually became painfully hard. Touching it felt good. Charlie pulled his pajama bottoms down and it felt both naughty and nice to press his bare ass against the cool sheets.

Reaching down he slid his fingers over the front of his penis using the substance that leaked from its end as a lubricant. He noticed that his attentions were feeling better the more he played, yet he stopped periodically to calm himself. All the time he thought of Anthony – Anthony kissing him, Anthony holding him, Anthony taking his pants down.

The next time he reached down he wrapped his fingers hard around his penis and didn't stop rubbing himself until he felt something strange building inside. Soon it was too late to stop. Without warning, Charlie's mind exploded. His penis and indeed his entire body proceeded to pulse in body wracking convulsions. His eyes closed and rolled back under his lids as his spine arched in ecstasy. His mouth opened and he expelled a long, languorous groan. When he recovered from this overwhelming reaction to his ministrations, his hand, belly, and top sheet were slick with semen. He crept from his bed, shaken, and cleaned himself and his sheets with a tissue from his nightstand.

When he climbed back into bed, he fell asleep dreaming of touching Anthony and giving him the very same experience.

Ever since that night, Charlie would lock himself in his bedroom or the bathroom and masturbate to fantasies of Anthony in his arms, Anthony touching him, Anthony kissing him, Anthony, always Anthony. And still, Charlie could not share his secret obsession, now a certainty, that he was in love with his best friend.

Now Charlie was pressed against the counter in his friend's kitchen watching through the window as Anthony cleaned the pool outside. Anthony had his shirt off even though it was somewhat cool amid the autumn breezes. Steam rose off the water which showed that it was obviously heated. As Anthony moved a net on a long pole around the pool, collecting leaves, his muscles rippled sending corresponding tingles up Charlie's spine.

Charlie and Anthony were both sixteen and as was more and more frequently the case around his friend, Charlie was aroused. He was making Kool-Aid which he planned to serve in a tall pitcher. To distract himself, he pressed harder against the counter, causing his penis to ache -- because the pain felt good, it felt like what he deserved for having such nasty thoughts. Charlie fantasized about Anthony spanking him for being bad. And still, the more he pressed against the counter, the more aroused he became.

Finally, Anthony had cleaned the pool to his satisfaction and set the net aside. Turning to face the kitchen window, he waved his arms, signaling Charlie to come outside and join him. Adjusting his jeans to accommodate his erection, Charlie set the pitcher and two full glasses on a tray and stepped through the sliding glass doors.

"Come on, slow poke," Anthony chided, playfully, "let's go for a swim."

"But it's chilly out here," Charlie protested, placing his tray on the patio table beside the pool, wrapping his arms around himself to show that he was cold, and smiling sheepishly.

"Besides, I didn't bring a suit."

"Never mind that -- can't you see the pool is heated?"

Anthony said, taking a healthy draught of Kool-Aid from one of the glasses.

"Besides, we don't need suits since it will just be the two of us."

Charlie froze in disbelief over what he'd just heard. Anthony displayed an adorable pink mustache from the Kool-Aid which was distracting. He was about to protest out of shyness when quick as a wink Anthony was throwing off his shoes and socks in preparation for pulling off his pants and underwear.

Charlie had only ever seen Anthony naked in the showers after gym, and then he had to stop himself from staring and move off on his own to keep from getting a boner. Only now was he able to pause and revel in the scene taking place before him.

Anthony had the strong, lithe body of a swimmer, another activity at which he excelled. His muscles were well toned and his abdomen sectioned into a modest six-pack. His arms were long and lean. As he pulled off his pants and underwear Charlie noticed that this was true of his legs as well. He also noticed that his friend's ass was tight and well rounded. When he saw Anthony's cock he almost died -- it was circumcised, not too small, and not too large. In fact, Charlie judged it to be just right. Then, while Charlie was still admiring his physique, Anthony flashed his lovely smile and dove headlong into the deep end with nary a splash.

"Come on, what are you waiting for? The water's fine," Anthony taunted, splashing in Charlie's direction after coming up for air.

What else could he do? Charlie began to disrobe. However, when it came to the point of actually being naked in front of Anthony, he chose to keep his boxers on. This did little to hide his erection, which had barely subsided, but did a great deal to mask his embarrassment.

Charlie dove in.

The water that washed over Charlie's body was warm like that of a bath. Rising for air he found that he'd lost sight of Anthony amid the steam rising off the surface. When he spotted Anthony, trolling toward him out of the fog, face half in and half out of the water -- blowing bubbles, he couldn't help but giggle with glee.

"What is this I see?" Anthony said, ducking his head to look beneath the waves. "You're wearing your underwear. Well, we can't have that."

Charlie squealed in surprise when Anthony dove forward and grabbed him. Then he felt his ineffectually waterlogged boxers being slipped down his hips. He chose to fight back and was soon locked in a trashing struggle with a crazed beast over the possession of his drawers. As was always the case, Anthony one the contest -- but Charlie didn't mind. He wasn't sure but that he might have let Anthony win in the end. Whatever the case, Charlie was joyously happy splashing and wrestling with Anthony in the pool -- feeling his body close, running his hands over sleek, wet muscles, feeling Anthony's penis brush against his body, pressing his own swollen cock against Anthony.

Charlie had no idea how it happened, but suddenly the thrashing stopped. Charlie found himself with his legs round Anthony's narrow hips, arms over his shoulders, having his buttocks gently cradled by his friend who twirled the two of them round in a slow circle. Their faces were close. Eyes locked. Not a word was spoken but in those few moments' embrace Charlie managed to express his longing for his friend far more eloquently than he'd ever imagined possible.

They were about to kiss. Charlie knew it, he could feel it the in very air that separated them. He moved his hand to the back of Anthony's head to pull his face closer. He wetted his lips in nervous anticipation. Then Anthony's eyes blinked and his eyebrows knitted together in a frown.

"What are you doing? Get off of me," Anthony said, wedging their bodies apart and pushing Charlie away.

Before Charlie could react, Anthony was splashing away from him toward the stairs to the pool. As he climbed the stairs he seemed ashamed, turning his body away from Charlie.

"Wait, Anthony. Don't leave me," Charlie pleaded.

Anthony stopped dead in his tracks. He had never denied Charlie anything and now was to be no exception. Still he did not turn to him until Charlie had walked up the stairs to stand beside him.

When he did, Charlie found that Anthony was fully erect himself. Anthony turned his face away. Charlie reached out and turned it back.

Their first kiss was soft, gentle, experimental – barely a kiss at all. Anthony didn't respond but also didn't pull away. Their second kiss was more forceful. Anthony parted his lips this time. Charlie noticed that Anthony tasted vaguely of Kool-Aid – that and chlorine. This kiss concluded with Charlie running his tongue playfully over Anthony's lower lip. Charlie felt Anthony slide his hands down his spine which caused him to shiver -- that and the cool air. He did the same running his hands across Anthony's luscious, soft skin. They stepped closer. Charlie's hands didn't stop moving until they were resting lightly on Anthony's ass. He stroked the warm, soft curves of Anthony's buttocks. Anthony reached down and cupped Charlie's bottom in his hands.

During the next kiss their lips parted more fully. Charlie cocked his head to one side so that he could wholly envelop Anthony's mouth with his own. Their bodies pressed hard together and Charlie's cock pushed up Anthony's belly to rest beside Anthony's own prick. This kiss was long, deep, and hungry. As their lips parted, Anthony reached a hand between them to grab Charlie's dick. When he squeezed Charlie gasped. Laying his face against Anthony's shoulder he nibbled and pecked.

Stepping out of the pool, Anthony led Charlie by his dick to the poolside table. There he reached for a lotion dispenser which his mother always kept by the pool for when she was done sunbathing. After applying lotion liberally to his hands, he placed his hands on Charlie's chest and started to slather the viscous formula all over his body. He smoothed it slowly over Charlie's shoulders, kneading the muscles there, then down to his abdomen and finally, achingly, concluded by grabbing Charlie's cock and pulling it, hand-over-hand, as if he was pulling taffy.

Charlie nearly bent in half backward in his desire to thrust his penis into Anthony's masculine grip. He fell back against the patio table afraid that his shaking legs would no longer support his weight. And still Anthony continued to stroke, alternately gliding round and over the head of his penis. Anthony's attentions grew to include Charlie's balls which he squeezed and pulled. Charlie was going crazy, afraid that he might cum too soon and the experience would be over.

Eventually, Anthony's attentions focused less on Charlie's cock and more on the root of his penis leading back from his balls between his legs. Then Anthony stopped stroking him all together and instead slid his fingers between Charlie's legs and buns to play with his asshole. As Anthony probed him deeper and harder Charlie became less concerned on his penis and more focused on how badly he wanted Anthony inside of him, even if it meant only his fingers.



Without warning, Anthony stopped and walked away. Charlie nearly fell to the ground pleaded for him to come back.

"Come over here," Anthony insisted, grabbing a towel off one of the deck chairs and laying it out next to the pool.

"Where do you want me?" Charlie asked, fully prepared to comply with any further demand.

"Down here, on your hands and knees," Anthony said with a mischievous smile.

Charlie bent low, laying his forearms on the towel and thrusting his hips high up in the air. He gritted his teeth not knowing what to expect. Anthony knelt behind him and applied a few experimental probes with his fingers tips, each one going deeper. Then Charlie felt Anthony's penis slide up and down his crack in search of his anus before it slipped inside of him with a single smooth thrust. Charlie threw back his head and gasped in surprise and pain, but he did not pull away. He wanted this too badly, had dreamed of it too often to pull away.

As Anthony repeatedly thrust himself deep inside Charlie, Charlie reached down and began stroking himself. The feeling of getting fucked was like nothing he'd ever experienced before. The sensations he was feeling were strong and oh so pleasing -- he didn't want them to stop. He wanted Anthony to fuck him harder and deeper and finally unable to contain himself screamed out words to that affect.

Toward the end Anthony's movements became more frantic and Charlie could tell he was going to cum before Anthony himself knew it. Then it happened, Anthony finally lost the fight and began to furiously pump his seed into Charlie. He called upon God repeatedly using lips that could barely articulate words. Charlie felt the muscles of Anthony's penis convulse for what seemed like an eternity. The muscles of Charlie's ass clamped down hard when he too achieved orgasm. Charlie screamed out. For a time all was suspended amid glorious sensation. Then as quick as it began it was all over.

To Charlie's mixed relief and disappointment, Anthony slipped his penis from inside him and stood up. Charlie fell forward to lay on the bath towel in exhaustion. He heard Anthony dive into the pool and soon forced himself to rise and join him.

The two splashed and played together but something had changed between them. Their time together felt strained which it never had before. After only a few more minutes, Anthony jumped out of the pool to get dressed. Charlie wanted to make love again but when he approached Anthony he was brushed aside and told to 'knock it off'.

Charlie got dressed and went home.

Over the next several weeks Charlie and Anthony had sex several more times; but in each case things were awkward with Anthony being overly anxious and clumsy, ultimately hurting Charlie in his rush to climax. During their love making sessions, Anthony refused to kiss Charlie and afterwards would jump into his clothes and want to go do something else as if nothing had happened between them. Eventually Charlie grew to avoid Anthony and when they were together to spurn his advances. It wasn't until years later that he discovered Anthony was simply a poor lover.

By the end of the month Anthony was dating a girl named Carol and they didn't see much of each other anymore. By the end of the year Charlie was working to graduate a year early in order to attend Stanford in the fall.

Over the years, Charlie took many lovers. But he never forgot his first. Eventually he settled down with just one man. On a return trip to Cedar Falls to introduce this man to his parents, he heard from a friend that Anthony had gotten married and had kids. He was happy for his old friend.

Leaning back on his parent's sofa to lay his head on his partner's shoulder, Charlie looked up into his lover's eyes and smiled.

"What?" his partner asked.

"Oh, nothing. Just reliving some old, happy memories."

And Charlie was happy; mostly, he was happy for himself.

## **THE END**

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## LEAKING PIPES by Deanna Wadsworth

*Dear Santa,*

*My Christmas is looking very bleak indeed. All I want for Christmas is to get my pipes fixed, but all of the plumbers I've found so far are too damn pricey! I found this fellow in your picture listing, and I was hoping maybe you could hook me up with him, pretty please Santa?*

*Santa, if you would be so kind as to stuff my stocking for me, I'd be every so grateful!*

\*\*\*\*\*

"Please you have to help me!" There was no other way to describe my voice but a desperate wail.

The owner of 'Bubba -n-Sons Plumbing' chuckled.

I wanted to jump through the phone and throttle him. "This isn't funny! Water is shooting everywhere! It's like frikkin' Niagara Falls under my sink! I don't have enough towels to absorb it all! It's gonna destroy my flooring!"

"Sorry," Bubba began again, his voice sober and soothing this time. "It's not funny. Now did you turn off the waterline?"

"I'm an I.T. guy, not a plumber!" I growled.

He calmed me, then, proceeded to walk me through the rather simple steps of turning off the waterline. Much to my ire, I had to get under the spraying sink to do it. By the time I was done I was soaked from head to foot.

Drenched, I picked up the phone again and collapsed on the floor right in the deepest puddle. Water soaked through my jeans, but I was too upset to really care at this point. "Okay, I turned the water off, thanks. But I need this fixed. Like now. I'm having a dinner party tonight."

"Well, its Saturday, that's overtime, ya know," Bubba informed me.

"I don't care!" I wailed, flipping wet hair out of my eyes.

"I guess I can send over my son, Bubba Jr."

"Thank-you." I gave him directions, and hung up.

I took one look at my brand new kitchen and wanted to cry. Everything in the house had been perfect for the party. Like, Pottery Barn catalog perfect. People from work were coming. My neighbors, my sister and her fiancé, too. Every towel in my possession had been stuffed under the



sink to absorb the water from the burst pipe, and now they were heaped on the floor in a soggy mess, just like me.

My pug, Skippy, came into the kitchen. He lapped at the puddle then looked up at me as if to say, "Is it all better, Daddy?"

"It's a nightmare, Skip," I told the dog as if he'd actually asked.

While I waited for the plumber, I quickly changed clothes. Then, I threw the first load of sopping towels in the dryer. The rest were still on the floor, more than likely too saturated to do more than prevent the water from spreading.

I was barefoot, wearing sweats and a T-shirt when the doorbell rang forty-five minutes later. Skippy started barking immediately.

"Quiet," I ordered, rushing from the kitchen and stubbing my toe in the process. I cursed and opened the door, using my left foot to keep Skippy from escaping.

The words 'It's about damn time' were on the tip of my tongue, but the moment my eyes alighted on the man in the doorway, I was stunned silent.

The plumber had to be the hottest man I had ever seen in all my life. Six feet of lean, sinewy muscle even a bulky, tan Carhartt and carpenter jeans couldn't hide. A red baseball cap was pulled over cropped dark hair and he wore a lopsided grin on his gorgeous face. The green-eyed hunk looked like one of those plumbers in a beefcake calendar. A shudder went the length of my back. I could almost hear the cheesy porno music begin to play.

"You're Bubba Jr.?" I blurted.

The man laughed, a deep throaty sound that went straight to my groin. "Actually, I prefer BJ."

I almost said, 'Yes, I'd prefer one of those too,' but instead I just stood there, staring.

"Are you Sam Dreshler?"

I nodded, still staring.

"I'm here to check your plumbing," he prompted, holding up a tool box.

"Um, yeah." Feeling like an ass, I stepped aside to let him enter. Skippy saw an opening and darted forward.

"Whoa there, little guy!" Fast as lightning, BJ scooped up the escaping dog. "Looks like you got a runner," he joked as Skippy licked his face wildly.

"Um, uh, thanks," I stuttered, feeling inexplicably jealous of my dog just then. I'd never been jealous of Skippy before. Then again I really never wanted to lick the plumber before either.

BJ handed me the dog and stepped into the foyer. I felt a funny flutter in my gut and I wanted to kick myself for it. I was already stressed out about the party when the pipe burst, but now bumbling-nerd-me had to have a super hunk in the house.

Oh, why couldn't Bubba Jr. be fat and ugly like his name suggested? Instead, he was gorgeous and tan, everywhere I was thin and pale. My last boyfriend called me a twink, but I don't think he meant it as a compliment. I was five-six, blond and blue-eyed. I was decent looking, but next to this guy I felt lacking in every possible way.

"You wanna show me that leaking sink?"

"Um, yeah, right this way." I gestured for him to follow, still holding the flailing, snorting Skippy.

BJ looked around with approval. "Nice place. You live here with your folks?"

I should've been insulted, and I kinda was. I knew I barely looked legal. When I went to buy the liquor for the party the attendant stared at my ID for a long time, convinced it was a fake.

"Um, no. It's my house. I just moved in. I'm 27," I added, though I don't know why. Maybe just to justify myself to the hunk in my kitchen I was a man, too. Not some skinny kid. Why I cared was beyond me at this point.

"Sorry, I didn't mean anything by it."

"It's okay. I know I look young."

He gave me that lopsided grin and a wink. "Nothing wrong with that."

As I led him into the chain-o-lakes in my kitchen, I was inundated with his masculine scent. Not cologne, just pure sweaty male.

"Whoa! Looks like you had a gusher!"

"Your dad told me how to turn off the water so I think I managed to save my flooring but..." I gestured helplessly to the bucket under the sink and the piles of soggy bath towels. My breath became shaky once again.

As if sensing my distress, BJ gave me a smile. It went a long way to soothing my nerves. "Don't worry, Sam. Let's take a look see at what's going on."

BJ set his toolbox down and took off his jacket. His dark blue T-shirt was skin-tight and showed off an unbelievably broad shoulders and a narrow waist. And abs so flat they looked hollowed out. His carpenter jeans were slung low on those lean hips. He turned his red ball cap backwards and crouched down low, his thighs stretching the fabric of his jeans.

When he popped his head under the sink, the hem of his shirt inched upwards. I sucked in my breath.

Everyone made jokes about “plumber’s crack” but never before had I seen a plumber’s crack this fine. My dick swelled instantly and heat washed over my flesh at the sudden peek-a-boo of round ass cheeks above his waistband.

Oh dear lord, I did not need this kinda distraction today!

Skippy flailed a bit, bringing me out of my lust filled trance. Hastily, I set the dog on the floor and he raced over to the plumber, sniffing and prancing around as if the man were a giant plaything brought into the house just for him.

BJ didn’t seem to mind my spastic dog. “You gonna help me fix the sink, little guy?”

I bit my lip to stifle a whimper. Was there anything sexier than a man baby-talking a dog?

After he ruffled Skippy’s fur, BJ turned his attention to the sink. I stood four feet behind him, leaning on the kitchen island. He was on his knees but if he turned around his face would be on level with my crotch. That realization forced into my mind the vision of this man giving me a taste of his namesake. I swallowed the sudden, painful lump in my throat.

“The gaskets are old on the main line, that’s why she blew. Looks like you need a new trap, too, Sam.” BJ’s head was under the sink and his voice sounded muffled.

“Um, okay,” I said, not having any idea what that meant.

“Don’t worry. I’ll have this fixed before your guests arrive,” he told me, opening the tool box.

“Guests?” I repeated dumbly.

He grinned, a shock of white on a tan face. “You’re having a party, aren’t you?”

I looked behind me at the carefully arranged platters and wine glasses on the island. I chuckled at myself. “Um, yeah. Just my luck this had to happen today, huh?”

“You get ready for your party and I’ll get this all taken care of. You don’t have to worry about a thing.”

Yeah, easier said than done with such a hot hunk of man-flesh in my kitchen.

With a sigh, I left to retrieve the towels from the dryer.

Skippy had disemboweled one of his toys and was happily squeaking and shredding to his heart’s content. But that wasn’t what made me freeze in my tracks when I returned to the kitchen.

Heat suffused my groin at the sight of the deliciously displayed backside in front of me. BJ was kneeling, his head and shoulders inside the sink cabinet. His knees were apart and his back arched down so I had a clear view between his legs. The denim was pulled tight and the seam separated his balls, one on either side. My throat went dry, and I stared, wishing more than anything I could touch him. Run my fingers down his spine to the crack of his ass. Though in my fantasy, he was naked and his balls were hanging down, ripe for my mouth.

Oblivious of my return, BJ sat back on his haunches, and reached into his toolbox.

I quickly looked away before he noticed me staring at his balls like some horny pervert. Then I swapped the wet towels for the dry ones in my arms.

Get a grip.

BJ grinned over at me. "This made quite a mess."

"Oh, uh, yeah," I stuttered, sounding like a complete and total dip-shit.

"Don't worry I won't be here for your party," he assured me.

I couldn't help feeling a pang of regret that it was true. Insanely, I thought about inviting him. Was that lame? You didn't invite your plumber to your dinner party, did you? He probably had a date anyways. A man as good-looking as him always had plans on Saturday night. If I said anything about my party, BJ and whatever big-breasted bimbo he was going out with would have a good laugh about some gay dude hitting on him.

As I dried the floor, I suddenly felt like I was being watched. When I glanced at BJ he averted his eyes almost immediately. If I didn't know any better I would have sworn he was checking out my ass. I sniffed a laugh at my own stupidity.

Yeah right.

After I put the towels in the dryer, I began to prepare the appetizers. The party was still two hours away but I wanted an excuse to be in the same room with BJ. So as I cooked, he rummaged under the sink. Neither of us said anything. It was oddly domestic and comfortable. Though I wished I could come up with something clever to talk about. My mind was blank every time I noticed BJ, looking all sexy and manly with his wrench or whatever the hell tool it was.

I shook my head irritably at myself as I carried the food trays into the dining room. He was only here to fix my leaking pipes. And not the one starting in my tighty-whities.

"Jeesh, you're such a moron," I muttered under my breath. Bristling, I turned to head back into the kitchen and stopped dead.

BJ was reclining in my doorway, his shoulder against the door jam. His hip jutted out and to the side, displaying the rather sizable bump in the front of his jeans to my hungry gaze. Tan hairy arms were crossed over his chest. The red ball cap was still backwards and that sideways grin was back. I wondered how long he had been watching me. Had he heard me talking to myself?

Oh my god, I was such a dork!

"All done, Sam," he said before slowly heading into the kitchen.

I allowed myself the pleasure of staring at his ass as I followed after him, feeling a bit like an eager puppy on his heels. His movements were like liquid sex and it made my dick grow a bit. I



joined him by the sink, my pulse thumping, but I tried to act natural. "That was faster than I thought."

BJ turned on the faucet, gesturing beneath the sink in a Vanna White move that had me chuckling. "Easy fix," he said, turning off the water.

I sniffed a laugh. "For you maybe."

BJ bent down to gather up his tools and his gaze flitted over the front of my sweats. I almost grinned until I realized my dick was poking out like a pop tent. Shit! I had a boner and BJ noticed!

Cheeks on fire, I hastily moved to the other side of the kitchen island. Dammit, what the hell was wrong with me? I willed my erection away but it was impossible with BJ bending over like that. Showing off that succulent ass.

To mask my embarrassment, I picked up a washcloth and wiped down the spotless counter-top. But my eyes kept betraying me by darting back to BJ's ass while he cleaned up. I had to swallow a few times so I didn't drool watching him move.

BJ closed the sink doors then turned to face me. I looked away at once, cheeks burning.

Double shit! He'd caught me staring at his ass!

I scrubbed at the non-existent stain on the counter harder, my face in flames.

"You're nervous, Sam."

I jumped.

BJ was right beside me. So close I could feel the heat from his body. Smell the PVC glue he had used and the manly hint of his sweat. I stared up at him, powerless to look away. My throat was too tight to speak, not that I was brave enough to try.

"First party in the new house?"

I managed a breathless chuckle. "That obvious?"

BJ set his toolbox on the counter, the move bringing him just a tad closer. I sucked in a tiny breath.

"You seem really stressed out."

"Maybe a little..."

"I know the perfect way to relax, Sam," he told me conversationally, running his long index finger on the edge of the granite counter. The gesture seemed lewd and suggestive.

I swallowed hard and looked back up at him. "You do?"

He was smiling at me. "Mmm, hmm."

I wasn't so clueless that I couldn't pick up on the change in his demeanor. The heavy look in his eyes and the sudden roughness of his breathing. My pulse skipped and the blood flooding my face

decided to take the long trip south to alert another part of my anatomy that BJ might be interested in checking out more than just the plumbing under my sink.

“Like what?” My voice cracked like a pubescent boy.

I didn’t have a chance to be embarrassed or clear the frog from my throat because BJ kissed me then.

I moaned into the sinful delight of the man’s warm lips encircling mine. My mouth opened willingly, and his wet tongue slipped inside, flicking over mine and darting out. He pulled back and smiled down at me, his thumb stroking my jawline.

He didn’t ask permission to touch the rest of me. My kiss had already granted him unlimited access. He ran the flat of his hands down my chest, the palms scraping my nipples and sending jolts of need straight to my dick. I shuddered, relishing the way he watched his hands caress me. I was breathing heavily now, gripping the counter with one hand, the other opening and closing into a fist.

A finger hooked in the front of my sweats. There was no denying the hard cock pressing the soft fabric out. He stroked the drawstring, and though my erection seemed to be BJ’s destination, he went no further. He seemed transfixed and I held my breath. Those green eyes looked back up. Without taking his gaze from mine, BJ pulled the sweats down, his fingers brushing my abdomen as he did so.

I could hardly breathe, I was so hard by this point. There was a wet spot on the front of my underwear. When BJ brushed his thumb over it, a violent tremor went the length of my spine, then back to my cock. Reflexively, I reached out to steady myself on his broad shoulder. One hand on the cold granite, the other on his warm muscles. That solidness anchored me as he slowly peeled the sweats below my ass, kneeling as he did so. His fingers slid over the elastic of my underwear next, pulling them out further in front so as not to catch on my erection.

The air felt cool on my wet dick. Men my height and build usually weren’t well endowed. I was just regular sized, but BJ smiled at me like he’d just been given a winning lotto ticket.

“Oh, shit,” I gasped the second those work-worn, calloused hands gripped me.

I’d always had a thing for the blue-collar types. Maybe it was their manliness. The way they smelled of grease and sweat. But at that moment, I was pretty sure my attraction was to the way his rough hands felt on the soft, tender skin of my dick.

He held my base, and began to lick me like I was an ice cream cone, swirling his tongue to catch the pre-cum. I groaned as he slathered my head with saliva, my shaft, too. Soon I was wet enough

that his calloused hand could stroke me in time with his licking. He moaned as he tasted me, folding his lips over his teeth and sucking hard.

I felt my body preparing to come, my balls tightening, wanting to release. I forced a deep breath to remain in control. I wanted to savor the sight of my dick going in and out of his sweet mouth, not shoot like a virgin. It was exquisite, the warm, wet feel of him sucking on me. Licking me. BJ's tongue probed my slit and a flash of heat made a sweat break out on my face.

When I hissed, he pulled back to grin up at me. "You like that?"

I nodded frantically, my mouth hanging open. Wanting desperately to feel his dark hair between my fingers, I pulled his hat off and let it fall to the floor. I cupped the back of his head, encouraging him to take me into his mouth once more. He flicked his tongue over my crown in a circular pattern. Then, he ever so gently bore down with his teeth.

I threw back my head and screamed, bolts of pleasure shooting into my sac, and swirling in my belly. I would burst if he did that again. Part of me wanted to see gobs of white cum spurting all over his gorgeous face, but the other part of me didn't want this to end.

When I opened my eyes again, I saw Skippy staring at us, his head tilted curiously to the side. Embarrassed a little, I focused back on the man servicing my dick. I caressed the back of his head, and rocked my hips slowly as he sucked me, allowing him to set our pace. I reveled in the feel of his rough hand pumping my shaft, the sight of my dick disappearing into the recesses of his mouth. He reached between my legs and pulled on my balls, first one, then the other. Breathless, I began to thrust a little bit harder.

I was leaking cum steadily now and BJ sucked the little droplets right from the slit. My entire body shook and I wanted to grab my shaft and pump it faster than BJ's slow and steady movements. Suddenly, as if knowing I was on the brink and wanting to drag it out, he withdrew. He gently kissed my tip and squeezed the base to ease me back down. But he was by no means done torturing me. After he licked the pre-cum from my slit, he drug his teeth down the shaft and back up, to where he nipped at the bottom edge of my head.

An animalistic noise burst from my lips and I seized a handful of his hair. I almost came right there.

"That's your spot isn't it?" he said, sucking the area once more.

I buckled over this time, as pleasure raced through my groin. He took the head inside his mouth again, sucking and pumping his fist, focusing all of his attention in the sensitive spot he discovered.

It was too much, too intense. "I'm gonna come!"

BJ's groan vibrated up my dick, and he gripped my ass in both his hands, his fingers dangerously close to my hole. He pulled me forward. I shuddered when my cock head hit the back of his throat. My hold on his hair and shoulder were the only thing that kept me from collapsing from sheer rapture and delight. I felt the roundness of his tonsils rolling over my head as he drew me all the way down his throat, his hands spreading my cheeks open as he did so.

Then, just as fast as he deep-throated me, he pulled back. There was a brush of hot air on my pubes as he stole a quick breath before he pushed my dick back down his throat. His lips made a tight seal and he used the hands on my ass to make me fuck his face. I clung to him, thrusting faster now. He didn't fight me. Hell, the man didn't even gag. He just opened his jaw and swallowed me down, keeping his lips tight as he let me search his throat for release. It didn't take long to find it. With a stab of sheer ecstasy, I felt the cum firing up my shaft, the ache in my balls.

"I'm coming!"

Those words set BJ into a frenzied sucking.

Wave after wave of cum exploded from my body, and my hips were snapping helplessly.

BJ let the cum fill his throat, and when it began to overflow from his lips he pulled back, slurping and sucking as it shot from my dick in a steady white stream.

"Oh, god," he whimpered in pleasure as it sprayed his lips, and dripped down his chin. "There's just so much!"

Dizzy and heart racing, I watched my cum make bubbles on his full lips as I emptied myself with a final tremble. The sight of him still fully dressed, and nursing on my dick like it was a bottle, and my cum the sweetest cream he'd ever tasted, was so damn hot, I actually whimpered. It was the most erotic thing I'd ever seen in my life.

Or so I thought.

BJ reached for his jeans, still licking and cleaning my dick with his tongue. Light headed, I held on to him as he slid the zipper down. While I reveled in post-orgasmic bliss, he freed his engorged, darkened cock. Goddamn, it was so large and beautiful! The plump crown was shiny with pre-cum and his shaft was thick and veiny. He wiped his mouth, then spit cum into his palm. A shudder of desire shot through me as he used my cum to lubricate himself. He took his cock in both fists and began to pump it fast. The wet sounds of BJ masturbating and his eager grunts held me captive.

He looked up at me while he jerked off at my feet, his face contorted in that look of pleasure and agony a man wore when he was close to shooting his load. It only took a few seconds of frantic stroking and a volcanic eruption of white cum burst from his dick, landing on my bare feet.

While he came, BJ never broke eye contact. The first wave was followed by a few smaller spurts, falling onto my toes. It was so warm! He trembled and closed his eyes in bliss, pressing his thumb the length of his shaft to milk the rest of his orgasm loose.

After he caught his breath, BJ stood up and kissed me again. Clinging to my smaller body, as if he might collapse. I could taste the salty, thickness of cum in his mouth, and I lapped at it. I didn't even spare it a thought that I was wearing the plumber's cum on my sweats and my feet. All I cared about was the heat of his body, the semi-rigidness of his cock pressed to my abdomen, and the cum dampened fingers coiling through my hair as he kissed me.

"That was fucking awesome," he breathed.

I chuckled and rocked my hips into him. "Do you offer that service to all your customers?"

BJ gave me that lopsided grin and kissed me once more. "Only the hot blonds who keep flaunting their cute asses at me while I'm trying to work."

A shiver of delight washed through me at the compliment.

We kissed for a little while longer, me stroking his back and him running his hands through my hair. It was sheer bliss the way he held me. He was so much bigger than I was. I felt safe and sheltered.

"I should probably go so you can get ready for your party," he whispered, his hot breath tickling the crook of my neck. I wriggled, but neither of us made a move to leave each other's arms.

Unfortunately, BJ was right. I had a party to get ready for. The guests would be there in less than an hour, and I still had a lot to do. Not that I was regretting the afternoon's distractions. I sighed with great reluctance and stepped back. BJ kissed my cheek then tucked that pretty cock of his back into his carpenter jeans.

"Um, how much do I owe you?" I asked awkwardly as he retrieved his ball cap from the floor.

BJ looked a bit taken aback. "You don't have to pay me for that."

I blushed again, and gestured to the sink. "No, I mean the sink."

It was BJ's turn to pinken and the sight of it made my dick stir. "Oh, yeah. Well, I guess I wouldn't feel right taking your money...not after..." he nodded to my crotch.

I grinned. BJ was absolutely adorable when he was embarrassed. But my smile faded when I realized I hadn't bothered to pull up my pants and my cock was still hanging out. Blushing, I turned slightly away from him, and righted my clothes. When I turned back around, he seemed amused by my display of modesty.

I was struck with inspiration. "Wanna stay for my party?"

He made a face. "I'm in dirty work clothes."

"You could go home and change, then come back," I suggested hopefully.

BJ cocked his head to the side, and for one terrified second I was afraid he would say no. Maybe he'd gotten what he wanted, and he never cared if he saw me again. Just the thought of never seeing this man again depressed me more than I expected.

Then he grinned, and it was like liquid sunshine filling me. "Sure, I'd like that."

"Great. You don't have to dress up," I told him. "It's casual, just so you know."

"Cool."

I led him to the door then, and he kissed me long, and slow. I trembled into the kiss, my lips following his when he pulled back.

He smiled at my eagerness. "I'll see ya in a little bit, Sam."

"Thank you, BJ."

He gave me that lopsided grin one more time and paused on the front porch steps. "Are you thanking me for fixing your sink or taking care of that leaking pipe?"

I grinned so wide I swore my face might crack. "Both."

**THE END**

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Also from Deanna Wadsworth:

*Red Riding Hood*

*The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*

*Secret Santa*

(available from Decadent Publishing and Amazon)

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## CHRISTMAS IN THE SANDBOX by Missy Welsh

*Dear Santa,*

*At this time of year, our minds turn to the men serving in our military. They're protecting our freedom - far away from their friends and family, surrounded by other, muscular, sweaty men in close quarters. I would love it if you could give two of these brave heroes a dirty, hot holiday they'll never forget.*

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"Digger?" Neal whispered into the darkness inside the temporary supply depot. With one hand, he tried to find a light switch.

This was a new spot for them. Mostly because this little building was newly erected a few days ago. Usually, they were a little farther from the bustle of the base, but maybe the late hour — or early since it was after midnight — would be to their advantage. They'd have to be quiet, though.

"Yeah," came an already husky voice from somewhere deeper in this semi-darkness.

"Where the hell are you?" And there didn't seem to be a light switch.

"Come find me, Moose," he said with a definite tease to his voice. Then he giggled. Dig'd never admit to making any such sound, but the man giggled like a little girl sometimes.

"Don't call me that, Dig."

Neal stepped inside and secured the door, fumbling the lock only once. He'd caught sight of the rows of metal shelves and the plain, gray lockers inside this metal box from the light over the door outside, but now it was black as hell. Reaching out, he found a shelf and felt his way to the alley between two sets, guessing it'd take him back toward Dig.

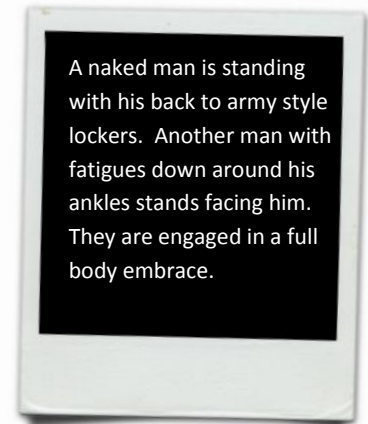
"Everybody calls you Moose, so why not me? It's the perfect name for a giant like you."

He heard the click of a bottle opening and then the squelch of its contents coming out. Christ, was Dig in here beating off without him? He was ready to bust out of his shorts, so the man had better have plans for doing something about that, regardless of his head start.

"It's not what you call me, so cut it out. And what are you doing in here?"

"Getting hard for you."

That matter-of-fact answer sent a shot of lust right down his spine. Neal gasped and damn if he couldn't smell Dig now. The ever-present scent of the dusty desert of this country clung to everything, but under it was the raw, musky aroma of a sweaty and seriously aroused man.





"Yeah?" he asked, picking up his blind pace toward everything he wanted. He only had an hour to get it and every second was going to count.

"Oh yeah." That was definitely the sound of a slick fist sliding on a cock now. "Soon as you get back here, I'm going to give you everything I've got."

"You suck at dirty talk, Dig," he said and smiled, reaching out. He was pretty sure he was right in front of him.

"That's not all I suck."

A pair of hands somehow managed to latch onto his belt so accurately that it came undone in a flash and then his pants fell right down to the tops of his boots.

"Hi," Neal said, knowing it was inane even as he said it.

"Hi," Dig said, a smirk in his voice. His fingers now went after the buttons down Neal's shirt. "What's a nice boy like you doing in a place like this?"

"Hoping to get himself fucked for Christmas." He found smooth, bare shoulders and followed them up until he could hold Dig's face in his hands.

"Have you been good?" Dig said, undoing the last button and sliding his hands up beneath the undershirt. Neal sighed as those long fingers explored his belly.

"Real good." He leaned in until he found Dig's lips.

Agile fingers stroked up to his chest, pushing the material away as they kissed. Neal loved Dig's kisses because they always started so gentle. He hadn't spent a lot of time kissing guys — not over here in this godforsaken sandbox anyway — but those he had always seemed to go for the tongue-battling kisses. Like it was something to fight through so you could get to the good stuff.

Kissing Dig was the good stuff and Neal never wanted to kiss anyone else.

Neal's shirts came off while they tasted each other, breaking apart only once. He let go of Dig so he could shove his shorts down, then leaned into him and moaned. Hot, hard body to hot, hard body. Perfection.

"Love the way you feel," Dig said between gasped breaths. His hands roamed all over Neal's back, then down to grip his ass cheeks. Hard. "So meaty."

Neal chuckled even as he pressed his dick into Dig's stomach. Dig's own dick rubbed up into his balls and teased at his crack. He moaned again and latched onto Dig's neck. He couldn't suck too much, so he mostly kissed and licked at the muscles and tendons he found, kind of liking the fact he had to see with his mouth.

Dig reached back and cupped his hand so his dick could rub into Neal's ass with every thrust of their hips. He was such a damn tease.

"I'm ready for you," Neal whispered near Dig's ear. He was already panting. "You gotta fuck me, Digger."

"I got to?" he said on a breathy laugh.

"Pleasepleaseplease," he breathed into his ear and felt Dig shiver.

Dig groaned, the sound rough and kind of growly, as he took Neal's hands and planted them on the metal of the wall. A moment later, he was walking back around behind Neal and giving his ass a swat.

"Bend. Stick this big ass out for me."

"It ain't that big," Neal muttered even as he bent and stuck.

Dig let loose one of those giggles again. "Meaty."

"Oh shut up. You're just jealous because all you've got is back and legs. Ow! Quit smacking me!"

"Quit insulting the man you want to fuck you then."

Neal smiled. "I figure you've got no ass because all that flesh got diverted into making that super fine, nine-incher of a cock the Good Lord gave you instead."

He heard a snort and the tearing of a wrapper. Damn, that sound alone made his whole body giddy with anticipation.

Just before that sound of a bottle popping open, Neal heard Dig say, "Praise The Lord and pass the lube."

He chuckled at that, then gasped when cool slick met his waiting hole. Dig pushed in a finger and it went right in deep.

"Well, well, you are ready. You got a dildo I don't know about?"

More fingers went in as if to test him, and Neal backed up on them with a moan.

"No. I was damn near fisting myself before I came looking for you."

"Goddamn," he said and took his fingers back. "That would've been something to see."

Neal leaned his head on his forearm against the wall as he felt that big ol' dick start pressing into him. "Next time maybe."

"Oh yeah."

Dig always went slow at first. Thank God. He hadn't been kidding about the baby's leg the man had between his thighs. Neal wasn't sure if Dig really was nine inches, but he probably wasn't far off. He felt every inch as that thing slid inside him. And slid and slid until a big set of furry balls nestled up against his cheeks and Dig sighed.

As Neal took deep breaths and willed himself to relax, Dig leaned against his back, and gave him the chance to adjust to that holy-God invasion of cock. What would Dig say this time? He always had something to say.

“Well, would you look at that. There’s a private on my private.”

Neal laughed into his forearm and damn if that didn’t loosen him up head-to-toe. Dig snickered then hummed as he withdrew and came on back in.

“You’re such a dork,” Neal said, arching into another thrust.

“You — aw yeah — love it.”

“Do. Really fucking do.”

Neither one of them could say much then. Neal couldn’t do more than try not to bang into the wall when Dig really took off, those lean hips smacking into his ass. Dig babbled like Dig always did, nonsense and grunts spilling out of him. Neal liked the pounding, but it was the—

“Oh fuck yeah!” he couldn’t help hollering when Dig pressed up tight and just ground into him. That was what he really loved. Stretched, filled and rubbed just right, it had him sweating and moaning and aching to come.

Then Dig wrapped his fist around Neal’s cock and started pulling. A loud whine left him before he could bite it back and he found himself clawing at the wall like a cat. Damn. He was a total slut for this man’s cock up his ass and his fist tugging him right over the edge.

With a grunt instead of a scream since he had his mouth clapped behind his hands, Neal came hard, hearing burst after burst of cum hitting the metal wall. Dig just held onto Neal’s quaking cock while his hips went back to a fast, graceless pounding. Then Dig came with a groan muffled by Neal’s shoulder.

They panted like that for a while, then Dig took a step back and Neal sighed with his leaving. He heard the snap of latex before a little smack of the condom landing on the concrete floor. He made a note to make sure they found it before they left.

A quiet click off to his left had him looking over. Dig had a flashlight face down on a shelf. It was just enough light to see by as Dig moved back in between Neal and the wall. Neal took a moment to smile at him and admire the flushed face, bright blue eyes, and satisfied grin of the soldier he loved before he wrapped his arms around Dig and got an equally tight hug in return.

“Merry Christmas, Nealy-baby.”

He gave him a kiss on his ear for finally getting to hear the name only Dig called him. It really didn’t matter where they spent the holidays so long as they were together.

“Merry Christmas, Virgil. Ow! What? It’s your—”

The rest was muffled by a kiss.

**THE END**

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Also from Missy Welsh:

*My Summer Of Wes* (M/M)

*Take The Shot* (M/M/F)

Website: <http://missywelsh.com>

## CRYING WOLF by Jade Archer

*Dear Santa,*

*All I want for Christmas... all I've ever wanted for Christmas... is some wolf-man loving in shifted form. Maybe someone (or something) gets lost at night in the dark, freezing, snowy woods... and there is some light and a cabin up ahead...? Oh please Santa!*

*P.S. a light d/s dynamic makes for a perfect gift wrap! ;)*

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(This story is set in the *Portals* series universe)

Wolf whined softly in the back of his throat and took another desperate, but increasingly hopeless look around the forest.

It was so dark. So cold. The deep blanket of snow was broken only by the tall, black trunks of the trees crowded in around him. While they offered a merciful reduction in the wind chill factor, they also felt slightly...sinister—like crones crowding around to watch him stumbling to his demise. It was well below freezing anyway. The difference was probably only a few extra minutes of misery.

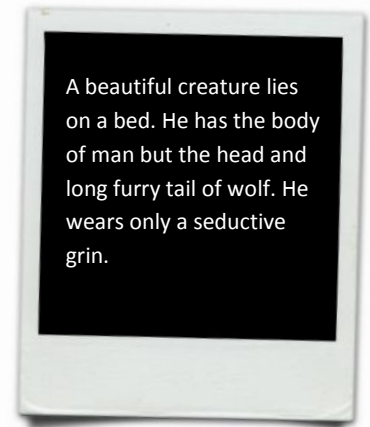
You've really done it this time, you stupid mutt!

This wasn't good. Running away from the slave caravan in the middle of winter certainly wasn't the smartest thing he'd ever done. But what on Rigial had possessed him to do it naked? At the very least he should have tried to steal a cloak, or a blanket, or...something. Maybe a loincloth. A fur lined loincloth. If his cock and balls climbed any higher up into his body, he'd have trouble swallowing.

Unfortunately, apart from his own, admittedly hirsute hide, he was as bare-assed naked as the day his mother had whelped him. And he could smell the snow storm that was coming—sharp and ominous. The sensitive black tip of his nose quivered and he couldn't hold back another whine of distress. If only he could actually shift into full-wolf form—which would better preserve his body heat. But of course, being defective, he couldn't.

His desperation to escape his Masters had made him stupid. More stupid than normal. More stupid than the handlers told him he was every day. Damn, he wished he could have proven them wrong. Just once. Running away into a blizzard probably wasn't going to accomplish that though.

Sadly, even if he did die out here, the truth was they'd probably find him and still manage to get their pound of flesh. He could just see it. He'd end up a frozen Wolf-boy Popsicle to amuse the masses at the next carnival or street fair. Well, at least until spring when the weather warmed up and he began to melt...and stink. Mind you, this far north that eventuality was many months away.



Wolf fought hard not to cry at the depressing track his mind insisted on taking. Numerous “training” sessions had beaten him into realizing tears were futile. He didn’t want to appear any more pathetic than he already was either—although he hardly imagined the nightsquarrels and owlings would care. And finally, but probably most importantly of all, tears would freeze almost instantly in this weather, and he was already quite miserable enough as it was.

Still, he was forced to wipe at his eyes and down his long muzzle moments later. Damn it.

Flagging badly, but determined not to give in—to keep going until there was no more go left in him—Wolf climbed to the top of the next snow drift and...stared in amazement. In the distance, warm yellow light spilled out across the snow. The log cabin it came from—with its thick plume of enticing smoke that whipped away into the forest beyond—lay in the valley below like a beacon promising welcome and survival.

It was, of course, a great big steaming pile of horse manure and lies—no one was likely to welcome Wolf. He was too freakish, too “defective” as so many had jeered and mocked—eternally caught between wolf and man and not able to shift into either. When no Master would have him, he had ended up a travelling curiosity in the cesspit they diplomatically called a circus.

But perhaps he could hide in a shed. Or shelter in a root cellar. It was certainly worth a try. And if he was caught...well he’d escaped once now. He could do it again.

Surging ahead, eager to escape the bone numbing hypothermia already setting in, Wolf hadn’t managed more than a few hurried steps before pain exploded up his right leg. His foot connected sharply with something hard and unyielding beneath the deceptively smooth surface of the snow. It was probably a rock or thick log buried beneath the white death all around him. But Wolf really didn’t have time to wonder.

He stumbled forward. With nothing to catch hold of and slow his decent, he tumbled down the steep slope unchecked. While he’d long since lost feeling in his pads and lower limbs, apparently his numb body could still register bone jarring jolts of agony as he fell headlong down into the valley.

Wolf knew the black spine of rock he had spotted sticking up at the bottom of the slope would break his fall—and probably his neck as well. But miraculously, the gods smiled on him. He never registered the impact. The world went black and he lost consciousness when his head hit a submerged tree branch he never even saw coming.

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Cy added more wood to the already blazing fire. Although the stray he had rescued from the snow had long since stopped shivering, he didn't want to take any chances. The cabin was well insulated, but the approaching storm would soon have the temperature dropping even inside the warm shelter.

He gazed down at his unexpected house guest. Normally it would be an unwelcome house guest, but there was something about the little wolf-boy as Cy looked him over from pointed ears to cute padded toes—lingering for a long while on the mesmerizing curve of his firm ass—that made it hard to wish him anywhere but right where he was.

Wolf-boy certainly made a very attractive addition to the hearth rug. Cy could imagine long hours spent admiring the new addition to his home. Well, admiring in a very tactile way at least.

The boy had been hard to ignore outside too. When the early warning wards at the edge of the forest had been triggered, letting Cy know someone was encroaching on his territory, he hadn't paid much attention. With a storm rapidly approaching and the temperature dropping at an alarming rate, the likelihood of anyone making it into the valley alive to disturb him had been minimal. And he had no intention of leaving his warm little nest on a wild goose chase for a corpse.

But when the wards at the top of the ridge had been breached, Cy had found himself compelled to focus his senses—to brush against the presence approaching his home. And from that point on he'd been lost.

Something about the soft whine he'd discovered as he stretched out with his magic called to him. He'd almost felt as if someone was shoving at him, forcing him along as he tracked down the intruder. And he was so glad he had followed the insistent demand. The boy was fascinating. Cy had never seen anyone like him.

Fur covered the boy's whole body in a soft, silky pelt of brown and black, but it did little to distract from the firm, toned body beneath. A thick bushy tail sprouted from the base of his spine and currently lay limply across the floor. Cy longed to reach out and caress along its length—investigating where it rooted into the boy's body. He wanted to explore what lay beneath too—nestled between the boy's tight ass cheeks.

But truly, it was the boy's face that was the most captivating. He had a wolf's pointed muzzle and sturdy head that tapered down to a very human, very male body. A thick brown ruff of fur protected his nape and upper shoulders. His ears were sharp triangles. His nose a very canine soft black flare at the tip of his snout. In other words, he was mesmerizing.

Cy could see wet tracks down the boy's muzzle. It was obvious at some point he'd been crying. Cy loved tears. And something about the wolf-boy made Cy want them. He wanted the soft whine again

too. But this time they needed to be edged with arousal and desperation for release. A release Cy wouldn't grant until the boy was begging—crying out for his cock.

As Cy knelt down beside him, the boy began to stir. A low moan escaped the long muzzle as the pup stretched out his neck and slowly regained consciousness. It ignited a tiny flame of awareness in Cy's belly—a very primitive, very aroused awareness that called to something deep and instinctual. It demanded possession. Cy tamped it down, but didn't dismiss or push it away completely.

"Hush. You're safe, little wolf." With a gentle brush of his magic, Cy began checking the boy over.

The boy slowly open his eyes and raised his head to focus on Cy as he worked. But after a moment of stunned silence, the wolf-boy gasped and pulled away.

Cy instantly raised his hand to the deep scars that ran from his hair line down the left hand side of his face in three thick, ugly gouges. Damn it all! How could he have forgotten to cover the scars? It had been so long since he had been in the company of others he had almost lost sight of why he shunned the outside world.

The wolf-boy ducked his head and cowered away. Cy felt every muscle he possessed clench in anger and humiliation.

"You needn't be afraid. My scars are not contagious," Cy snapped as he very purposefully lowered his hand away from his face. He didn't want to frighten the boy, but he refused to hide in his own home.

The boy cringed further away from him and a tiny whine escaped. Something about the reaction gave Cy a moment of pause. He'd spent most of his adult life being ostracised for something completely beyond his control until he'd simply given up on society in disgust. But something about the way the pup whined and bared his throat made Cy feel like he'd kicked a puppy.

Cy studied the Wolf-boy cowering in front of him. He looked...frightened. Cy couldn't help himself. He reached out to touch the boy's head. But again the pup jerked away, whining softly—his ears collapsing down against his head and his beautiful thick, bushy tail tucking in between his legs.

"Hush," Cy commanded firmly, but not unkindly.

He reached out and very gently ran his hand over one silky ear and down into the pup's thick neck ruff.

After years of deliberately avoiding the stupidity of the outside world—a world so vain and enamored of physical beauty it refused to see past the superficial imperfection of his face—Cy found it difficult to find the words he needed.

"My apologies, little wolf. I...should not have snapped at you."



Wolf-boy looked up at him suddenly, clearly startled by the admission and apology. The boy even forgot to avert his eyes. Cy's heart sped up as he stared into the brilliant gold colour that reflected open amazement at him.

"I'm sorry, Master. I...I wasn't..." The pup's voice was low, with a slight growling accent. His eyes pleaded for something, but Cy wasn't quite sure what.

"I know my face is...unpleasant. There's no need for either of us to pretend otherwise."

"No!" The denial was quick and loud. "I mean...I was..." The wolf whined—his long, pink tongue licking along his muzzle nervously.

Cy waited patiently—his innate curiosity piqued. What was the boy trying to say?

"Your...your magic it...touched me. In the forest and a...again just now," the boy finally said.

Cy blinked several times in surprise. Of all the things he'd imagined the boy would say that hadn't even crossed his mind for a second. He took a moment to study the wolf-boy. If he was telling the truth, if the denial that had come so easily was real, then...

Perhaps his magic was trying to tell him something, Cy reflected. Trying to guide him as it often did since the attack. And perhaps...well perhaps the two of them weren't as dissimilar as first appearances would suggest. He doubted the boy's fearful, cringing reactions were a result of love and acceptance.

Very tentatively, Cy reached out with a thin tendril of his magic—imagining himself caressing along the boy's back and down towards the base of his tail. The boy whined, his eyes narrowing slightly as he stretched up to meet the invisible caress—unconsciously exposing his vulnerable neck as his leg began a very slight, involuntary scratching motion and his tail wagged hesitantly. He was the very picture of a puppy on the edge of canine bliss. Cy felt his cock twitch as he watched the tip of the pup's cock emerge from his foreskin—a hot pink head that begged for attention.

Oh, fuck! Cy's mind shouted as he groaned and very nearly followed through with the thought. He wanted to roll the pup over, mount him and pound into him right there on the faded red and gold rug until the cum boiling away in his balls flooded into the wolf's ass. Cum would be a delicious addition to the ash, charcoal, and tiny splinters of wood on the rug. It was that last item that had him pulling away. He didn't want splinters anywhere near what he had planned.

The boy looked up at him—confusion and a little hurt reflected in his eyes as Cy withdrew the caress.

"Good, pup." Cy enjoyed the way the boy relaxed instantly under his approval.

A moment of silence stretched out between them as they looked one another over carefully. Cy could see the boy's eyes repeatedly drawn to the scars, but refused to hide them.

“What...what happened?” the boy eventually asked. When Cy didn’t answer immediately, the boy tensed and lower his eyes again fearfully. “I...I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have—”

“My father had many enemies at court. Enemies that sent an assassin cat that won’t be hunting ever again.” Cy growled angrily at the memory of that night so many years ago that had changed his life forever.

He’d barely been seventeen—barely been in control of his magic. But mage society was competitive. It was cutthroat and vicious. Weakness and imperfection simply were not tolerated. Cy had gone from being a first-born, talented and destined to rule his father’s holdings, to an outcast and pariah which his own sire was embarrassed to acknowledge.

Cy was so caught up in his own dark, painful thoughts, he didn’t noticed the wolf-boy move. Suddenly, a cold, wet nose touched the side of Cy’s face. He had to work very hard not to flinch. He refused to show any signs of weakness. Never again.

But when a warm tongue caressed the side of his face, Cy started in surprise. The pup looked away as if embarrassed by the spontaneous canine caress. Cy watched him in amazement. He couldn’t remember the last time someone had touched him, nevermind kissed him.

“What is your name, little wolf?” Cy couldn’t resist stroking his hand along the ruff of fur that grew at the back and sides of the boys neck like a brindle mane. It was thick and warm and infinitely fascinating. As he ran his fingers through it, the boy arched up into his touch.

“Wolf,” the boy replied on a sigh.

Cy cocked an eyebrow—not exactly doubting the little wolf, but...“Really?”

Wolf shrugged and looked away—embarrassed again. “No one ever bothered to call me anything else.”

Cy studied the side of Wolf’s long muzzle and the line of his strong head as it curved up to the tip of his sharp, pointed ears. “It’s a good name. Wolves are strong, loyal and brave,” he finally announced firmly—leaving no room for doubt or ambiguity.

Wolf looked up at him in surprise. Cy had to wonder if the boy had ever received a complement—even an offhanded one such as the one he had offered. He’d have to work hard, but for however long the boy chose to hang around, Cy wouldn’t begrudge them when earned.

“Are you hungry, Wolf?”

“Y...yes, Master.”

Cy allowed a small smile of pleasure to tilt the corner of his mouth. He liked the way Wolf said the word Master—low, rough and with an edge of longing.

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Wolf cocked his head as he watched the gorgeous man in front of him turn and head into a small cooking area.

Mage, he corrected himself instantly. The man was most definitely a Master Mage. The power swirled and throbbed around the man in shimmering eddies so strong Wolf almost felt as if he could reach out and touch them. And for the first time in his life he wanted to. In the past, mages had always scared him just a little, but not this one. Something about this one's magic was...enthraling.

The man had mesmerizing eyes too. Intense, dark blue orbs that Wolf was drawn to over and over again—despite having been warned repeatedly during his training to keep his eyes lowered in submission. Even more inappropriately, Wolf found himself wondering what the man's soft, enticing pink lips would taste like.

And the long, black hair that was caught in a leather thong at the base of his neck tempted Wolf's fingers mercilessly. Two large hanks had escaped, framing the mages long, thin face, and Wolf wanted to reach out and touch them so badly—to see if they were as soft and silky as they looked. He managed to restrain himself...just barely.

Studying the man's profile, Wolf once again found himself studying the scars on the man's face. They were three, long, thin red claw marks that made the man look fierce and...strong in Wolf's opinion. Wolf imagined they belonged to someone that had been tested and proven themselves worthy of survival. Someone that was quite capable of fighting to defend both themselves and their home. It was infinitely attractive to Wolf, whose silly heart longed for that sort of safety and security, and a Master to tie him to it.

Being a mage, Wolf would have expected a lot of things—disgust at his appearance being first and foremost. Mages didn't like imperfection and differences. But this mage didn't seem at all concerned by his oddity. In fact, he seemed a little...taken with it.

He was just so different from anyone Wolf had ever met—mage or shifter. Wolf wasn't exactly sure what to do with him. At that precise moment Wolf's cock twitched again, letting him know that if he had no idea, it had a few to offer.

Wolf shivered as he remembered the touch of the man's magic playing along his body. It was...incredible. A wild, lustful pull that called to his wolf nature, whispering promises of mating and bliss and...home. Wolf shook his head at his own foolishness. He was being utterly ridiculous.

Why on Rigial would a Master Mage give him a second glance, unless it was to stare at his strange appearance? He was—

“Something wrong?”

“N...no, Master.”

Something inside Wolf stretched out towards the mage. He wanted to rub himself all over the man until their scents blended and fused. He wanted to touch and be touched. He constantly had to stifle the growls and whines of invitation in the back of his throat. His body wanted him to lift his hips, cock his tail and brace his limbs for the man to plunge his cock into him in a wild, thorough claiming.

“So...where did you come from anyway, little wolf?” the Master asked casually as he filled a bowl from a large pot with thick stew.

Wolf managed not to fidget as he eyed the bowl hungrily. He wanted the food, but there was no way he was telling the gorgeous man in front of him he was a runaway. And not even a useful, valuable runaway. He was a freak. A curio. Part of a travelling show going from holding to holding for the amusement and awed disgust of the nobility and nosey.

He just couldn't do it. He wouldn't do it. He didn't want to see the interest he saw in the other man's eyes dim. But worse than that, he secretly knew that his heart wouldn't survive seeing pity in the mage's eyes.

The question of whether or not the mage would withhold food if Wolf refused to answer was solved when the warm bowl was placed in Wolf's hands. He lapped at it eagerly—gulping it down before the man could change his mind. But the Mage just smiled at him indulgently as he lowered himself into a large, wing-backed chair by the fire.

A rush of wind that rattled at the windows heralded the arrival of the storm. Wolf shivered just thinking about being outside it in.

“Looks like we got you in just in time,” the Mage observed.

“Thank you, Master,” Wolf whispered—so grateful he felt his heart ache a little with it.

“You're welcome, Wolf.”

Wolf quickly finished his meal and looked around, uncertain what to do or where to be. He took his bowl back to the kitchen area and carefully washed and dried it.

“Why don't you bring some cushions to the rug and enjoy the fire.”

Wolf sighed. A full belly, a warm fire and the howl of the wind outside, it was an offer too tempting to refuse. Doing as the Master suggested, Wolf gathered the cushions, tucked his legs into his body and curled his tail around himself to settle at the Master's feet.

After a few moments, a slim hand caressed Wolf's head, running his long, agile fingers over his ears and down his neck. Wolf pushed into the touch, craving more of the delicious contact. He sighed, closing his eyes in bliss. Not willing to question the perfection of the moment. And never wanting it to end.

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Cy ran his hand back through the long fall of his hair—brushing the errant strands away from his face in frustration. Wolf was driving him absolutely insane. Not necessarily in a bad way, more as in “I want him bad”.

Last night's storm had raged into the early hours of the morning, but now the forest was calm and still. The sun was even peeking out through the clouds—showcasing the forest in a glittering wonderland that belied how deadly, and lonely it could be.

Cy looked over at Wolf curled contentedly on the hearth rug. Somewhere between the food and intermittent conversation long into the night—before sleep had finally claimed them both—Wolf had calmed and settled in.

Somehow, Wolf had found a neat little place for himself between the warm fire and Cy's cold heart.

It was a shame the pup was about to get the fright of his life.

Crouching down at Wolf's side, Cy gently stroked Wolf's head. He settled his hand firmly over Wolf's muzzle as golden brown eyes flickered open—demanding silence.

“Ssh! Don't move. Trust me to keep you safe.”

Even as the words left his mouth, a heavy fist pounded on the door. Wolf's eyes grew wide and wild with fear. Cy held his breath—waiting to see what the boy would do. If Wolf trusted him, then everything would be fine. More than fine actually. If Wolf bolted, things were going to get ugly. And Cy would lose another little piece of himself—his faith in his instincts. Instincts that told him Wolf wanted to trust and ultimately submit to him.

After a moment, Cy removed his hand. The pup stayed absolutely still except for the rapid movement of his chest as he panted in fear. That was perfectly acceptable—courage without fear was meaningless.

Cy studied Wolf for a moment. His submission—the control and dedication he displayed in doing exactly as he was told—was stunning. It sent a flood of excitement through Cy so powerful he had

to take a second to find his own composure, before rising smoothly to his feet and calmly opening the door.

Outside, in the clearing that passed for Cy's front yard, a small group of heavily armed men were clustered together, fighting to control their nervous horses. Cy ignored them in favour of staring down the two guards that stood on his doorstep. He carefully kept his demeanour neutral—neither welcoming nor outright driving them away. Though the temptation was strong.

The man directly in front of him—the one who had most likely pounded on the cabin door—cleared his throat. “Good day to you, Sir. We’re—”

“Master,” Cy said coldly.

“Huh?”

Cy pointed to the lintel where the mage's sigil was displayed. Admittedly it was tarnished with weather and age—long since browned so it nearly blended in with the wooden frame—but that was no excuse. He was quite within his rights to punish them all for the lack of respect afforded his station. And the men knew it. They paled to a rather sickly shade of white-green.

“I beg your pardon, Master Mage. Forgive me.” The pair stepped back—bowing low at the waist, their hands clutching over their hearts in a frantic bid to appease.

Cy stood silent and aloof.

“We...ah...we’re chasing a runaway slave. It’s sneaky and dangerous, with a monstrous appearance. Have you seen anything...weird in the area lately?”

“No.”

The first man blinked, waiting for Cy to elaborate—perhaps even watching for a slip or a sign that something was amiss. The second man shifted from foot to foot, looking out into the forest—either worried about the possibility of another snow storm or wanting to run away from Cy. The guards trying to calm the nervous horses behind them looked like they were hoping for an invitation to come in out of the weather—obviously having missed Cy pointing out the sigil.

All of them were going to be bitterly disappointed. Cy didn't flinch. Cy didn't give a toss if the men hunting Wolf froze to death. And he certainly wasn't in the habit of inviting strangers to stay—barring gorgeous wolf-boys with warm golden eyes and tight furry asses, of course.

“Well, we...ah...we—”

“Yes, good day, gentlemen. I suggest you leave my land by sunset.”

With that, Cy closed the door in their faces. He paused long enough to reach out with his magic and feel the group clamber up onto their mounts and hurry away—the tang of fear following them out of his clearing.

Then he turned back to the frightened wolf cowering on his rug.

"You've been a very naughty pup, haven't you?"

"No, Master! I...I'm a good boy. A good pup." Wolf swallowed visibly, the silky smooth hair on his throat undulating under the nervous wave of muscles. "Y...your—?"

Wolf didn't finish the sentence. He didn't have to.

It was way too soon. Way too fast. There were a million words to say between them. A thousand touches and, hopefully hundreds of soft sighs and little whining cries. And if Cy was very lucky, perhaps even a few tears. Still, the unspoken offer—the promise of something one day—was...tempting. More than tempting. It was...intoxicating.

Which is the only explanation Cy could come up with years later for what happened next.

Surging forward, Cy gripped the thick fur at the back of Wolf's neck and yanked him closer—pulling him up from the floor until they stood toe to toe. Wolf followed eagerly, and was quickly pinned against Cy's body.

Holding him firmly in place, and acting purely on instinct, Cy rubbed his face along the side of Wolf's head, stopping only when he came to the base of one tall, triangular ear.

"Should I make you prove yourself, pup?" Cy whispered. "Prove that you're a good boy?"

Wolf whined, but pushed closer to Cy at the same time.

"P...please, Master."

Oh! So pretty!

Cy reached down and took Wolf's cock in his hand. It was hot and hard. Swiping the tip, Cy also felt how wet it was—pre-cum spilling out of the slit to coat his thumb.

"Eager little pup. Do you like that?"

Wolf whined and nodded, burying his head against Cy's neck.

"Tell me. I want to hear you."

"Y...yes...Master. Oh! Please..."

Wolf's velvety warm tongue licked over Cy's neck, sending shivers of delight racing up and down his spine. Cy felt his cock throb in his pants, seconds away from release when Wolf caressed the lobe of his ear and hesitantly reached out to clutch Cy's waist.

It was too much. Cy released the boy's cock and took a step back. He didn't want to come in his pants—not when there were better, more attractive alternatives.

"On your knees, pup."

For a moment, Wolf looked confused by the instructions, but quickly lowered himself to the floor when Cy continued to stare at him—waiting for his order to be obeyed. He couldn't help but smile

when Wolf's snout nosed forward in tiny, involuntary jerks, sniffing the air around Cy's groin. He knew the instant Wolf caught the scent of his arousal—the pup's eyes widened as he began to pant.

But Cy had other plans for that long, pink tongue.

He released the leather ties on his pants and pushed the material aside so his cock sprang free—bobbing enthusiastically in front of Wolf's face. Wolf focused on it so completely that he actually started in surprise when Cy spoke several seconds later—trying to get his attention. Cy applauded the boy's dedication, but he wanted the pup's tongue on him. Now!

"Lick it," Cy repeated, holding his cock steady and offering it to Wolf.

Slow and hesitant, Wolf leaned forward and tentatively lapped at the rounded head, swiping the drop of pre-cum that had formed at the slit. Chills of pleasure raced across Cy's skin, forcing a moan of bliss from him. The more he moaned, the braver Wolf got—it seemed foolish to hold it in.

Soon the boy was bathing Cy's entire cock, balls and even the tender, sensitive flesh where his leg met his body with his long, agile tongue. It was so delightful, Cy found himself needing to catch hold of the wolf's head to steady himself—but it only seemed to spur his lover on.

Soon it became too much again.

"Stop!"

Wolf whined and gazed up—meeting Cy's eyes with a pleading, golden-yellow look as he swiped the cock in front of him once more very lightly, as if begging to be allowed to continue.

"I said stop!" Cy forced the pup away, but eased the reprimand by stroking his hand over one silky ear, gently scratching the base with his finger tips.

"On all fours for me, pup. I want inside you now."

Cy didn't think he'd ever seen anyone move faster. Wolf spun around, lowering himself to his elbows so his ass was offered up to Cy in one swift movement. It was such an amazing display Cy had to take a moment to admire it.

Wolf's knees were spread apart for support, allowing Cy to see the glorious globes of his firm furry balls hanging full and heavy between his legs. The taunt, furry cheeks of his muscular ass were parted just enough to glimpse the tight, puckered rosette Cy longed to feel wrapped around his cock. And Wolf's thick bushy tail was cocked to the side, allowing easy access to his most private hole. It was nearly more than Cy could take. But something was missing.

"Stay," Cy growled as he hurried to the kitchen.

After ferreting around for several wasted seconds, he finally found a fresh jar of oil and rushed back. Kneeling down directly behind Wolf, Cy slathered the thin oil liberally over his cock. When Wolf looked back over his shoulder, watching him with sultry yellow eyes, Cy nearly lost all reason



and plunged straight in. But he managed to restrain himself. Instead, he took the time to circle Wolf's hole, spreading oil around to sooth and loosen the muscles, dipping his fingertips inside to open the way for his claiming.

Wolf pushed back against his fingers, softly growling, his eyes closing in eager anticipation. Cy couldn't take it any more. He lined up his cock and nudged the head into Wolf—giving a few, teasing thrusts to ease his way, before surging ahead in one long push that buried him balls deep in Wolf's ass.

Wolf arched back into him, drawing him impossibly deeper. Their balls touched for a moment, before Cy pulled back, only to plunge back in for more of Wolf's tight heat over and over again. Sweat dripped off Cy's brow. Wolf grunted and whined as he thrust back against Cy. It was pure, wild, torturous bliss. But it couldn't go on for much longer. Cy was too close. They both were.

Pressure building, Cy reached around, encircling Wolf's cock with his hand. He wanted to feel Wolf come while buried deep inside him.

"Now, Wolf. Cum for me now."

With the command, Wolf threw back his head and came, gripping Cy's cock like a vice and locking him deep inside. The pulsing contractions of Wolf's ass as he pumped spurt after spurt of cum out into Cy's hand and across the rug were all Cy needed though.

"Wolf!" Cy cried—yelling the name into the rafters as he exploded in great jerking waves of cum inside Wolf's ass.

Time hung suspended as their balls emptied. A rush of pleasure so strong swept over him that Cy lost all connection to the world. The only thing that existed was Wolf's body—warm and soft beneath his hands and wrapped around his cock.

Finally, Cy pulled free, gently guiding Wolf back against him. Wolf whined as he sat back on his heels.

"Did I hurt you." Cy heard the edge of concern in his own voice, but didn't regret it. He hadn't wanted to hurt Wolf. Well not in a bad hurt kind of way at least.

"Splinter," Wolf explained, holding out his hand for Cy's inspection.

Cy reached out and cradled it between his hands. It was surprisingly soft. An amazing combination of human hand and wolf's paw that was unique to Wolf. And in the pad of one digit a surprisingly large sliver of wood could be seen.

He'd have to remember to clean the rug thoroughly before they played in front of the fire again. And there would be an again. Winters were obnoxiously long and bitterly cold this far north.

Leaning forward, Cy lowered his mouth to the fingertip, all the while watching Wolf's golden eyes widen in surprise. He used his tongue to gently probe the area, guiding his teeth in to nip around the splinter. Gripping it firmly, Cy removed the foreign object from Wolf's paw then bathed the injury with a few gentle swipes of his tongue.

Wolf whined, wriggling his ass. Cy smiled at the telling reaction. He suddenly loved long winters.

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## Epilogue

Cy studied the smooth white expanse of fresh snow around his cabin carefully. There were no boot prints, no paw or hoof marks to mar its crisp new surface. Since last night's snow storm, nothing had passed this way. He'd make sure to set out more wards over the next days, weeks and months, but apparently the searchers had moved on.

Or perhaps simply given up. It wasn't unheard of for people to simply disappear in the Great Northern Tundra. After a week in the cold, unforgiving environment, with no clothes, food or shelter, no one would expect to find Wolf alive.

Cy smiled. He knew Wolf was very much alive—though slightly exhausted after an extended play. He'd left the pup curled up, snoring softly to complete the rounds he made twice a day since Wolf came into his life. He had a prize even more precious than solitude to protect now. He was twice as vigilant as he'd ever been before.

Weaving another, slightly stronger dissuade spell around the perimeter that would gently nudge any trespasses away from the cabin, Cy headed back. He really didn't want to have to spill blood to defend his Wolf. It was just so messy and always led to headaches. Better just to avoid the issue altogether.

But one way or another, Wolf was his, and he was staying that way. No one was getting their hands on the pup...well other than Cy, of course. And he planned to have his hands on, in and over the boy as often as possible. He didn't want anyone or anything to disrupt that goal.

Speaking of which—

Cy quietly opened the cabin door—shedding his cloak and easing off his snow encrusted boots once he had secured the latch with a locking spell. He left both boots and cloak to dry by the fire and padded into the bedroom on soft, stockinged feet. When he had left to search the perimeter, Wolf

had been curled up—fast asleep and exhausted. Expecting to see more of the same, Cy was surprised to find his little wolf awake.

Wolf's tail was lazily fanning the air in a deliberately provocative way. The gentle back and forth sway drew attention to where the root emerged above the tightest, most drool worthy ass Cy has ever had the pleasure of. Wolf's balls rested against the sheets, begging to be fondled and squeezed just enough to induce a delicious humping against the linens.

And as if that wasn't enough, Wolf's arms cradled his head in the sweetest, most enticing display of innocence Cy had ever seen. But it was the eyes—golden and soft and the tiny smile that reached out and snared Cy's heart.

The promise was still there. But now it was tempered with something even more precious. More rare and utterly beguiling. Love shone back at him—new and unspoken—but like a tiny mustard seed, it promised years if only Cy was brave enough to accept it. Strong enough to nurture it.

Without a second thought, Cy stepped into the room. He was brave. He was strong. And he was utterly, blissfully lost.

## **THE END**

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## THE NEW MAN'S ARMY by Michael S.

*Dear Santa,*

*I'm rather concerned at the moment that I'm being recruited by... Well, I'm not sure by what exactly. See there's this recruiter who's tempting me to join up, but I'm not sure what kind of group this is. It looks dangerous...sort of. I'm also afraid I may laugh inappropriately during the recruitment process and find out if that's a grenade he's carrying down there instead of something much more fun.*

*So, Santa, please help me out here and let me know what you think I should do about this recruiter and his group of... Yeah, you got me on this one.*

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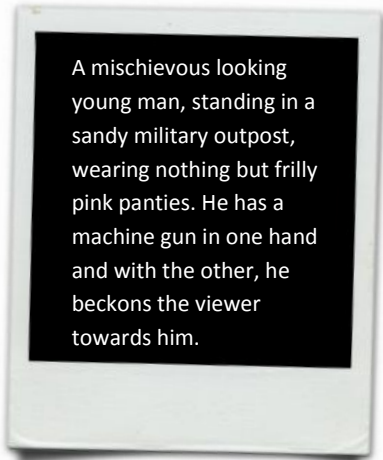
The sun was beating down harshly, and I wasn't quite used to the heat here in Israel. I had always dreamed of walking in such an ancient and beautiful country but hadn't expected what was to happen. I knew that there were blockades and soldiers watching who crossed in and out. Seeing the young soldiers walking with rifles in the street was slightly new to me. At eighteen, all Jewish men are drafted into the armed forces for a term of three years. I couldn't imagine knowing that I would be drafted and would have to serve regardless. It's definitely not like here in the states. They don't care if you're straight or gay....everyone serves their term.

I had taken a walk in the city and was wandering a bit outside the limits when a young soldier came up to me. Being a foreigner, I travelled with my passport at the ready. I wasn't very well versed in Hebrew, but luckily for me most people spoke English. He was maybe eighteen with dark hair and dark chocolate brown eyes. He walked up to me with his rifle slung over the front of his chest. It was a little intimidating, but who could resist such a beautiful young man?

"Passport?" he asked holding out his hand. A small group of his buddies were off behind him snickering about something. The heat and nervousness made me sweat a bit more. I fumbled for my passport and wound up dropping it on the ground. I reached down to pick it up and he raised his rifle. Behind him, the snicker stopped abruptly.

"I'm an American." I said voice shaking slightly. "It's ok."

"I'll be the judge of that." he said never taking his eyes off me. "Stand up."



A mischievous looking young man, standing in a sandy military outpost, wearing nothing but frilly pink panties. He has a machine gun in one hand and with the other, he beckons the viewer towards him.

Slowly I stood up with my passport in my hand. His hand shot out and grabbed it before I knew what happened. The three other soldiers began walking towards us. My nerves were starting to fray a bit. One of the soldiers walked up behind me and the other two flanked my left and right sides.

"I was just out site seeing," I began to say.

"You will come with us please." I was pushed gently from behind as they started walking off. The dark haired youth pocketed my passport and had turned to leave after ordering me to go with them. Not far off I saw what looked like barracks.

"Really, I was just out site seeing. I didn't mean to do anything wrong if I did. Did I do something wrong?" I asked the youth in front of me.

"Just come with us please. Everything will be all right. My name is Yonatin. We've had some reports lately and need to check things out. Nothing to worry about."

"But," I began to protest but was cut short when one of the other soldiers briskly gave me a shove. Apparently I was going whether I wanted to or not.

As we came closer to the barracks, Yonatin said something to the others in Hebrew. They all laughed and one patted me on the shoulder. He smiled at me and I started to feel a bit more at ease. The sun, the stress, and the heat were starting to wear me down a bit. I wanted to open my shirt to try and get more air, but thought better of it.

We arrived at the barracks and Yonatin spoke to the others again in Hebrew and they left us. Yonatin stood there smiling at me. There was a slightly devious look to it. Not quite a smile, not quite a smirk. He handed me back my passport.

"You don't look like you are used to our heat." He said turning and removing the rifle. He placed it against the side of the building. He smiled again and began unbuttoning his shirt. "I hope you don't mind. The uniform is a bit warm even for me." I saw his smooth chest emerge from under the camouflage. He finished taking off the shirt and folded it neatly, putting it on a nearby box. That devious smile returned to his face.

Yonatin rubbed the sweat from his chest and wiped it on his pants. His muscles seemed to gleam in the sun. He sat down and began taking off his boots. "Please," he said, "feel free." I unbuttoned my shirt and took it off laying it down near his. By this time he had removed his boots and socks. He stood up in the warm sand. He looked like what I imagined David to have looked like. Toned, and beautiful.

"So..." I started trying not to stare too much. "Um...did I wander somewhere I wasn't supposed to? I'm just a little confused is all." I had taken off my shoes and socks and stood up again in the warm sand.

"No," he said coming a bit closer, "it's just that we're sort of a special unit. Usually we don't see many Americans out this way." He walked up and placed his hand on my chest. "You could use something to cool you down it seems" and he proceed to wipe his hand down my chest stopping just short of the top of my pants. He smiled again and walked back to where the box was.

"Yes. It's uh...well you're right. I'm not exactly used to the heat yet. I just got here recently."

"Mmmm" he murmured and turned his back on me. When he turned around, he had removed his belt and was starting to unbutton his pants. "You get used to it eventually. Still, there's nothing better than getting out of uniform. Much cooler this way." He said dropping his pants and turning around to remove them. He was wearing nothing but what looked like thin pink panties. I could see his firm muscular ass through them, a light dusting of hair on his legs. This was definitely not what I had expected. He folded his pants and placed them with his shirt, grabbed his rifle and turned around. He looked to me like an Adonis.

I was a little leery of the rifle being picked up again, but he walked slowly towards me staring into my eyes. There was something there in that look. Something that was only slightly dangerous, slightly devious, and something that told me that I wasn't going to be harmed. His hand reached out and undid the top of my jeans.

"Uhhhh!" I started to protest. "I um...what are you doing?"

Yonatin just smiled at me as his hand remained where it was on the top of my jeans. "Just trying to make you more comfortable.", he said. With that, before I could move or say another word, his hand reached down and unzipped my pants. They fell to the dirt and I stood there in nothing but my boxers. This was beginning to become more surreal and interesting at the same time. "Off with them then." He said walking a few paces back.

I reached down, hopping slightly to remove my jeans from around my ankles. Yonatin walked around me in a circle as I did so. As I stood up, I realized he was right behind me. I felt his sweaty chest against my back, his hands reached around me and helped to support me. Fingers brushed lightly against my nipples as the sweat from our bodies mixed and mingled.

"Lean on me." He breathed softly into my ear. I leaned back against him to finish removing my other pant leg. I could feel his breath on my neck. His face was against my cheek. "You'll feel much, much better soon" he whispered in my ear. His hands travelled to my waist. I started to feel a stirring and blushed. Was this really happening? I dropped my jeans in the dirt, but Yonatin didn't stir. He simply stood there holding me now with his arms wrapped around my waist.

"I told you we were a special unit." He said softly in my ear and I felt slight nip at my earlobe. "My friends and I are stationed out here for two months at a time." His hand moved up my chest again

brushing against my nipples. "It can get very tedious and boring out here." I felt something hard against my back and realized he had pulled our bodies together.

Standing in the sun, our sweat mingling against our bodies, and his hands roaming across my chest I felt an exhilarating sense of freedom. It was as if he and I were the only two people in the world. His hands slipped lower hooking fingers in the elastic of my boxers and slowly pulling them downward. His lips brushed against the back of my neck, then were at my ear where I felt that soft breath again. There was no mistaking what was happening now. My boxers were now down around my calves.

"There is no shame in the beauty of the human body" he said softly and I felt him kiss down my back as he pulled the boxers past where they would stay by themselves. I tried to turn, but he was standing again and holding my fast. I was lost in the myriad of sensations coursing through me. Fingers moved across my body finding delicate spots that made me feel weak. I wanted to turn and kiss him. Try as I might, I was held in place.

"You see," he said kissing my neck, "we were looking for others to join us. We were hoping to recruit a few more good men." His hand moved to my crotch taking hold of the prize. "It's only two more weeks and our service is finished. There's nothing to do out here but stand guard and there's few people that pass this way" He had begun to slowly work his hand up and down on me. "Just two weeks." He said softly as I felt his other hand move to my bum. One finger slowly caressed between my cheeks and I couldn't help myself but moan slightly.

"I..." I began gasping slightly "I'm here for a month. My hotel is..."

"Shhhhh." He breathed into my ear. "There's no need for a hotel. You could stay here. There's an extra uniform. No one would know." The sweat had worked its way down my back and his now a damped finger entered me. "I'm sure we could accommodate you"

My hands reached out behind me and pulled at the pink fabric desperately pulling it away from his body. His finger pulled out and his hand shot up to my face forcing it to turn as his lips met mine and my hands helped guide him to where we both wanted to be. His lips parted slightly and our tongues met. A groan escaped me as I felt him push inside.

"Welcome to our army" he said kissing me again as we stood in the warm sand, the sun beating down, lost in our ecstasy.

**THE END**

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## ROMMY AND JULES by Xara X. Xanakas

*Dear Santa,*

*I've been very good this year (you know, depending on who you ask...) and I was hoping for a pet.*

*I know cats and dogs don't normally get along, but these two seem to be doing just fine. Do you think I've earned a little love this year?*

\*\*\*\*\*

Rommy smiled as Jules started purring against his chest, the low vibrations tickling his skin. He curled up to rub his cheek along the close-cropped black hair and wondered to himself.

'How did we wind up here?'

One minute, he had treed the big tomcat, and it seemed as if he had his tongue down his throat the next.

Jules had been strutting past his yard for months, tail held high, swishing in the air as he went about slowly driving Rommy out of his mind. Solid black fur, except for that intriguing white puff at the end of his tail. He looked like someone had held him by it to dip him in paint. The huge green eyes would zero in on Rommy as he would pass on the sidewalk.


Jules the man was no less striking. The close-cropped black hair only accented the luminous green eyes. Long black eyelashes drew your attention to them, and you were sucked in. Rommy tried to deny the attraction, but he would always notice Jules. Taking out the trash, mowing the yard in nothing but a pair of loose cut off sweats, climbing the ladder to clean out the gutters, Rommy noticed the man every day.

He knew he shouldn't do anything about the magnetic pull he felt toward his neighbor. There was a reason for the phrase "fighting like cats and dogs."

Today, when Jules began his prance, that tail swishing, reminding Rommy of that hot, tight ass he'd been trying to ignore, he snapped. He shifted and took after the tomcat. Jules took refuge on a high branch in the tree between their houses. His tail puffed up, looking like a raccoon's, and all the hair along its spine stood at attention. His ears flattened against his head, and he aimed a low, wailing howl down at Rommy.

Rommy paced around under that tree, barking his fool head off. He was biding his time. The cat had to come down at some point.

'When he does, he's mine,' Rommy thought.



Two handsome young men  
cuddle naked on a white  
bed with a white fur  
blanket pulled up their  
waists; each is tattooed on  
his bicep – one has a wolf's  
head and the other cat  
footprints



Rommy watched in horror as the cat backed himself out on a branch and lost his footing. The cat tumbled out of the tree, head first, rushing toward the ground.

Jules righted himself mid-air, and sure enough, landed on his feet. It didn't cause any damage, but it did sting and send shockwaves through his system.

Both men shifted to their human forms, grateful the magic allowing them to shift returned their clothes. Suddenly appearing on the street could attract enough attention, appearing buck-naked could be disastrous.

"Hey man, are you all right?"

"What the fuck do you care?" Jules was yelling.

"That was a big fall. Maybe you should sit down."

"Why the fuck did you do that?" Jules was sputtering and flailing about.

Rommy hid his smile as Jules continued to berate him. He couldn't help but admire the fire in those green eyes, making them shine like emeralds in a jeweler's case. Though he was several inches shorter than Rommy's six feet, he had broad shoulders, tapering to a narrow waist, a hot, tight ass Rommy couldn't ignore anymore, and an impressive basket for a man his size. A circle of paw prints running around his bicep peeked out from the short sleeve of his t-shirt as he waved his arms up at the branch he fell from.

"And another thing..."

"Huh?" Rommy's thoughts had drifted during Jules' tirade.

Jules stared at Rommy.

"You son of a bitch."

"Pussy."

They stared at each other, a playful smirk on Rommy's face, sheer confusion on Jules'. Their words sunk in, and the most adorable, incredulous look crossed Jules' handsome face. Rommy couldn't help it. He pulled his neighbor into his arms and kissed him. Jules stiffened in his arms, but released a sigh, parting his lips and relaxing into Rommy's arms.

"Finally," he breathed against Rommy's mouth.

Frantic groping, grinding, and kissing drove both men to the brink. If they didn't get off the street soon....

Rommy pulled out of the kiss.

"Your place or mine?" A cheesy smirk played on his lips.

"Mine. I know where I keep the lube." Jules pulled out of Rommy's arms and rushed up the sidewalk to his house, pulling off his t-shirt and swishing that hot, tight ass Rommy was done ignoring.

"You coming? Or are you just breathing heavy?" Jules' taunt broke Rommy out of his trance. With a snarl, he took off to follow. Jules squeaked and ran through his front door, leaving it open on his way to the stark white living room at the back of the house. He pulled the shaggy white blanket off the couch on his way to the thick pile rug on the floor near the windows. Sheer white curtains diffused the bright sunlight.

By the time Rommy made it in, Jules was naked, lube and condoms on the floor next to him. He stopped in his tracks. The vision waiting for him took his breath away. The soft white light surrounding Jules' golden skin made the man look like an angel. The green eyes bored into his soul, adding to the ethereal quality of the being waiting for him – HIM – on the floor.

"You gonna stand there all day?" Jules' voice was low, husky with desire. The look of pure lust on his face made all Rommy's blood rush south in a hurry, making him dizzy. He swayed a bit, taking in the sight of his debauched angel.

Jules leaned back on one elbow and bent his knees, putting his feet flat on the floor. He let one knee fall to the floor, opening himself, and stroked his long shaft, pulling the foreskin forward and back over the head with his left hand. His eyelids sank lower, the green eyes cutting into Rommy like lasers. He poked his tongue out to lick his lips. Rommy stood, rooted to the spot, unable to stop watching the show.

Jules shifted his hips a little, and moaned as a bead of pre-cum leaked from the tip of that beautiful cock. He brought his hand up and wiped it on his lips, and Rommy heard another moan. He was a little surprised to realize it had come from him. When Jules leaned all the way back to the floor and brought his right hand around to tug on his balls, Rommy finally moved. He crossed the distance in three long strides and knelt next to Jules, not wishing to impede his progress. The sight of him stroking and fondling himself was just too gorgeous. Rommy leaned forward and took that open mouth in a kiss, licking along those full lips, tasting that bead of pre-cum on them. He groaned and thrust his tongue into Jules' mouth, reveling in the friction caused by slightly rough tongue he found waiting for him. He rocked his hips along the side of Jules, careful not to dislodge either hand from their important task. He watched, fascinated, as the foreskin moved back and forth. His mouth watered at the thought of taking that into his mouth, tasting every bit of anything Jules had to offer. His eyes feasted at they slowly traced back up the expanse of the body laid out before him.

"I think you're overdressed, dog boy." Jules' voice was breathy and low. Rommy leaned forward and took one perfect brown nipple into his mouth. Jules hissed and arched his back, trying to push more of himself into Rommy's mouth.

Rommy smiled at the reaction and pulled back to flick his tongue over the tightened bud. Jules squirmed under him, pulling faster on his cock. His hips started bucking as Rommy kept up the assault on the nipple in front of him.

Rommy pulled back to admire the flush crossing Jules' face. The pure bliss on his face stopped his heart for a second, and he reached out to wrap his hand around the base of Jules' cock. Jules bucked and trembled for a second, then he brought his right hand up to wrap around Rommy's neck and pull him down for a searing kiss. He continued bucking into Rommy's hand, and Rommy continued rocking into Jules' hip.

Finally, Jules let go of his erection and put both hands on the hem of Rommy's t-shirt.

"Off. Need skin," he panted. Rommy pulled back a little to kiss him, then stood. He stepped back a few feet, still taken with the picture of debauchery on the floor waiting for him. He met Jules' eyes, only losing them for a second as he pulled the shirt over his head. Then he hooked his thumbs into his waistband to push his shorts and briefs down. His heavy cock bounced with its newfound freedom, and his balls hung low and full under a neatly trimmed nest of dark hair.

Jules rose to his knees and crawled to Rommy. He kissed Rommy's thighs from knees to the crease where they met his groin, rubbing his razor-stubble whiskers along them. He ran his tongue along that crease and down the thick length in front of him. Rommy grunted and shuddered in front of him. Jules ran his tongue under the pinched foreskin at the tip, and Rommy growled as his cock grew rigid. When Jules took the entire length down his throat, Rommy groaned with pleasure. Jules bobbed his head a few times, then Rommy pulled out. Jules looked up, the question clear in his eyes.

Rommy leaned down to push on Jules' shoulders. "Lay down."

Jules leaned back as Rommy's heavy body covered him. He ran his hands up Rommy's back from his hips to the nape of his neck and back down as Rommy nipped, licked, and kissed his neck. Jules bucked up into Rommy with each bite, and Rommy ground down with each pass of Jules' nails down his back and ass.

With a growl, Rommy began working his way down Jules' body. He licked and nibbled at both nipples, then dragged his tongue across Jules' torso, tracing the lines of his abs. He stopped when he got to the nest of soft black hair at the base of Jules' cock. He breathed in the musky scent, then ran his tongue down the crease of Jules' leg to his balls. He sucked one in his mouth, gently tugging on the delicate skin. Then he repeated with the second before dragging his tongue behind them to the

soft skin of the perineum, and further to the glorious hole of that hot, tight ass Rommy would never again ignore.

He grabbed Jules behind the knees and pushed them up to get better access, then he swiped the flat of his tongue across it. Jules bucked and hissed with pleasure. He did it again, and he had to hold the writhing body down. He traced the wrinkles of it with the tip of his tongue before finally pushing into it. Jules trembled and pushed back against him. Rommy's nose was buried in Jules' balls, and he nuzzled them, sniffing deeply. Jules purred, and his cock started tapping Rommy's forehead in time with his heartbeat.

"Be a good neighbor," Jules whined. "Please fuck me already."

Rommy chuckled against the hole, and pulled his mouth back to lap at Jules' balls, taking them into his mouth again, then worked his way down the cock that had been trying to get his attention. Jules closed his eyes and moaned.

Rommy never took his mouth off Jules as he grabbed the lube and slicked his fingers. He hissed when Jules groaned and pushed back against his fingers. He hollowed his cheeks, sucking hard as he carefully pressed two fingers into that hot, tight ass Rommy was now powerless to ignore.

He thrust his fingers into Jules in time with the rhythm of his head bobbing on Jules' cock. Jules bucked and thrust and tried to both fuck Rommy's mouth and himself with Rommy's fingers. Finally Rommy couldn't stand it anymore. He pulled off Jules' rod and leaned back to look into eyes that had gone glassy and hazy in his passion. Jules reached out to him, and Rommy found a condom pressed into his hand. He looked back at Jules, who licked his lips and nodded.

"Please." Jules was panting, the muscles of his abdomen moving up and down in a fast tempo. Rommy's hands shook as he tore open the package. He pulled his foreskin back and rolled the condom down his own leaking cock. It was a tight fit, and he was glad for it. He didn't think he would last too long once he was finally seated, so the extra pressure at the base helped control his need. He used a little more lube on the outside of the condom, then he lifted one of Jules' legs by the ankle and positioned the head at Jules' opening.

"Ready?" His own voice was dark with hunger. Jules licked his lips again and lifted his other leg to wrap around Rommy's waist and bucked against the cock nudging his hole.

Rommy started pressing in slowly. He felt the ring resist, then it finally loosened to allow the head to pop through. Jules sighed with relief and pressed back further, urging Rommy to fill him completely. At last, he was buried balls-deep in that hot, tight ass Rommy couldn't believe he had ignored for so long.

He rocked forward, impaling Jules and stretching him open further by trapping his thigh between their chests. He leaned forward to kiss Jules, and thrust at the same time.

Jules threw his head back when Rommy hit that spot. Rommy pulled back and did it again, causing Jules to see stars. He kept at it until Jules was reduced to a series of hoarse guttural grunts. The friction of Rommy's groin against Jules' trapped cock was exquisite, and he was panting and keening into Rommy's mouth.

Rommy pounded into Jules until he felt that tingling beginning at the base of his spine. As his balls started to tighten up, he reached between them to grab Jules' cock. Jules was so close to the edge, it only took a couple of strokes before he let out a high yowl, spilling hot over Rommy's fist. His channel slammed tight against Rommy's sheathed cock, and he dragged Rommy into orgasm with him. Rommy howled as he filled the condom, thrusting forward with short, erratic movements.

Spent, Rommy collapsed onto Jules, tilting slightly to support some of his boneless weight. They panted against each other for long minutes as Rommy softened and began to slip out. He reached down to hold the condom as he pulled out of Jules, then he tied off the latex and dropped on top of the t-shirt he tossed aside earlier. He rolled onto his back and pulled Jules on top of him. Both men sighed contentedly.

"Now that's what I call doggie style." Jules settled his head against Rommy's chest, closed his eyes and started purring. Rommy settled back and allowed himself to drift in the warm feeling.

Jules was still for a few minutes, then raised his head and looked around, blinking his eyes against the light.

"Cat nap?" Jules nodded and stretched out, grinding their naked groins together, creating the most delicious friction between their cocks. Both started showing renewed interest. He used his tongue to trace the tribal design running across Rommy's strong chest.

"Tell me about this one." Jules was tracing the modified Yin-Yang symbol on Rommy's shoulder.

"Idealistic youth. The cat yin to the dog yang. Opposites attracting and balancing each other."

"Well, we seemed to attract and balance pretty well here." He idly traced the spiky designs along Rommy's bicep and forearm.

Rommy chuckled as he nuzzled against Jules' hair

"What's so funny?" Jules asked, grinding his hips down a little harder.

"Us. You do realize we are a walking, talking fucking cliché, right?"

"Well, you finally got the fucking part, at least." Jules ground down again, then stretched up to kiss Rommy's nose.

"I'm serious. I am a dog named Romeo. You are a cat named Julius."

“So that whole tree incident was our own fucked-up balcony scene? Does that make me the sun?” he asked, blinking dramatically.

Rommy chuckled as Jules continued his paraphrased melodramatic soliloquy.

“Deny thy species and refuse thy nature, and I’ll no longer be a cat. That which we call a dog by any other name would be so sexy.” Jules scooted forward and kissed Rommy, long and firm.

“You know it didn’t turn out too well for them.”

“Well, we’ve re-written the leads. We’ll just have to re-write the ending, too.”

Rommy pulled Jules tighter into his arms and rolled him onto his back, marking him with a gentle kiss. He reached one hand in between them to grasp their rapidly filling cocks in one hand and begin stroking.

“Count on it.”

**THE END**

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## THE CONQUERORS by Mark Alders

*Dear Santa,*

*I've Been a VERY bad girl this year, I just can't help myself. I keep sneaking into locker rooms and spying on the boys... but I got caught before all the interesting stuff started. Could you tell me what happened with these hotties??*

\*\*\*\*\*

### Chapter One

*"Welcome sports fans to the games of the one-hundred and fiftieth Olympiad. What a sensational line up of action we have for you on this beautiful morning now that the Perseid meteor shower has moved on beyond the complex here high above Earth's atmosphere. I've been informed that the Olympic Park venue is cruising some thirty kilometres above sea level in geosynchronous orbit, but really, the action is so thick and fast here no one really cares. Let's pick up proceedings from within the Yokohama complex where the zero-G wrestling grid is providing its share of some fantastic entertainment. The game about to start is between Chalky Jones, representing Australia, and Yoshi Guo of Japan. Over to you, Howard."*

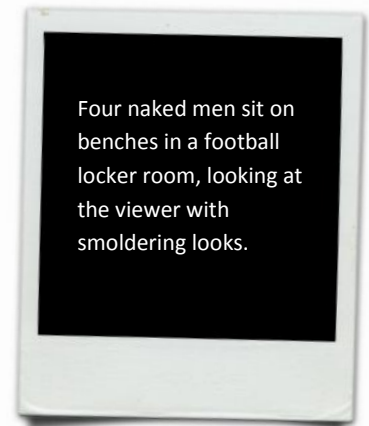
"You right to go, Chalky, my man?" Jasper slapped his team mate on his bare, muscular buttocks.

Through his mouth guard, Chalky, all smooth and hairless no matter where Jasper looked and admired, replied, "Yeah, sure thing, captain."

Jasper loved the *International Olympic Committee's* ruling of twenty five-hundred that all athletes, both male and female, must compete naked. Stopped anyone using cybernetic devices or organic enhancers. Nothing worse than a cheat. Besides, seeing all that fit flesh running around sure got sports damn good ratings, too. "Good. Good. Now go pin that sucker to the wall or hold him as best you can. You do that and we'll get the clear points, the gold medal game in our sights, okay?"

Chalky glanced to his captain. The look of determination in his eyes, the hunger for victory and the celebration afterward more than clear to Jasper.

The call to the grid whistle blew.



Jasper smiled, watching Chalky push himself from the team's bunker wall and glide into the grid area, free-fall style. The gravity turbines were off, weightlessness the result. Fuck, he hoped Chalky could manage against the Japanese competitor. He was a slippery one, able to get out of locks as easy as a fish from bare hands.

*"Thanks, Chuck. Yes, folks, this match is going to be tight, there's no doubt about it, whoohoo! We have two very close competitors here, both in style and strength. Sure is going to be interesting to see how the points will tally up, as I think an all out pin to the wall will be a remote chance. I also think the referees know this, so they'll keep a close eye on all the moves."*

The second whistle blew.

Both competitors came to the centre area of the grid, held onto the floating support holds scattered about the grid, shook hands, and listened to the referee give his spiel on good sportsmanship before they separated, waiting for the green light. Chalky looked even more determined, his brow creased, his sexy blue eyes a steely gaze. His six pack and every other muscle on his body bulging with anticipation as he got into position.

Jasper couldn't help but keep the smile on his lips. "Go, Chalky!" he screamed out with the rest of the crowd until his voice was hoarse. The air was electric, the tension so real that Jasper could swear his heart refused to beat while he waited for the go signal from the referee.

Once more, Jasper sent his gaze over Chalky. Sure, checking out Chalky's cock wasn't an option these days, especially since the rules of play had been amended after all the blatant grabbing that went on to try and gain an advantage, especially in wrestling. From within two Olympics of the IOC *naked competitor* ruling for fairness, all male competitors had to have their genitals detached before any event.

Jasper glanced between his legs. Seeing nothing there, other than what looked like a flat skin bridge, sure took some getting used to. Still, better than having one's balls ripped out of their sack, as happened to that poor Russian fellow way back in twenty-five hundred and eight. Jasper shuddered at that thought, felt sick to the stomach, in fact. Taking a piss, getting horny thoughts, even readjusting one's self, all had to be put on hold until the game was done and retrieval and reattachment was achieved.

The green signal sounded, knocking Jasper from his reverie. Chalky flew from his starting position like a cat would on unsuspecting prey, his leg muscles taut. It was a beautiful sight, poetry in motion.



*“Yee haaa, and a here we go! Seems Chalky started well, able to move Yoshi back a bit on the grid. That’ll get him a point. Ah, yes, the ref has now ordered a break. Looks to me like there was an illegal hold and both competitors were unable to gain any advantage. Yes, wait. It was an illegal hold. (whistle sounds) The representative from Japan got too frisky there folks and tried to gain advantage just a bit too eagerly, I think. That might have cost him, but still, the tactic may have worked. Chalky looks a bit rattled. Can he come back with the same enthusiasm from this next defensive start? Stay tuned to find out as we grab a word from our sponsor, cryo-freeze—freeze your family for your sanity and your life.”*

Jasper grabbed a towel.

Chalky pushed his way toward his captain, using one of the extra supports that had come down from the ceiling. The other member of the team, a well built bloke named Padrig, joined Jasper in offering encouragement to their comrade.

“You’re doin’ great there, Chalky,” Padrig said, slapping him on his back and pecking him on his cheek at the same time.

Chalky nodded. Sweat had gathered on his brow, his skin a nice sheen from his efforts. “Sure, sure.”

“Don’t let the fucker rattle you. Stay frosty,” Padrig said.

Again Chalky nodded.

Jasper dabbed the towel across Chalky’s brow. “You hang in there. You’re ahead on points. That’s all that matters. Do as Padrig says, stay cool, okay?”

“He’s playing a bit dirty,” Chalky said. “The weasel.”

Jasper smiled. “Not as dirty as we’re all going to get later when you win this.”

Padrig laughed, also coming to slap Chalky on his back. “When I get my dick back, it’s so going in that tight arsehole of yours, if you can pull this off.” He then kissed Chalky again, this time square on his lips. The sight of their tongues touching, a glimpse of shared saliva, made Jasper’s stomach turn in a delicious way. He loved how close his team were. Then again, competing and training and being with each other night and day was a natural flow of all that. When parted, Padrig added, “And I’ll suck you so hard after that you won’t need to go to the detachment centre next game.”

A glint in Chalky’s eyes more than revealed his liking for his teammate’s encouragement.

The whistle sounded.

*"After the short break, the competitors are back in the grid. Gadzooks, doesn't Chalky look a lot more relaxed since his return from the bunker? Bet his hunky team captain, Jasper Arnold, had some encouraging words to say. Sure, Chalky is their last competitor for the semi-final game, but I wouldn't rule out Australia from this match just yet. (Green signal sounds) Whoo hoo, and again, wow, what a start. Yoshi went for the higher air and what looks to me like a half Nelson manoeuvre straight off the bat. I haven't seen one of those for years. Are these Japanese desperate? Or are they still playing mind games? Who knows, and time will tell and all that, but from what I can see, Chalky defended himself well. He turned his defensive stance into one that was able to get him out of that hold. Some good points there."*

Jasper gasped. The half Nelson had Chalky held for a lot longer than he would have liked. Thankfully, the referee was lenient, as the hold was a little low.

Padrig came to stand beside Jasper. "He's goin' to be fine. This one's in the bag."

"Good thing Chalky shaves his legs. Otherwise he might not have been able to get out of that so easily."

"Perhaps I should shave mine, hey? Coach might like it if my opponents don't have stuff to hold onto."

Jasper turned to look upon Padrig proper. He wasn't a big, burly bloke, but he was well built all the same. He was slightly hairy and muscular and as alluring as any man he'd set his gaze upon, even his hands were huge. A good sign. Jasper also loved how his hair, thick and of the strawberry blond kind, added to the picture of what made him a man, one who oozed so much masculinity, detached cock or not. "Naw. Don't you change a fucking thing, my man. I love getting my nose lost in that bush of yours while your cock's deep down my throat. Besides, you're in a different weight class to Chalky. He's against all the twinks, the ones who'll grab onto anything and hang on for dear life. You're the bear wrestler, no pussy footing around for you, my friend."

Before Padrig could answer, three red light signals ignited the grid, setting the crowd to silence.

*"Shiver me timbers, what do we have here? Seems the game has been declared. The Japanese competitor was trying too hard to rile his opponent, performing too many illegal holds below the waist and around the neck. We'll wait for the official word, but, jiminy cricket, to me it's a foregone conclusion here folks. There may be a Japanese protest, but yes...hang on...three red lights. It's official."*

*The game goes to Australia. Chalky has done it. Chalky has done it! What a match. I knew it would be close, but I didn't suspect in all the years I've had hot dinners that for one minute Japan would turn to such desperate acts. Goes to show, play it cool and it will go your way. Jasper must have given Chalky the right sort of Voodoo! Back to you, Chuck."*

\*\*\*

Jasper, Chalky and Padrig all walked hand in hand with smiles that couldn't be wiped away toward the reattachment centre outside the wrestling grid complex.

"You lads were awesome," Coach Andrew Macmillan said, slapping them all on their backs. "Now see you all later for the post match meeting. I've got to log the win with the committee."

The coach turned his attention elsewhere, taking his support staff with him as he left the grid building. Jasper knew what he meant by *post match meeting*. Coach liked to join in the fun. Who could blame him? Heavy fucking action, getting all hot and sweaty, was something no guy could resist.

When Jasper turned his attention back to his team mates, hundreds of fans had surrounded them. How he didn't see them all gather, he didn't know. Well okay, he did. He was staring at Andrew's arse. Even though the man didn't wrestle on a competitive level anymore, he was still damn fine.

"Can you sign my dick, Jasper? I think you're just the best," a stocky but somewhat attractive man in his early forties said, holding the elastic of his sweat pants down so the full view of his natural attributes could be seen. He was well endowed, which was just as well. A signing can turn out to be quite embarrassing for a poor man who isn't long enough to fit the words *Jasper Arnold* across the length of his cock. Jasper was handed a marker by Chalky. Where he got it from was anyone's guess.

Many fans wanted their skin decorated with Jasper's scrawl, including three on women's breasts, one on a handsome man's backside and plenty more on pecs and stomachs and genitals. Jasper breathed in the sweet air of victory as he accepted the accolades. Nothing beat the feeling he had now, and when he got his own dick back, he'd let Padrig and Chalky and coach know about it, too.

Before he knew it, he had become separated from his teammates, swept away by those who offered their congratulations and skin. Still, he didn't mind. The guards were all around and the fans were jovial. He'd meet up with his team later for their traditional post match fun, cocks at the ready.

Many minutes were spent with the public before he decided that he'd better go and get his equipment put back on, the need for his bladder to release becoming more pressing than greeting all the wrestling fans.

Inside the facility that held the athlete's genitals, or removed them for the stasis chamber depending on whether a game was about to start or had finished, Jasper followed the sign that read, reattachment centre. The corridors that led there were sterile, all white and cold. If it wasn't for all the other men milling about, the place would be quite disturbing. Still, getting his cock back was more important than the aesthetics of the place that held it.

When at the reattachment centre's reception counter, and it was his turn for the front of the cue, a robot greeted him. In a cold simulated male voice, it said, "Please place your ID code into the pin pad, competing athlete."

Jasper typed his code. JA1110002125894545AU.

"Thank you. Retrieving your genitals now. Please wait," the robot chimed as the cylindrical wall behind it spun around, revealing thousands of slots. Most of the holes were filled with steel boxes placed behind a stasis field.

An arm from the robot reached up as a box glowed blue and was pushed by an automated system inside the cylinder an inch or so out of the slot. Such a thing indicated that his genitals were ready for retrieval and the skin inside the box at the right temperature for reattachment. Jasper knew he only had a few moments to get to the technician in the next room. Once stasis was halted, the skin died within about a half an hour.

The robot handed Jasper his box.

Jasper so wanted his cock back, if only to take a slash. He looked down at the box. The lid was made of a special stasis friendly perspex, so checking out your own dick was an easy thing to do. What Jasper saw made his heart skip a beat and his throat constrict to the point of him finding it hard to swallow. With words as calm as he could manage, he said, "I think there's been a mistake. This isn't my dick, my man!"

The robot's façade remained unchanged. It's bulb like eyes within its squarish head reflected no change other than to intensify in colour as it replied. "Are you athlete JA1110002125894545AU?"

"Yeah!" Jasper could see where this was going, and he didn't like it.

"Then that is your genitalia. Next athlete, please."

Jasper looked down at the box once more. He tried to keep calm as best he could, but he knew the knot in his stomach from the anger that washed over him would soon rise up and he'd lose his cool. "What colour am I?"

"You are of African American decent. Your skin reflects that heritage."

He shoved to stasis box in front of the robot's cold, illuminated eyes. "Then tell me why this dick is white. Sure, it's real nice, but it just ain't mine, that's all." Jasper mentally counted to ten. "Why in my right mind would I get a white dudes schlong attached between my legs, hmmm?"

"Because that is your genitalia according to the ID code you imprinted. Perhaps you are mistaken. There have been plenty of men who have tried to take better genitalia than their own in the past."

"I have damn fine genitalia, thank you very much!"

"No need to get defensive, competing athlete. If you would like to lodge a complaint, please return the box back to stasis and fill out the appropriate claim forms over in the claims department on level two."

"How long will that take?" Jasper asked between his teeth, now breathing hard. His anger boiling up inside him.

"Twenty four hours," the robot replied in his cold, mechanical voice. A voice that now grated on Jasper to no end.

"What?" Jasper roared. "I can't wait that long. Besides the fact I've got a post match meeting tonight, I need to go to the loo real bad."

"You can have your bladder syphoned free of charge while your claim is being considered. Please return the box so it can go into quarantine and remain in the stasis field."

Jasper was about to jump onto the counter and throttle the electric life out of the mechanical idiot who was in charge of something so important yet failing miserably, when he felt a hand on his shoulder. He turned. Behind him was a man that took his breath away. Tall, thin and with a smile that would have made him weak in the legs so he'd have no choice but to kneel down before him given any other circumstance.

"I think you have my dick," the man said, cool and casual and never once letting his smile slip away. "My number ID number is only one digit different to yours. A nice happy accident, hey?"

Jasper opened his mouth. No sound eventuated except a sigh of breath that melted away all his anger. Finally, he managed, "I have? It is?"

"Yeah. And I've got yours." The man reached out his hand. With one fluid motion he took his stasis box and handed Jasper's his own. "Nice bit of equipment, too. I wouldn't mind getting to see it attached and in action. You've got a foreskin I could chew on for a week and still beg for more."

"Who...are...you?" Jasper felt as dumb as the robot counter server for asking, but he'd never seen this man before in his life. He would have known if he had. He'd have asked him out within a

heartbeat. He was gorgeous. All smooth skinned, but with golden hair that he could run his fingers through for an eternity where it mattered. Something about skinny dudes did it for Jasper. Did it so bad, he'd bend him over and lick his rim until his spine turned to jelly so he was ripe for anything without hesitation.

"I'm Carlos Mendoza. Marathon runner, and this is my first Olympiad. How about you? What's your story?"

Jasper licked his lips. "Well, after we get our dicks back on, how about I tell you everything you need to know over lunch? Something hearty and filling like a real piece of meat cooked on the barbeque. My treat."

Carlos shook his head. "Can't do that."

"Why not?" Jasper's heart sank. Had he blown his chance with Carlos before he'd even begun because he was too pushy?

"Because the only meat I want to eat is yours, and I'm afraid a lunch like that might fill me up too much." Again that smile remained on his full, plump, kissable lips.

Jasper's stomach turned in a delicious way. Not many men did that to him. "Then I suggest we get our gear on and go play. Where you want to go?"

"The Luna View rooms. I hear they're perfect for all sorts of occasions, including the intimate kind."

"Deal." Jasper leaned over to plant a kiss onto Carlos's lips. The man accepted him, offering a glimpse of his tongue to help sweeten the moment. "Meet you there in an hour—oh, damn. I can't do that. I've got a post match then. How about later on tonight, around seven?"

For the first time Carlos lost his smile. "I can't do that, either. I've got training then."

Jasper grabbed a card and pen from the counter. "I'll give you my room's number. Meet me tomorrow after our first round match, okay?"

"You sure?"

"Sure, I'm sure."

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"Hey, you look like you just saw the Saint of old Mary," Padrig said to Jasper as he entered the team's headquarters and meeting room located within the zero-G wrestling grid complex. They patted each other on the back.

"I'll tell you about it later. Let's just say my mix up at the reattachment centre got me some fine tail."

"Finally got you some skinny dude, hey mate?" Chalky added, a cheeky smile accompanying his words.

"You bet."

"You've got to bring him home to us, too," Padrig said. "Got to see what turns our man on."

Jasper smiled. "You know what turns me on. You guys attach it to yourselves after each game."

Chalky dropped his pants. "You're such a cock slut, Jasper." He then grabbed his dick and waggled it, slightly retracting his ample foreskin so that a teasing view of his pink, moist head and lickable piss slit could be seen. "I like a man who knows what he wants."

At that moment, Coach Andrew Macmillan entered the room. "Good game today guys. But the toughest game is yet to be fought. Who wants to start the meeting—ah, I see chalky already has his motion put before us. He can start then."

Chalky got up onto the table that adorned the centre of the room. He removed the rest of his clothes. He retracted his foreskin fully, revealing his now bulging head. Pre-cum dribbled from his dick, catching the light and glistening like a spider web soaked with morning dew. "I propose that you all get down and suck on my big Aussie monster. I played a good game today, and I say we should have some damn good fun as a reward."

"I like that motion, Chalky," Padrig said as he removed his clothes as well, coming so that his lips were at his team mate's cock. Seconds later, Padrig had taken him into his mouth, slurping and sucking so that Chalky had no option but to get harder and groan like a man loving every minute of the attention.

Jasper smiled. Chalky was a bitch, no two ways about that. Good thing, too. He was the one who usually got all the pounding.

Jasper took off his clothes, too. He retracted his foreskin, his head as large and ready as it had ever been, hardened by the thought of Carlos and their encounter earlier. He came so he was behind Padrig, feeling his buttocks, letting him know of his intention.

Padrig's arse was amazing, more firm and tight than even Chalky's. The man moaned as Jasper worked his way to his rim with his touch, unable to talk seeing as he was stuffed to the tonsils with

cock. Jasper liked it like that anyway. Nothing better than having a man writhe, unable to do anything but groan for more, while every hole was being fucked.

Coach Andrew slicked Jasper's cock with lube, making sure every millimetre of his length was covered, offering a smile. "Thanks, coach—," Jasper's words were cut short by the man coming to kiss him, send in his tongue to conquer Jasper. He tasted sweet and salty all at the same time. Andrew was divine, a god who walked the Earth as far as Jasper was concerned. His dark hair, thick in the places that mattered, was all he could see think about while his coach danced and chased his tongue within his mouth. When parted, Andrew said, "Now give Padrig a good hard fuck. He's been a bastard all day after the win."

"Yes, Coach," Jasper said. Licking his lips of his coach's efforts.

Andrew removed his clothes. He was hard. His foreskin, as loose as Jasper had ever seen even when flaccid, still covered his cock. The coach came so that he was on the table and behind Chalky, lubricating himself while he got into position.

Soon Chalky was bent over just enough so Andrew could enter him, legs spread wider. He let out a cry of both pleasure and pain when the coach sunk his cock into Chalky's hole. "Oh, fuck! That hit the goddamn spot, coach."

Andrew closed his eyelids, concentrating on his efforts while his deep breathing set the rhythm of his actions like a metronome. He had his hands gripped tight around Chalky's waist. The sight of them together was beautiful.

Padrig didn't let anything disturb his cock sucking and continued unabated, coming so he was more underneath Chalky, craning his neck so he could still take his cock as deep as he had before. The air was soon filled with sucking and slapping as the action heated up between the coach and his team.

"Ready, Padrig?" Jasper had fingered Padrig's hole so that he was nice and loose, deciding that his rim needed a good tonguing before he ploughed the man with his meat. That fingering was punctuated with buttock slapping and tight grabs to let him know Jasper meant business, the result delightful little groans.

Of course, Padrig couldn't answer. Instead, he groaned, giving his acknowledgement. That was all the encouragement Jasper needed. He came to lick his team mate's arse like a person would an ice cream on a hot summer's day, lashing his tongue in great long movements across his rim, wetting him all over. He also made sure he caught the back of his big, red balls and the area of skin between them and his rim. Jasper knew that Padrig would be driven wild inside as all his senses were coerced into overdrive from his tongue movements.



Padrig arched his back.

Jasper's efforts had achieved his desired result. Now was the time to finish off what he started, make Padrig blow his load and lose his mind without even having to touch himself. A man's dream beyond any other.

A few moments were spent gently feeding his cock into Padrig's arsehole. The man groaned more and more as Jasper pushed in his length. The man almost gagged when Chalky grabbed the back of Padrig's head and sunk his cock in until he was nose deep in his blond pubes.

Padrig shuddered.

He had blown his load, great ribbons of cum spurting across the table. At that moment, coach Andrew said, "Chalky, for winning the match for us you're going to take us all."

Chalky's face was red, flushed with the feeling of ecstasy that would be rising up more and more inside him. "Sure thing, coach."

Jasper pulled his cock out of Padrig's hole. The warmth of his team mate was missed in an instant. Still. He'd soon have Chalky. That more than kept his erotic thoughts alive and his dick as hard as ever.

A moment was spent getting Chalky into position. He was laid on his back on top of Andrew. Padrig helped place the coach's cock back into Chalky's arsehole. Soon, the sight of Andrew's balls bouncing as he got his rhythm back, and of Chalky's rim stretched, was something that stirred Jasper into action.

Jasper parted Chalky's legs wider, shuffling up onto the table so he could get to his already filled team mate's arse hole. "You're going to get your reward for sure, Chalky."

But Chalky couldn't answer. Padrig had come around so that his cock, gaining hardness again, was fed into Chalky's mouth. He licked and rolled his tongue around Padrig's head as soon as he retracted his foreskin. Cum still dribbled out of his piss slit. Chalky sure had a feast.

Jasper used more lube, before he pressed his cock against Chalky's hole above where Andrew had entered him. With a brief moment of resistance, Chalky's arse soon sucked in Jasper's cock, hungry for the whole of his length.

Chalky shuddered as he was filled by his team, his stomach quivering the dance of ecstasy. He had grabbed his cock and balls, lifting them up so Jasper and Andrew could fuck him without hindrance.

"Oh, my man, you're so fucking good," Jasper said with a gasp, the pangs of climax causing him to shudder with as much delight as Chalky. It wouldn't be long now.

Sure enough, Andrew let out a cry. He was holding Chalky tight while he fucked him from behind, his muscles bulging as much as his cock inside his team mate. Seconds after the familiar yell of climax, Andrew began kissing Chalky on his ear and neck. He had cum, and within a few moments of that revelation, Jasper realised he had more room to move within Chalky.

The coach's cock was flaccid.

That free movement was short lived. Jasper couldn't keep back the flood of ecstasy any longer. He blew his load, squeezing his eyelids tight and grabbing Chalky around his waist as he pumped him full of more fluid, letting out a yell of victory at the same time.

Then Padrig let out a cry. He had cum again. Not as much fluid spurted out of him as before, but enough to cover Chalky's chin in his delicious white sperm. Chalky had well and truly been filled.

When they had all kissed each other, deep and with the love only a team could have, they got up off the table. Jasper slapped each of their arses in turn. Then, a moment more was spent cementing the bond between them that could never be broken no matter if victorious or not. A moment filled with more kisses and embraces and gropes on the backside. What's more, they all took turns to clean up the mess of cum all over Chalky with their tongues.

When Chalky was loved enough, when they were all loved enough, and Jasper could think of nothing else but how wonderful he felt, the coach said, "I think that means our meeting is adjourned, gentlemen. I'll see you all tomorrow."

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*"Well, sports fans, this is it, the final of the ever popular zero-G wrestling. A contest that will see the favourites Australia take on the Ukrainian underdogs. I have to say it's a beautiful morning on day twelve of competition, the full Moon giving all those interested a great backdrop to the finals action here at Olympic Park. The complex has once more risen to well above the thirty kilometre mark, making for perfect conditions for the athletes to compete in. We pick up the action from the Yokohama complex right before the first round of the gold medal match. Over to you, Howard."*

Jasper slapped Chalky on his buttocks, their traditional starting move. "Don't forget your mouth guard, Chalky my man. Then you'll be right to go."

Chalky smiled. "I can't even feel my teeth after last night's fucking and cock sucking action, you know. My tongue is still numb, too." He chuckled, placing in his guard.

“Good. There’s plenty more where that came from. Now get out there and don’t forget the Ukrainian likes to stay close to the wall. Don’t let him get into your blind spot. You’ll lose points.”

“Yeah, sure thing, captain.”

The call to the grid whistle blew.

Chalky sprung off the bunker wall, soaring with the grace of an eagle into the centre of the wrestling grid. Hand holds stopping him from slamming into the opposite wall. Jasper smiled like he always did as he watched Chalk moved. The man sure knew how his body worked. That was a good thing. He just hoped it was good enough to out manoeuvre the Ukrainian.

*“Thanks, Chuck. Well, put me in a red dress and call me Martha, I’m as excited as a bee in a glass jar over this game, let me tell you folks. Not only do we have the simply gorgeous looking team of Australia competing in their first ever gold medal game, they are against the darlings of the wrestling world, too. The tough as nails and hard as cocks Ukrainians will show no mercy even though they are odds on to lose at least two of the three divisions represented in the modern wrestling world and this game. Speaking of divisions, the game will be a best of three match with all three weight classes taken into account. In other words, folks, weee Nelly, we’ll have some hot wrestling action right here as I’ve just heard the starting whistle. Chalky Jones is competing against Boris Youngstone in the light weight division that will be nothing but pure wrestling ecstasy.”*

Coach Andrew and Padrig came to stand beside Jasper in the viewing box to the left of their team bunker.

“I sure hope Chalky can keep his wits about him. That Boris is a fucking tough son-of-a-bitch. He won’t use any dirty tactics, just his muscle,” Padrig said.

The second whistle blew and the referee began his pre-match pep talk. Chalky once more had that steely look of determination in his eyes. Eyes that were so fucking hot when he looked up begging for more while he sucked cock. Jasper felt himself stir. Not only for the thought of being with his team in the meeting room again, but of what he could look forward to with Carlos tonight. The man had contacted him. A good sign that he was interested after so much time to cool off his thoughts.

When the athletes were in position, the green signal sounded. Chalky pounced, coming to Boris like lightening. Both men were soon locked in combat, not one wanting to relent to the other. They

were perhaps too perfectly matched. Jasper gasped as the seconds ticked by, their struggle to gain supremacy clear.

Unfortunately, Chalky had lost ground on the grid. Seemed Boris could indeed use his mass a bit better than what Jasper would have liked.

The referee blew his whistle.

Both competitors parted. Chalky came back to the bunker, a thirty second rest break declared. So far Boris was at the advantage, two points ahead of Chalky.

"Fucking hell, he's like moving a mountain out there," Chalky said. Sweat in great droplets trickled down his temples.

Padrig kissed the sweat off Chalky's lips, then said, "Just use his own force against him. Remember, while he's trying to push you give way just enough so he comes off balance. Then you've got him."

Chalky nodded. "Yeah, but if I pull away too much he'll have me at the wall."

Jasper placed his arm around Chalky's waist, bringing him close. "We believe in you, Chalky, my man."

The whistle sounded.

*"Well blow me down with a feather folks, seems Chalky Jones might have met his match here. Boris is just too strong. And by jingo, I believe he looks to be the better man on the day. Notice the power and follow through with the Ukrainian's actions as he uses the supports to full advantage all over the grid. I fear for Chalky on this one. Sure, there are no outright winning moves from the defensive position, but at the end of the day, those with the most points win the round and all that's needed is a six point advantage and the game is over."*

Chalky sprang from the wall again. This time Jasper couldn't help but get the feeling he'd been spooked by Boris even though he had tried to give him the best encouragement he could. Sure, Chalky might lose the match, but it was the team captain that wore the pain. Jasper took everything his team did personally, that's the only way they had survived as a strong unit all these years as they lived, ate and slept together.

"C'mon, Chalky!" Jasper screamed at the top of his lungs with the crowd.

Chalky and Boris were once more locked in each other's hold. As the seconds ticked by, Boris was able to force Chalky onto the defensive, bringing him closer to the wall. Inch by inch Chalky lost

ground, the look of sheer and absolute determination on Boris's face was frightening to behold. Jasper bit his lip, nervousness taking over all his thoughts and emotions.

"Watch your back!" Padrig yelled.

All too late. Chalky misjudged the strength of a push made by Boris when Chalky had entered the danger zone on the grid. Sure, Chalky had tried to push back, try and lock his opponent in any sort of hold that would gain him points, but he became overwhelmed too easily. Unable to recover, Chalky was pinned. The longest couple of seconds passed before three red light signals ignited the grid. The referee blew the whistle for the final time.

Chalky had lost the match.

The crowd on the Australian support side of the Yokohama complex fell silent. Padrig and the coach had fallen silent, too.

Jasper swore, but couldn't help but feel admiration for the effort Chalky had put into the match. It was a tough battle, one Chalky would hopefully learn from.

*"Geez Louise, that's it! What a complete surprise and yet, on paper, kind of expected. Boris Youngstone has taken out victory in this first round game for the gold medal. I hate to admit it, but Jasper will have to pull out something quite special if the team are to win the next round and stay in contention. Phew, what a game. I'm having heart palpitations here. I can't wait until tomorrow when the zero-G wrestling continues at the magnificent Yokohama complex. Back to you Chuck."*

When Chalky entered the bunker, covered in sweat and looking as depressed as ever, Jasper, Padrig and Andrew embraced him, lavishing sweet kisses on his weary face.

Through lips stained with his tears, Chalky said, "Let's just hit the showers."

Jasper knew that nothing could be said in the here and now that could cheer Chalky up or even the team right now, but he turned to look at Andrew, give him one of those now-is-the-right-time-to-act looks. In Jasper's opinion, a team building exercise was called for right now, one that would refresh the good times they spent together. Whether that involve physical love or any other sort of activity, it didn't matter. Now was the time they needed each other the most.

Andrew nodded. "I think a quick game of spot rugby in the locker room will take our minds off things for a moment before we rub each other down in the showers. What you all say?" The coach produced a football from a locker, throwing it. Once he had done so, he stripped down. Jasper noted that he hadn't detached his penis. Then again, why would he. He wasn't competing.

Padrig caught the football, charging toward the locker room.

“Sure thing, coach,” Chalky mumbled as he plucked a fresh towel off a rail and dabbed himself down.

When all were in the locker room, Andrew placed a foot casually onto the bench Chalky and Padrig sat upon. He said, “Now, before we begin, I just want to remind you that we got to the gold medal match for a reason. We’re the conquerors and we won’t be beaten, not ever. We will not only win tomorrow’s round, we’ll smash the opponents to the wall. Am I right?”

“Yes, coach,” Jasper said, pulling up a stool so he could remain within touch of his team mates. They were close, and a loss affected them all on a deep level.

“I can’t hear you,” Andrew said, getting another football off the shelf above him, slapping its leather for emphasis.

Before anyone could answer, get swept away by the coach’s words, a *Galactic Gazette* reporter burst into the room and snapped a picture of the team on an instant relay camera.

Within seconds of the reporter taking the photo, and Jasper chasing him out of the team bunker, the news tablet the coach produced from his desk beeped. What was on screen revealed the weight of their woes.

## Chapter Two

### The Galactic Gazette

#### **Australian Zero-G Wrestling team in Disarray**

**{NEWSPAPER PHOTO: FOUR NAKED MEN SIT ON BENCHES IN A FOOTBALL LOCKER MAN, LOOKING AT THE VIEWER SMOLDERING LOOKS.}**

**The Zero-G wrestling Team from left to right: Coach, Andrew Macmillian; Middle weight, Padrig O’Malley; Light weight, Chalky Jones; Heavy weight and team Captain, Jasper Arnold.**

**After a shock round one loss in the gold medal match, the Australian Zero-G wrestling team competing in the 150th Olympiad on board the geosynchronous orbiting 'Olympic Park' facility, couldn't even use a light game of spot rugby to cheer them up earlier today. Has their loss affected more than their moral? Or will their captain, Jasper Arnold be able to drag his team up from the doldrums so they can win the next round and stay in contention for the gold medal? If they can win two of the three rounds, it will be the first time Australia has won such an accolade and all of our hopes are right there with the guys as they get ready for round two in the best of three game for gold! Go Australia!**

**To read on, click on the read on icon on the bottom right of your tablet. “The Galactic Gazette, news that matters in an instant.”**

"Damn fucking press," Andrew said as he threw the news tablet across the locker room floor, smashing it to pieces. "I'm going to launch an inquiry as to how that bastard got in here. There'll be hell to pay, mark my words. Mark my words." The coach stormed out of the locker room, not bothering to dress.

Jasper offered Chalky his hand. "C'mon, my man. Let me wash you down after we've all got our dicks back. I think the best thing is to just hit the showers like you had suggested in the first place."

"Yeah, sure thing, captain," Chalky said, a faint smile crossing his lips. A smile that got wider when Padrig came and embraced him. "But I think you should both rub me down. That'll cheer me up quite considerably, don't you agree?"

"Anything for you, Chalky," Padrig replied.

All three, hand in hand, headed for the reattachment centre. A few fans were there to offer their support, but not like the numbers of yesterday. One or two asked for skin to be autographed, but no other words were spoken between the team until they were back in the locker room and Jasper was turning on the shower.

While the steam filled the air, Chalky climbed into the large cubicle, designed for them all to fit comfortably within. "What a day," he said with a sigh.

Padrig came to embrace him, offer him a sensual kiss as the water cascaded over their bodies. When parted, he said, "Things can only get better, thank the Mother of the Saints above."

Jasper grabbed the soap and began washing Chalky, massaging him while he worked it up to a lather. Soon, both he and Padrig were running their hands over Chalky's skin, easing the tension of the day within his mind and his muscles. The actions they did must have worked, Chalky's cock became engorged, his foreskin retracting of its own accord.

A heartbeat later, Padrig was on his knees. He cupped Chalky's balls, rolling them around gently within his fingers. "You're so beautiful," he said before he took as much of Chalky's length as he could into his mouth, making sure Padrig licked his frenulum before he did so. An action Jasper knew would have made Chalky shiver inside with delight.

Chalky gasped, his lips moist and so sexy from the shower's water.

Jasper said, "I think I know what will make you even happier, my man."

Before Chalky could answer, Jasper was on his knees, too. The warm water running all over him, making everything he did hot and sensual. He kissed Padrig on his cheek while Chalky's cock was deep in his mouth. A signal to let him know that he had to share this experience.

Padrig came away, understanding Jasper's intent. Chalky's cock bulged from the attention it had just received, veins filled to capacity. Then, together, both Jasper and Padrig kissed and took turns licking and sucking and enjoying Chalky's throbbing cock. It was the least they could do for their team mate who had been defeated in the heat of battle. The least they could do to make him feel better. He hadn't let them down. Losses happened. How could the high of victory be gauged if there was no defeat? All they could do now was hope for that victorious euphoria tomorrow when it was Padrig's turn to wrestle in round two.

All Chalky could do was moan with delight, scrunch up Jasper and Padrig's hair as he climbed up more and more toward ecstasy. Seconds later, and with a yell out of sheer joy, Chalky's hot cum shot out to mingle with the water of the shower and the saliva in both of their mouths in equal measure. Chalky tasted sweet. Jasper smiled, swallowing the share of sperm he had been given, knowing that his team mate had been eating well, sticking to fruits and all the good things that kept his body toned and damn fine. God he loved him so. God he loved Padrig so, too.

Jasper got up, continuing to kiss and wash Chalky. Padrig did the same. Finally, when they were done, satisfied that Chalky was clean of any doubt about his match, Jasper turned off the water. The air was soon cleared of steam, but not of their passion for one another.

"You got that hot date tonight, haven't you, Jasper?" Padrig asked.

Jasper winked. "Sure have."

"Well, we all better get dry and dressed so you can hurry up and show us this man who has stolen your heart. I bet he's a looker, too," Chalky said, that smile of his returning in full. Their loving in the shower for him must have worked.

Jasper sighed. "He sure is."

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The Luna View Rooms restaurant was as stunning as the name implied. All pomp and ceremony, plush curtains and red carpet, too. Jasper wore his best suit, one he couldn't help but feel uncomfortable in.

An overly keen waiter directed him through the restaurant. He wasn't attractive, not to Jasper, but still, he had a cute butt. Jasper smiled. He saw Carlos before the waiter gestured at a rather expensive and comfortable looking couch for him to be seated at.

Jasper sat down.



Carlos was by the window. The view outside that of the impressive Lunar surface taking up most of the scene, craters of all shapes and sizes dominated its features even though cities had been there for two-hundred years or more now.

Jasper accepted a drink from the waiter. Carlos approached. His gait hypnotised, and Jasper had to admit, melted away any discomfort or first date nerves.

"Glad you could make it," Carlos said, sitting down next to Jasper, shuffling up so he was close. Very close.

"I'm glad you did, too."

Carlos clinked his glass against Jasper's. "So when do you want to fuck me? Before or after the meal?"

Jasper smiled, sipping nervously from his glass. The wine was dry, yet crisp and refreshing. "How about during. We'll get a room, then order room service."

"I like how you think, Mr. Arnold."

"I'll like how your arse will look once it's got my cock up it," Jasper said, trying his hardest to match Carlos's cheeky nature. The tactic seemed to work. The man beamed a smile, his eyes reflecting his want, his hunger for some man loving.

Carlos grabbed Jasper's hand, pulling him up off the couch. "Good thing I thought of all that earlier. We're in room two-hundred and forty four." A cheeky smile accompanied his words, reinforcing them.

Jasper drained his glass, more for courage than anything else. Sure, he was a dirty slut with his team mates, but that was something that had taken years to cultivate. He'd never really had another man, been in another's bed besides Chalky, Padrig and Andrew. This was all new to him, and again those nervous first date butterflies returned.

Before he realised what had happened, Jasper was in a hotel room. Carlos threw the ID key onto the hall stand, coming so he could embrace Jasper.

"Did you want to start slow or just go for it and plough me good and hard."

Jasper licked his lips. "Well, to be honest...I...I—"

"Shhh. Don't fret." Carlos leaned forward, pecking Jasper on his lips. He did things so different to his team mates it was tangible. His kiss was delicate, not filled with the lust for victory or the need to conquer. He continued, "I understand that you have your team. All athletes who are part of a group know that. If you want me to ease off, just say so."

"No," Jasper said without thought. "It's just that...do we need protection?"

"I told you, I have everything under control." Carlos gave Jasper a gentle push toward the bedroom. "Now relax. Let me get that suit off you. Bet you can't wait to be in your skin, hey?"

Jasper pulled at his collar. "Yeah, you're right, my man. This monkey suit sure does chaff where it matters...like all over my body." A nervous chuckle was added to his words.

Carlos smiled. "I sure am *your* man."

He was taken aback. Saying *your man* was a figure of speech, something that rolled automatically off his tongue. But he supposed Carlos was right. At this moment, for the here and now, he *was* his man.

On the bed, Carlos clambered over Jasper, unbuttoning his suit's shirt until his pecs and rippling abs could be exposed for plenty of tender kisses. Jasper groaned, letting the man do his magic, the anticipation causing those nervous butterflies to return, but in a good way.

Carlos disrobed, his thick uncut cock was as hard as it was ever going to be. The veins bulging. They embraced, wrapping each other up tight. Skin on skin, lips on lips, tongue touching tongue, they held each other for an eternity. So long the view from the window was no longer dominated by the Moon.

But Jasper didn't care. He was engulfed by Carlos's presence. His musky scent, the touch of his body against his and the tickle of his breath on his cheek. All were so perfect. Soon, Carlos came onto Jasper proper, gyrating his hips, motioning the act of love without penetration. At the same time he came up so he could caress Jasper's chest, concentrating his efforts on his nipples.

Jasper gasped. His cock was as hard as hell, his foreskin helping to keep the movement of Carlos's cock against his fluid and without discomfort. It was amazing. The act of their frottage something that Jasper would never have considered before this day. He had always thought that genital rubbing was for dirty old men in subways. Done in shame and while perving on young boys. Not so anymore. This was electric and all of his skin tingled as Carlos gained more and more of a rhythm. As far as Jasper was concerned, any man that didn't enjoy this, especially as it was done properly, was a pussy.

Carlos continued to rub himself against Jasper in an action that was just as sensual as any he had experienced, took his breath away, in fact. While Carlos worked his cock in such a manner, he also used his hands to massage. The worries of the day melted away from within Jasper's mind. He was in heaven.

Again Jasper groaned.

He was filled with love. His balls tightened in their sack, the explosion of ecstasy one that wouldn't be far away. Carlos leaned down to kiss Jasper. Their bodies were one, working together toward the same goal, their complete and utter happiness.

Then it happened.

Jasper blew his load. He shuddered, his climax all consuming, all powerful and above all, filled with so much joy that he had found Carlos.

"You *are* brilliant, my man." Jasper then felt more warmth around his groin and stomach. Carlos collapsed onto him and he didn't need to be told that he had orgasmed, too.

With a whisper in Jasper's ear, Carlos said, "I think we made a mess."

"I think I want to see you again."

"Are you asking me out?" Carlos came to plant kissed on his lips in between the words of his question.

"Yes, I am."

"Good. I'm going to need someone to share my victories with. Being a marathon runner there isn't much chance of any team fun, you know."

Jasper smiled. "Well, I'm sure my team will accept you with open arms. They need plenty of cock play to keep them going, that's for sure."

Carlos let out a gentle laugh, coming off Jasper, revealing the mess they had just created. "I think we need a shower."

"Good idea. Say, why don't you come over tomorrow to the grid. I'm sure the boys will want to celebrate with you as well."

"I can't. Got training. I can make it the next day."

Jasper now beamed a smile. "That's great. That's when I'm playing...if we can win the next round, that is."

Carlos kissed him. When parted, he said, "I'm sure you will. And even if you don't, I'll be there for you."

\*\*\*

*"This morning, and brought to you live from Olympic Park in geosynchronous orbit right above your heads, we will bring you the non-stop action of zero-G wrestling from round two of the gold medal match between Australia and the Ukraine in the Yokohama complex. Stepping up to the plate and desperate for a win to stay in contention for the gold, Padrig O'Malley will show us his skills. Can he use his tactical knowledge to weaken Peter Zanoofsky? Or will it be another unexpected defeat for the Australian team? Time will tell, so stay tuned. Over to you, Howard."*

Padrig let out a war cry, matching the intensity of the crowd all around, his traditional pre-match quirk before he pushed himself away from the bunker wall. He was at the centre of the grid before Jasper could blink, the man motioning the cross when the whistle blew.

"Go get 'em," Chalky yelled, bringing his hand around Jasper's waist, both of them watching the match from the bunker's viewing window. Coach Andrew was called to the team's public box, as he was most matches. The poor man having to front the media.

Jasper returned the gesture, bringing Chalky closer. There was a moment of silence from within the whole grid as Padrig and his opponent began their battle, locked in each other's grip.

Chalky asked, "So what's he like? You didn't say."

"Who?"

"Carlos, of course."

Jasper took in a deep breath. "He's awesome, my man. Just fucking awesome."

"Well, that don't tell me nothing. What you get up to? Did you get him laid? Tell me, I'm dying to know."

Jasper let out a chuckle. "You'll see."

Before Chalky could answer, a *call to stand* whistle was blown. On the board Padrig was a clear four points ahead of Peter. The referee went up to Padrig, using the supports to do so. Seemed there may have been an illegal move. Jasper wasn't sure, his conversation with Chalky distracting him from the action on the grid for a moment.

*"Wait a cotton picking minute here, folks. I do believe Peter Zanoofsky just grabbed Padrig O'Malley by his buttocks! Sure, since the clean skin rule was implemented and athletes had to compete naked and have their genitals detached, there haven't been many deliberate fouls of the holding nature. But never in a million years would I have thought I'd witness a competitor get so desperate. Such a thing*

*was just so uncalled for, so unwarranted. Why risk an illegal hold when the match could have gone either way? We'll just have to wait and see what the referee has to say as they deliberate amongst one another. I don't think I can wait and I'm sweating golf balls here in anticipation, let me tell you."*

Padrig entered the bunker.

Jasper and Chalky ran to him, embracing him tight. After much mutual physical bonding, Jasper asked, "What happened, Paddy?"

Padrig screwed up his face, wrinkling his cute nose. "By the Mother of Mary, the bastard shoved his thumb up my arsehole, that's what."

Chalky ran his hands along Padrig's chest. "Did he even ask you out?"

Jasper let out a laugh, adding, "Not like you to complain about some anal play, my man."

"Good one, you guys." Padrig smiled, bringing them in closer to his embrace. "He knew he'd been licked so he had to resort to that. I had him worked out from the word go. Sneaky bastard."

The bunker was then illuminated by three red light signals. The final whistle blew. Padrig had been given the match after the illegal move, a clear points winner.

Jasper punched the air, coming to kiss both his team mates square on their lips and with heaps of tongue, too. "We did it."

*"Whoaaa hoooo, I knew there was something going on when the referee spoke to Padrig. Seems to me that desperation cost the Ukrainians the match. Why would a competitor perform such an outright illegal move for such an important game is anyone's guess? To me it's just crazy, crazy, crazy. They literally gave the Australians the points for round two. The standing at one all as we go into round three. So, what happens next? Well, the decider for the gold medal will be played tomorrow morning right here at the Yokohama grid. I don't think I'll be able to sleep, I'm chomping at the bit to find out if Australia will win their first ever zero-G wrestling gold medal. Stay tuned, folks. Over to you, Chuck."*

\*\*\*

*"Welcome sports fans to the action here at Olympic Park. This morning, as the complex rises up for the best possible view, round three of the zero-G wrestling is about to commence. So far we've had drama, tears, ecstasy and agony as the Australians and the Ukrainians have contended for the gold. We pick up the action as Jasper Arnold of Australia and Vladimir Koojak of the Ukraine are about to*

*do battle in a game that will surely go down as one of the all time greats of the sport. Over to you, Howard."*

Jasper breathed in deep, ignoring the slaps of encouragement by Padrig and Chalky, using his energy to concentrate on the moment. His focus, for the here and now, was the supports at the centre of the playing grid.

The whistle blew.

With all the energy he could muster, and as the gravity turbines were switched off, he pushed himself from the wall and glided toward the centre. The referee came up to him straight away. "Let this be a clean wrestle, gentlemen. Now shake hands and we'll get underway as soon as possible. Clear?"

"Yes, ref," Jasper said, grabbing Vladimir's hand and offering a strong hand shake. His palm was sweaty and the look in his eyes was far from the steely determination Chalky offered, whether on the grid or in a bed. A good sign that he was nervous about the match. A good sign that Jasper had won the first psychological advantage before the starting whistle had even been blown.

When in position, the referee blew the whistle to commence.

Jasper came at Vladimir with the force of a road train, grappling him, trying to twist his body in the weightlessness so that his back and shoulders were exposed to the wall.

*"Jeepers, Jasper came out of the start holds like a bull out of a gate. That's what we all like to see, folks. Raw power wrapped up in such fine physical form. If I weren't married I'd be all over Jasper like stink on shit, the man is an Adonis. Seems plenty of the fans think the same, too, as the crowd here at the Yokohama grid is going wild with excitement. Who can blame them? In fact, I do believe a couple of folk in the front rows have fainted. Pity, they'll miss out on seeing Jasper move like a panther and being hypnotised by that damn fine arse of his."*

Jasper realised just in time that he had his head caught under Vladimir's chest. He hoped to hell the referee didn't pick up on that, otherwise it would be a point against him. All he could wish for now was a time advantage, being able to control Vladimir for the longest, because getting him off

the grid and pinning him to the wall seemed a long shot. The man was skilled, perhaps more so that Jasper.

The whistle blew.

The first part of the round had been spent. The two minutes of wrestle time expired. Jasper glanced at the score board. He had four points, Vladimir, four points. He had to win the next part otherwise the advantage would go to the Ukrainian.

He came to the bunker.

Chalky and Padrig were waiting for him, towel at the ready as well as their open arms. Jasper accepted them both, making sure he groped both of their arses.

"He's a tough nut, isn't he?" Chalky asked.

"He's scared," Jasper said, matter-of-factly. "I can see it in his eyes. I just hope I can keep him held long enough to get the points and that the referee doesn't give him a sympathy vote for that penalty in yesterday's match."

"Yeah, my arse is still tingling from all that thick Ukrainian thumb I had shoved up it," Padrig said with a laugh.

Chalky came and kissed Padrig. "Your arse is always tingling, you big soft hearted romantic."

Jasper let out a chuckle, too. Padrig and Chalky were the best. "I'd say it's because I pounded you good and hard last night, more the fact. Not only did your arse tingle, your butt begged for more."

The whistle blew.

"Time for me to go, guys. Wish me luck." Jasper went to the entrance of the bunker.

"Hey, you don't need it. You'll have this guy pinned and we'll all be fucking each other in no time like good little boys," Padrig said, slapping Jasper on his buttocks.

Jasper pounced from the wall. "I sure hope so," he called back.

The whistle blew again, and once more Vladimir and Jasper locked horns, gripping each other tight. The man growled. Was that a sign that he had come out this turn with a new found sense of determination? Jasper had to think quick. He didn't want this to turn the tide of the match.

He decided to use an old tactic, one that if he could pull it off, would gain him an advantage.

*"I don't believe it, folks. Jasper has gone into a death roll!"*

Jasper gritted his teeth as he used all his strength to turn Vladimir around and around. The grid and all the crowd that surrounded him spun until they were nothing but a blur. But Jasper kept on going. Tighter and tighter he drew in his opponent as he twisted him like a crocodile would its prey. How he managed to grapple Vladimir around his torso and bear hug him at the same time was anyone's guess, but that's what he did.

Then it happened.

*"Oh my fucking godfather, there are chunks of breakfast floating all over the grid."*

Vladimir threw up.

The referee blew the whistle. For the longest moment the grid continued to spin even though Jasper now held onto the support holds for dear life. He had to admit he didn't feel too well himself. He'd been a bit too enthusiastic in his manoeuvre, that's for sure. Still. It worked. Vladimir looked rattled, as well as green.

Then the score board reflected Jasper's efforts. He was now five clear points ahead. "One more point and I'll have this sucker," he mumbled to himself while the referee called for the end of the turn.

Jasper pushed himself from the holds, heading for the team bunker. Chalky was jumping up in the air, clapping his hand enthusiastically. Padrig wore a smile on his lips he'd so like to enhance by shoving his erection down his throat.

But that was all for later.

For the here and now there was a medal to win, and as Jasper entered the bunker he couldn't help but get excited, his adrenalin soaking his body with the anticipation of victory.

"How was *that*?" Jasper asked, his emotions almost getting the better of him for he was pleased he had gained back the advantage without too much physical pushing and pulling.

"That was fucking brilliant. I can't believe he spewed his guts up though. Poor baby. Perhaps he needs something more substantial in his stomach, hey?" Padrig said, motioning the *cock sucking* gesture with his hand and mouth.

Jasper laughed. He couldn't help it. He felt giddy after such a resounding result for the turn. "I don't think he could manage that, my man."



Chalky slapped Jasper on his buttocks. "What's the use of a bloke who can't keep it down once he's swallowed, hey?"

All three laughed together. Jasper loved these moments, and really, to him, this was what wrestling was all about.

Then three red signal lights sounded, knocking them from their jovial mood.

"What's happened?" Chalky said, reiterating Jasper's thoughts to perfection.

*"I don't believe this. In fact, if you had told me earlier that this would have happened, then I would have laughed in your face. Folks, Vladimir Koojak has withdrawn. Seems he is unable to go on and cites medical reasons for his withdrawal. If you asked me he just got too spooked by the sheer brute strength and brilliant tactics of Jasper Arnold. My god, imagine him giving you some loving, you'd be praying for weeks afterward. So there you have it. Vladimir has pulled out of the match. Geezussss! The game and the match and the gold medal has gone to Australia. They have done it. They have done it. I'm so excited I think I'm going to pass out. All that's left now is to watch the gold medal presentation tomorrow at seven. Until then, we'd better get back to Chuck in the main studio before I lose my lunch as well."*

Jasper, Chalky and Padrig let all of their emotions go and all at once, too, when the news of the withdrawal hit home. They hugged and cheered and slapped each other over every part of their bodies. They laughed and cried and laughed and cried some more. The sheer raw feeling of winning the game almost overwhelmed Jasper. He not only wanted his team, over and over again. He wanted Carlos, too. To share such a thing with his new boyfriend would be the greatest reward besides the gold medal being placed around his neck.

When coach Andrew came into the bunker, they were still at it. Rolling around on the floor, wrestling each other, too. Laughing and carrying on like school boys on graduation day. Finally, and after the coach had joined in, offering his screams of joy to their mix of yells of victory, Jasper got to his feet.

Chalky said, "I think we'd better all go get our dicks, gentlemen. This is going to be one hell of a night."

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When near the reattachment centre's doors, and the crowds had been parted by the guards so that Jasper and his team could get their belongings, Carlos came into view.

"Carlos!" Jasper yelled out, the euphoric feeling still abuzz within him.

Padrig and Chalky gave Jasper one of those, *ah-ha* looks when Carlos ran to come and embrace Jasper, adding a couple of very sensual kisses for good measure.

"So this is the man that's got our captain all hot under the collar?" Padrig winked. "By the Mother of Mary, he is a damn fine example of the species, isn't he?"

Jasper returned Carlos's kiss, deeper and sending in his tongue, too. The experience of having his boyfriend here at the moment of victory only served to enhance all the joy that had consumed him.

"He sure is," Jasper whispered when he had parted their kiss.

"Sorry I couldn't get here sooner. Had a coach's meeting."

"Oh, I like those meetings. Nothing motivates an athlete more than getting a good hard fuck from their coach," Chalky said.

Carlos sighed. "Unfortunately my coach is straight."

"Damn. What a waste." Padrig slapped Carlos on his back.

Carlos smiled, one that Jasper came to know as that of want. "It doesn't bother me, really. Each to their own. But I do think we should all go celebrate your win when you're all whole. How about it?"

Jasper's stomach turned in that delicious way, and if he had his cock attached right now it would be bulging with appreciation. "Don't you have training?"

"That was the reason for the meeting. I have a rest day before the marathon later tomorrow. Lucky me, because that means I can have some quality time with my big, strong man now, doesn't it?" Carlos again kissed Jasper.

"Say, can we join you?" Chalky asked. "Paddy and me won the game, too, you know."

Carlos laughed. "I don't see why not. What do you reckon, Jasper, baby?"

Jasper let out a hungry for man-loving growl, bringing Carlos tighter into his embrace and causing his boyfriend's smile to broaden. "I don't care so long as I've got me some loving from all the men I love."

When they had reattached their dicks, and once more in the team bunker back at the grid, Jasper came to kiss Carlos, let him know that now was the time they could be together. Besides, he couldn't

wait another moment. Pre-cum was already dribbling from his piss slit in anticipation. If he had to wait any longer he wouldn't need lube.

"Just get your gear off, Carlos," Jasper said when he parted their kiss. "I don't think me and the boys can wait any longer."

Padrig helped Carlos remove his clothes. When naked, Padrig and Chalky gasped. Carlos was also ready for action, standing proud and tall and erect as all hell. His smile was there, too, as welcoming as his cock that demanded them to feast their gaze upon it. Jasper came to embrace his boyfriend.

"Fuck me good and hard, that's some nice meat, you've got there, Carlos," Chalky said, that steely look of determination striking his eyes.

Jasper knew his eager team mate wanted to get on his knees and suck on Carlos like a babe at a teat. But he also knew that Carlos was a guest in their bunker. "You're the centre of attention, my man. What do you want to do? We'll go at your pace."

Padrig and Chalky were holding each other. Chalky had his other hand on his own cock, jerking himself off, keeping his erection so that he would be ready for anything. "I don't care what we do, this is so damn fuckin hot," Chalky said, his gaze fixed on Carlos.

Carlos, with a smooth and casual voice, said. "I want you all to come around so I can suck you off in turn. Then, Jasper, my big, strong man, I want you to fuck me good and hard. How does that sound?"

Chalky took in the air through his teeth. "You are a gay man's dream, Carlos, buddy."

Jasper moved so that he could get the stool for his boyfriend. "He sure is a dream."

Carlos sat on the stool provided, opening his legs so that he could remain comfortable while in his aroused state. "You're first, Chalky."

Chalky didn't hesitate.

He came so that he could place his cock onto Carlos's lips, retracting his foreskin so that his head could have all the attention of his tongue. Pre-cum oozed from his piss slit. Jasper and Padrig came to stand next to Chalky, offer Carlos support by caressing him while he worked Chalky's length.

The sight of Carlos's nose deep in Chalky's pubes, the sound of sucking and slurping in the air, was nothing short of amazing. Jasper's stomach turned in that delicious way it did whenever he saw something that excited him.

Carlos cupped Chalky's balls while he worked his length, too. All Chalky could do was moan while he was being blown. That, and mumbling a couple of corny porn lines. "Oh, fuck! Oh, fuck! Oh, fuck yeah, baby. Oh fuck."

Then Carlos came away, licking his lips. Chalky's cock was slick with his attention. "Now you, Padrig."

Chalky stepped aside, making sure he continued to touch himself while he waited for more attention from whoever was willing to provide it. He wouldn't have to wait long with so many eager mouths and arses around him.

Padrig's groans of delight soon filled the bunker. Again, seeing those beautiful lips of Carlos's work along Padrig's length, wetting him, pleasuring him, was something that stirred Jasper onto even more carnal thoughts than he already had. He couldn't wait until it was his turn.

"You now, my big, strong man," Carlos said, wiping saliva from his chin and once Padrig had taken his cock out of his mouth.

"I have other ideas," Jasper said, helping Carlos up from the stool. "Lie down. I want to have you. You deserve some loving, my man."

"I brought the protection," Carlos whispered as he came to embrace, Jasper.

A moment later, and after Jasper had placed on the condom and added ample amounts of lube, he was at Carlos's rim with his tongue. The smell of his wonderful musk overwhelming his senses, and he was spurred on to lick him all over, his balls included. Jasper was in heaven, especially as he could hear Padrig and Chalky giving each other their loving, too.

Carlos opened his legs wider, holding them up behind his knees so that his arsehole was even more than available for his lover. Jasper obeyed his boyfriend's intention. Seemed he loved to be licked. Who could blame him? From experience Jasper knew that Carlos would be swimming in a swarm of pleasure, his spin tingling as his rim was stimulated.

Jasper couldn't help but smile as he worked his tongue in circles around his boyfriend's arsehole. Even Carlos's balls quivered as his whole body shuddered. Air was sucking in, before he finally managed, "Take me quick, baby. Take me." His voice was like a desperate cry. A cry soaked with a need, a hunger for their relationship to be consummated.

Jasper didn't hesitate.

He was in position, his hardness pressed against Carlos's warmth within seconds of his cry out for more. Without a word, Jasper grabbed Carlos by his waist and used that leverage to push himself deep inside his boyfriend. After the initial hesitation, Carlos's arsehole relented. Jasper sunk his length in as far as he could go. Gaining a rhythm so he could stimulate his boyfriend's prostate, give him all the pleasure he could ever want.

Carlos was now writhing underneath Jasper, his eyelids closed tight, his face a mask of both pleasure and pain. He mumbled words, but Jasper couldn't catch them. Then again, he didn't need to. It was clear the man was in heaven.

A long moment after the initial entry, Carlos let out a cry, louder and with more intent than any he had done before. Jasper looked down just in time to see his boyfriend's cock spurt out his cum all over his stomach and chest. The sight was beautiful and one that made Jasper orgasm, too. He just couldn't hold on any longer, anyway. This was all too good.

When he had given as much as he could give, his energy spent, his muscles heated so that he was sweating like a race horse, filling the condom to capacity, he pulled out.

Carlos opened his eyelids. "Come to me."

They embraced.

Jasper kissed his boyfriend. Over and over their tongues danced and chased each others. In the background he could hear Chalky and Padrig also reach their climax. The bunker was well and truly filled with the sound of both love and victory tonight. That pleased Jasper. He had succeeded as a team captain and as a lover. What more could he want?

After they had all cooled, coming off their ecstatic high, shared kisses and hugs some more, Jasper asked, "I think it's time we all came and gave you support for your event tomorrow, hey Carlos?"

Carlos smiled. "It's great being a part of a team."

"You'll always be a part of our team, and so long as we are all together, then nothing can stand in our way." Jasper helped Carlos to his feet. "We are all the conquerors, after all."

Chalky said, "I'll drink to that."

"Here, here!" Padrig added. "But first, let's hit the showers. Then we can all go out for drinks so we can all get blind drunk. After that, who knows? Maybe stagger back here so we can fuck some more. I want Carlos's arse, next time."

Jasper took Carlos by his hand, rolling his eyes up to the heavens. "I think you're stuck with us all now, you know."

Carlos pulled his hand away, running toward the shower cubicle, his cute little arse giggling as he did so. "Last one in is a pussy, missing out on a good hard blow job."

Jasper, Padrig and Chalky all ran to catch up to Carlos, jostling each other along the way. The room filled with their laughter. Jasper was sure glad his cock got mixed up the other day. How else could he have met such a great bloke as Carlos? How else could his team become even better than it already was?

**THE END**

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## A WISH FOR JAMIE by Em Woods

Dear Santa,

*I saw this nice little picture in the Suit section of the erotic photos, and kind of got me wondering. What do male employees do after hours?*

*If you could please stuff my stocking with a story using this picture you'd make my christmas a little brighter!*

\*\*\*\*\*

"I want you."

The deep baritone penetrated Jamie's daydream, overriding the image of him spread out on a mahogany desk with the boss's son wedged between his thighs.

Jamie blinked twice, giving himself a moment to figure out what he'd missed. Certainly, he couldn't have heard right. There was no way Alexander Conyer, heir-apparent, had uttered those words to him in front of a roomful of his co-workers. "Excuse me?"

"I want you."

*Well, fuck.* Jamie stopped breathing.

The corner of Alex's mouth quirked up. "To head up the Barnaby account." The sparkle in his deep blue eyes said he knew perfectly well where Jamie's mind had been. Unfortunately, the other ten people in the room looked like they knew too.

Jamie let out his breath, easing the restriction on his chest. *Bastard.* "Sure."

Alex nodded once. "We need to get a few things ironed out – what they expect from their marketing team, what I expect from you."

"Sure." *Jesus, can't I get past that word?*

"Tonight."

Jamie sat up straight. "Not this evening."

Not a soul dared breath. People didn't say no to Alex Conyer. And no one wanted to be between him and the one who had.

"Tonight." Alex prowled around the table, his six-foot frame exuding power. The crisp white oxford shirt molding perfectly to Alex's chest competed for Jamie's attention with the smooth cut of his pin-striped dress pants pulling taut over the muscles in his legs. "I expect dedication, Mr. Bushell."



Alex's words set off a small fire in Jamie's blood. "You know I'm dedicated. I'm here late every night, I work weekends, I even sit at my desk for lunch." His voice rose with each new word and he could feel the flush creeping up his face. "Any other day, it wouldn't be a problem. But not today."

Damn it. Jamie took a deep breath and stood up from his chair, coming nose to chin with Alex. "You want to meet tomorrow, fine. But not tonight."

*Tonight marked five years for Cody.* Jamie pressed his lips together, ruthlessly pushing down the sadness that threatened to overwhelm him. *Not here. Not now. Not in front of him.*

He could see Alex searching his face and prayed he'd kept his thoughts hidden. He didn't need the man to have ammunition against him.

Alex stepped around him, brushing their fingers together as he passed. "What time are you available tonight?"

Jamie turned, tracking Alex as he moved back to the head of the boardroom. The man was relentless, which made continuing to refuse pointless. "Early. I have to leave before seven."

Alex smirked at him. "Hot date?"

"Something like that." Jamie slumped into his chair and prayed for the stamina to make it that long. Hell, until two minutes ago, he'd had plans to leave right after the meeting.

"This comes first." The cold edge to Alex's voice had the entire staff looking at him, unused to that tone aimed at Jamie.

Jaime straightened in his seat, staring Alex down. "Then make sure we're finished before seven, Mr. Conyer."

Alex's nostrils flared and Jamie wasn't sure if it was the back talk or the disrespect he'd infused into Alex's name. A sharp nod was his only answer.

\*\*\*\*

A quick tap on his door alerted Alex to Jamie's arrival. Even though every fiber in his body wanted to leap over the mahogany desk between them and wrap himself around the smaller man, he held himself in check, choosing to appreciate the grace with which Jamie moved.

Jamie cleared his throat, as he lowered himself into one of the guest chairs. "Should I come back?"

"No." Another few key strokes finished the report he'd been working on and he gave Jamie his full attention.



Jamie was restless, shifting in his seat, running his hands over his thighs. Alex watched quietly. From day one, Jamie had captivated him, made him hope for things that he hadn't thought possible. The man was quiet, worked hard and never gave Alex any trouble. Of course, his deep brown eyes and sandy-blond hair didn't hurt anything. Jamie was easy to look at.

But something was off today.

Jamie never hesitated to come to his office after hours. They enjoyed each other, talking and loving well into the night. Alex smiled. *Hell, this desk has seen more action than my bed lately.*

And that had to change. Jamie wasn't simply some bar fuck to be treated casually.

Jamie squirmed, drawing Alex out of his thoughts.

Alex's smile fell away, his burgeoning erection leaving with it. Yes, something was different. Jamie didn't want to be here, didn't want to be with *him*. He caught Jamie's eye. "We need to talk."

"You know I can handle that account, Alex. What could we have to talk about?"

"Us."

"What?" Jamie sat bolt-straight in his chair, panic clouding his face.

Alex pushed away from his desk and squatted down in front of Jamie. He rested his hands on Jamie's knees, rubbing his thumbs in circles to reassure himself that Jamie wouldn't run at the slightest touch from him. When Jamie settled into his seat, Alex let out a long breath. "I want to see you outside of work, outside of this building."

Jamie's lips curled into a beautiful smile, lighting his face. "You do?"

Smoothing his hands higher on Jamie's legs, Alex watched, mesmerized by the lust darkening Jamie's eyes. "I want you around. I want to share everyday things with you. A funny spot on TV or a crazy old lady walking down the street."

"I'd love that." Jamie brushed a kiss across Alex's mouth, nipping at his lower lip.

The resignation in Jamie's voice stole any happiness from Alex. "Why do I hear a *but* coming?"

"But I can't." Jamie ran his hands over Alex's arms before clasping Alex's wrists and pushing him away. "You don't know the truth about me. I can't do that to you."

Alex was forced to stand when Jamie did. "So tell me the truth, Jamie." He reached for him again, and as surely as Jamie slipped away from his grip, Alex felt Jamie slipping away from his heart. "Nothing you could tell me would change the way I feel."

A single tear rolled down Jamie's cheek and he slashed it away with a furious wipe of his palm. "Don't say that." He backed toward the door, hands up between them. "Just don't."

Heated anger boiled in Alex's belly. "Say what, exactly? That I love you? Well, too bad. Because I do."

They both stopped short. Alex hardly believed he'd let that tumble out with none of his customary finesse. Like some star-struck teenager. *Shit.*

"You don't know what you're saying," Jamie turned and fled, slamming the door behind him.

Not the reaction Alex was hoping for.

Another soft knock at the door had him hoping Jamie had returned. "Come."

His secretary, Amber, poked her head around the door. "Everything all right, Alex?"

Alex slumped into the chair Jamie had vacated. "I don't think so."

He heard the click of the door and assumed she had left him to his own devices. When she patted his shoulder, he nearly jumped out of his skin.

Amber leaned against the desk beside him. "I've known you for some time."

He nodded. She'd been his secretary for two years.

"I've known Jamie a lot longer."

Alex raised his eyes to meet Amber's. "How long?"

"We went to high school together." She crossed one foot over the other. "He's been the happiest I've seen him in the last six months, since he started seeing you."

"Must not have been that happy." Alex sighed, scrubbed his hands over his face. "I asked for more and he bolted like a scared rabbit."

She smiled at him like Alex was a bright man but not quite getting it. "He *has* been happy. But today is a rough day for him. It was just bad timing."

Alex looked at her, hoping she wouldn't make him ask.

"Why don't you take a drive to Lake Shore Cemetery in-" She glanced at her watch. "Oh, a half hour."

That got his attention. "Why?"

Her own blue eyes were glassy with unshed tears. "That's when he'll be visiting my brother." She straightened from the desk, twisting her hands together as she walked to the window. Alex could see she was staring out at the night but not really seeing the twinkling lights or the drifting snow. Her voice quivered when she continued. "Have you ever seen Jamie speak to me?"

Alex shook his head but remained quiet.

"That's because he doesn't." She turned to face him. "It's been a long time, five years today, since Jamie has talked to me. He feels some misguided sense of failure."

"Why?"

She sighed, pushing her blond hair behind her ears with trembling fingers. "I guess we both carry guilt for Cody's death." She sat in his chair, engulfed by the plush leather and big desk. "My

brother was five years older than me. He didn't want much to do with a fifteen-year-old sister, but I adored him. And I loved Jamie despite him being gay even then."

"Jamie is easy to love."

Amber nodded. "I'm not going into all the details, but on our way back from a friend's Christmas Eve party Cody lost control of the car. Black ice, they said." She rested her chin on her folded hands, her eyes focused on the past again. "We landed upside down in a ditch full of water."

Alex sucked in a breath. "Oh God."

"Cody was stuck. Jamie tried to free him but Cody was frantic that Jamie help me out first." The tears spilled down her cheeks. "The water was so cold. It took me ages to warm up."

"Jamie didn't get back to Cody in time, did he?"

Amber's bottom lip quivered. "No."

Alex didn't know what to say. He opened his mouth to speak but Amber held up a hand as she rose from his desk. "I didn't tell you this for me. I'm always sad when I think of Cody but now I can remember the happy times, the good memories, which made my brother special. But that day I lost both Cody and Jamie. He feels responsible. Even though it was no one's fault and he did what Cody wanted. It is past time for him to heal, Alex. Find him. Help him."

*What had Jamie been living with?* The guilt had to be heavy. Almost unbearable. Alex watched Amber leave before standing at the window himself, his shoulders hunched and his hands stuffed in his pockets.

A shooting star crossed the December sky, drawing his attention to the inky black abyss as the light faded into nothingness. An old child's nursery rhyme sprang to his mind. *I wish I may, I wish I might, Have this wish I wish tonight.* A second star crossed the sky and Alex closed his eyes, pressed his forehead against the cold glass pane, and whispered, "I wish you happiness, baby."

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Jamie sat in the snow facing the tall grey marble with his friend's name blazed across the front, his ass frozen from the wet cold seeping into his dress pants. *Cody Newburg 1985 – 2005.*

*It's my fault.* He hadn't been fast enough, strong enough. If he'd only been...just more. Jamie rested his cheek against the cold stone and let the tears trace icy paths down his face. "I'm so sorry, Cody."

"Catching pneumonia won't solve anything."

Jamie shrieked and scrambled to his feet, whirling to find the intruder. When he spotted the other man, Jamie pressed his palm to his chest, trying to keep his heart from thundering through his skin. God, like this night wasn't bad enough.

Alex stood a few graves away, looking blessedly warm in his black parka, hat and gloves. He'd changed from his suit into jeans and snow boots. In one hand Alex held a thermos and the other a red winter coat similar to his own.

Jamie was instantly leery of the confidence emanating from his lover. Rather than face what his presence might mean, Jamie let his anger at Alex's arrival take over. "What are you doing here?"

Alex cocked his head, his gaze sweeping over the ragged mess of Jamie's clothing. "Apparently keeping you from freezing to death." He winced. "I mean--"

"Smooth, Alex." Jamie didn't want to give him the chance to worm his way into his annual ritual. For the last five years, he'd come to Cody's grave and sat with him. Paying his penance.

"I brought you a coat and some coffee." Alex held out both items to Jamie but didn't move any closer to deliver them.

Jamie sneered at him. "Afraid if you get too close, something will happen?"

Alex's eyebrows shot up and he took the few steps between them in a rush, stopping just short of Jamie. He glared down at him, his jaw clenched so tight Jamie could hear Alex's teeth grinding. Alex jerked his hand holding the coat up between them. "Put it on."

"If I don't want to?"

"I don't remember asking if you wanted to." Alex's blue eyes glittered with banked anger. "Put the damn coat on."

Jamie knew that look. When Alex got in this mood, there was nothing for it but to do what he wanted. Jamie flashed back to the last time Alex had that fire – it was the first time they'd fucked. He had dared say he wasn't good enough for Alex and it had sent the CEO off the deep end. The memory of that night, of the depth of Alex's passion, sent heat streaking to Jamie's cock, hardening it even as he stood shivering under Alex's watch.

Alex bent and set the thermos on Cody's marker, then smoothed his gloved fingers over Jamie's frozen cheek. "Baby, it won't do anyone any good if you come down sick. Please put it on."

Jamie could steel himself against an angry Alex, but tenderness was something else. The warmth of it seeped past his defenses and the fight drained from Jamie's body as he slumped forward into Alex's waiting arms. In a few quick movements, Alex had pulled the coat around him and was furiously rubbing him everywhere. Tingling all over his upper body told Jamie how dangerously close he'd come tonight. "I'm usually dressed for the weather," he mumbled into Alex's shoulder.

"I'm sure you are." Alex was brisk, all business as he tried to warm Jamie back to a normal temperature.

"You can stop." Jamie straightened, remembering why he was here, plunging himself back into the well of grief. "And you can go."

"I'll stay."

"I don't want you to." Jamie pushed away, smacked at Alex's hands when he reached for him. "I'll see you on Monday."

Alex sighed, patted his hands together, blowing on them like he was warming his fingers. *Buying time*, Jamie thought.

"I'm not leaving you alone on Christmas Eve." Alex shrugged. "I've been looking forward to tonight for over a month, planning dinner and picking the perfect gift for you." He held a hand up when Jamie opened his mouth. "I'm smart enough to see plans have changed. But if you need to be here, I need to be with you. We both stay."

Jamie didn't know what to do. There had never been a man who cared enough to notice the change in him on this most god-forsaken day, let alone one who would sit alongside him in freezing weather at an old grave. His lip quivered and he bit down to stop the weakness from showing.

Alex wrapped his arms around Jamie, pulling him into the circle of warmth. "Baby, he wouldn't want you to suffer like this."

"What do you know about it?" Jamie hiccupped, wishing he was strong enough to not snuggle into Alex's embrace like he was currently doing.

"I talked with Amber. Well, actually, she talked to me. I didn't say much." Alex rubbed his back. "She misses her friend."

"She should hate me." Jamie trembled. "I'm the reason her brother is dead."

"You are the reason *she* is alive. Don't you get that?" Alex gripped Jamie's arms and held him away to look into his eyes. "Without her brother's sacrifice, and your help, she would have died."

Jamie stared back at Alex. *Was that true? Cody sacrificed himself for Amber?* "I never thought of it like that."

Alex pulled him close again. "She does. Baby, she loves you and it's killing her that you don't speak to her anymore."

His mind completely numb and unable to process a new side to what had happened all those years ago, Jamie dropped his head to rest on Alex's chest. "I want to stay awhile."

"I brought coffee." Alex stepped away, scooped the thermos from the marble stone, and took a seat on the cold ground next to it. He motioned for Jamie to join him.

Jamie sat beside him, taking a drink of the offered coffee. "Cody was a lot like Amber is now."

"To know that, you'd still have to be watching out for her."

Jamie pulled his knees up tight to his chest, wrapping his arms around them. "I stay away from her so I'm not a constant reminder of that night."

"It doesn't work that way, you know." Alex took a drink, screwed the cap back on and set the thermos to the side. "Did you think less often of that night by staying away from her? Or did you hurt more because you had no one to share it with?"

Jamie pressed his face into his knees. "I figured that out within the first year. But by then it was nearly impossible to approach her, so I kept watch. It's selfish, but it made it bearable for me."

"You should talk to her. I think it would go a long way to putting closure to what happened." Alex sat similar to how Jamie did.

"Yeah, maybe I'll do that."

Alex shifted to lean on the headstone, tugging Jamie until he rested against him, and they sat in silence for what seemed an eternity as Jamie took a good look at what he'd let himself become over the last five years. His heart still ached but realizing that he'd carried out Cody's last request, that he'd saved a life that night too, dulled the hurt.

Jamie stretched his hand out and traced the letters of Cody's name, feeling for the first time the warmth of friendship along with the pang of loss.

He took a deep breath, drawing in the scent of the man sitting with him. A new sense of clarity told Jamie he no longer belonged camped out in this cemetery, pining over what should have been. He needed to be wrapped in his lover's arms. "Can you take me back to the office? I caught a cab here."

Alex's arms tightened around him. "Let me take you home."

Disappointment cloaked Jamie like a second skin and he pushed up from the ground. "Sure. I'll give you directions."

Alex stood with him, catching his hand to stop Jamie from walking away. "You know where I live?"

Jamie scrunched his brow. "What?"

Alex smiled, one side of his slim lips curving up. "Baby, I want to take you to my home."

The confusion evaporated and heat rushed Jamie's cheeks. He found it hard to breathe under Alex's intense gaze. He nodded. "Okay, then."

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Alex unlocked his front door, pushing it wide and motioning for Jamie to go first. He didn't want to let Jamie too far out of his sight for fear that he'd crumble back into the bleak despair that had surrounded him earlier. He flicked the light switch and closed the door behind them.

Jamie toed off his shoes automatically as he shucked his borrowed coat, his gaze roaming the large living room in front of him. His face was soft, relaxed. "This is lovely, Alex."

Following suit by removing his own coat and shoes, Alex peered around Jamie, half expecting to see someone else's place. He searched for what made it special.

The faux-suede couches were set at a ninety-degree angle to each other and both faced the fireplace on the north wall. Most of the floor was hardwood but a large, dark blue area rug covered the seating area. The cream walls gave the room a fresh feel and were soft enough to complement the oak tables. Nothing extraordinary.

"Thanks." He pressed gently on the small of Jamie's back to move him further into the room. "Amber helped pick it all out."

"She helped you?"

Alex laughed, self-deprecating at best. "No. She helped the designer. I simply moved in when it was finished." He tapped a knuckle on the sofa table next to him. "Until recently, that fact didn't bother me."

Jamie smiled up at Alex, a sweet curve that Alex realized had been missing in many of their so-called dates. "Lots of people have interior designers finish their homes. Don't sweat it."

"Yeah, but until just a few minutes ago, this wasn't a home." Alex cupped Jamie's chin, brushing a light kiss to his mouth. "Your skin is still chilled. I'm going to start a shower for you." He turned away, willing his stubborn cock back under control. Years of hurt didn't disappear in a flash and Jamie didn't deserve to be rushed.

"Alex."

He stopped in the doorway to his bedroom, looking back over his shoulder. "Yes?"

"I'm okay."

Alex wondered if he spoke of more than the fact he'd nearly frozen himself to death. "Then make me feel better and take a shower."

The slight smile on Jamie's lips turned into a full-blown grin. "Oh, I can make you feel better."

*Holy shit.* Alex's cock hardened painfully in his jeans. Jamie's eyes were dark, sparkling with desire. "We don't have to jump into that tonight, baby. Just relax and let me pamper you for a bit."

Jamie's eyebrow crept up. He started a slow circuit around the room, skirting the furniture and moving in Alex's direction. It was a curious sensation to be the one stalked instead of being the stalker. The fine hair on Alex's nape prickled as Jamie neared.

"You really want to pamper me?" Jamie whispered as he stopped facing Alex. "Then remember I'm your lover and not your child."

"Oh, I'm a long way from thinking of you as a child, baby." Alex's breath was short and this new side of Jamie was throwing him off his game. Not that it didn't make him hot as hell. Shit, his cock was ready to burst with even the slightest touch.

Jamie closed the gap, rubbing their erections together, pushing Alex to his limit. "Good, then you'll be okay when I say that I don't want a fucking shower." He grazed his lips along Alex's jaw, nipping lightly as he went. "I just want to fuck."

Alex cleared his throat. "I can probably help with that."

The smile Jamie cast at him was nothing less than an invitation as he stepped around Alex. "Your bedroom, I presume?"

"Yeah." He'd forgotten Jamie had never been here before. The only room in the house he'd done himself was his bedroom. It hadn't felt right for someone else to pick out even a stick of furniture for what he thought of as his sanctuary.

"Nice."

Alex followed, finally finding his equilibrium again. He slid his hands around Jamie's waist, pulling him back against him, nestling his cock in the crevice of Jamie's ass. His prick wept with need as he rocked his hips forward.

Jamie dropped his head back on Alex's shoulder, his eyes closed, his lips parted. "Yes."

Muscles bunched under Alex's fingers as he explored Jamie's chest and stomach, sending his hands on a quest south of Jamie's belt. "Like that?" He cupped Jamie's erection through his pants. "Mmm, this for me?"

"You know it is." Jamie was breathless, arching into Alex's touch. "More."

Alex nuzzled Jamie's ear, increasing the pressure on Jamie's cock at the same time he shifted against him from behind. Jamie caught his lower lip between his teeth, moaning, writhing between the twin points of contact.

With a flick of his thumb, Alex opened the snap of Jamie's pants, then pulled the zipper down to give him access to the soft steel underneath. A sharp hiss when Alex wrapped his fingers around Jamie's hard prick egged him on. Swirling his fingers around the swollen head, Alex used the pre-cum leaking from Jamie's slit to lubricate his hand as he slowly jacked up and down Jamie's cock.



Alex skimmed his other hand to collect Jamie's ball sack, rolling each nugget in his fingers. He licked his way along Jamie's neck, sucking a mark just behind his ear. Alex felt Jamie's balls draw up tight to his cock, his back bowed away from Alex and ribbons of cream spurted over Alex's hand as Jamie cried out.

Catching Jamie when his knees gave out, Alex scooped him up, yanked back the comforter on the bed and lay him on the cool cotton sheet. He stripped Jamie's clothes away, trailing his fingers over every inch of pale skin as he exposed it to the chilly night air, ignoring his own throbbing hard-on for the moment.

"Taking a tour?"

Jamie said the words too casually, drawing Alex's gaze up. The guarded expression wounded Alex's heart more than anything Jamie could have said. He was painfully aware he'd neglected to see what Jamie needed from him. "As a matter of fact...yes."

"Why?" A trace of panic edged Jamie's voice.

Alex knew the truth would send Jamie running. "Because you have the most delicious skin I've ever seen." Alex reared from the bed, stripping his clothes off and throwing them to the floor. He crawled back up the bed, curling into Jamie's side.

"Oh." That single word escaped on a sigh and Alex knew he'd chosen correctly.

A rush of desire pooled in Alex's groin. He gripped Jamie's hands and stretched them over his head as he rolled on top of Jamie. "You know what that means, right?"

"Mmm." Jamie pressed up into Alex, grinding their cocks together. "You'd better tell me."

"I'd rather show you." Alex slid one knee between Jamie's legs, then followed with the other. His new position lined their cocks next to each other and he instinctively shifted to create friction.

Jamie moaned low in his chest, tossing his head back against the pillows.

Alex pounced on the exposed stretch of skin, sucking at the pulse beating in the hollow of Jamie's neck. He reached under the pillow for the tube of slick he'd put there earlier, and thought briefly of the missed reservations at his favorite restaurant.

Jamie wiggled against him and all thoughts flew from his mind.

He knelt, pulling Jamie's legs over his thighs to get at the tight bud clenched between Jamie's cheeks. Alex brushed his thumb over the puckered opening, enjoying the flush covering Jamie's body.

Jamie mewled in the back of his throat at the tease and spread his knees wider for more. "Please."

"Patience, baby." Alex flicked open the lube and drizzled a thin stream on his fingers. He rubbed them together, warming the slick before circling Jamie's hole.

Bucking his hips, Jamie grasped Alex's forearm with more strength than Alex gave him credit for. "Fuck patience. I want your cock. Now."

Alex smirked at him and pushed two fingers into Jamie's clutching ass, curling them to hit that spot that would make him-

"Oh my God!" Jamie launched his hips from the bed, pushing down on Alex's hand. "Fuck. Fuck. Alex."

"Yeah, baby?" He slid his fingers out, then in over Jamie's gland, again and again until Jamie was a writhing mess holding onto sanity by a thread.

"Don't. Make. Me. Beg." Jamie pushed the words through his teeth as he fought for more, fought for that touch that would send him careening over the edge.

Alex pulled his fingers away, smiling at the low whimper when he leaned over to the dresser for a condom. "One or the other, baby. Me or my hand."

"You. Always you."

Alex ripped the condom open, rolled it down his prick and pressed the head against Jamie's ass. He rocked his hips forward. "Let me in, baby."

Jamie relaxed his muscles and Alex slid in the first inch. He kissed along Alex's neck, working up to Alex's mouth. "Get a move on, bossman."

With a surge forward, Alex seated himself balls deep in Jamie's channel, simultaneously drilling his tongue into Jamie's mouth; the kiss a more powerful aphrodisiac than anything Alex had ever experienced. He struggled for control to allow Jamie time to adjust to his invasion.

Gripping Alex's arms, Jamie gave him a shake. "I'm not some fucking china doll. Fuck me, damn it."

Alex took him at his word, establishing a hard and fast rhythm, reaming Jamie's ass with every bit of pent up desire roiling in his blood.

Jamie met him halfway, thrusting up into each stroke. He threaded his fingers through Alex's hair, crushing their lips together as he wedged his legs under Alex's arms, creating a different angle for Alex's thrusts forward.

Each withdrawal drew Alex's cock over Jamie's gland, sending the smaller man into a frenzy. He sucked in air, wiggling for more contact.

Alex pulled away to watch his lover crash over the edge of bliss, not disappointed by the howl Jamie let out as his ass clenched down Alex's cock, cum splashing over Jamie's stomach, hauling

Alex into the most intense orgasm he'd ever experienced. Alex shouted Jamie's name as he slammed into the hot chute of Jamie's ass, flooding the condom with his cum.

They lay spent, chests heaving as they sucked in much needed air. When he'd regained some part of his mind, Alex rolled off to the side, his soft prick sliding from Jamie's body. He curled his arms around his lover and tugged him close.

"Wow."

Alex chuckled and smoothed sweat-soaked hair from Jamie's forehead. "Yeah, wow."

Jamie wrapped his arms around Alex, rested his head close to Alex's heart. He was quiet but Alex could tell he was working up to say something. It wasn't long before Jamie took a deep breath. "Why do you put up with me?"

"Because I love you." Alex stated the newly discovered fact as if they'd known it forever.

Jamie lifted his head to stare at Alex. His eyes round like saucers.

"What? You thought my feelings would change if we weren't ensconced in my office?"

Jamie blew out a long breath. "I thought you were just confused."

"Do I strike you as a confused man? Someone that easily follows the wind with my decisions?"

Alex couldn't tell if he should be angry or amused.

"No." Jamie lowered his head back to Alex's chest. "Actually you are probably the most level-headed man I know."

Alex tucked one finger under Jamie's chin, tilting his face up. "Then why would I treat my personal life that way? Why would I treat you that way?"

"I have issues."

Alex laughed. "You think?" He settled his mouth over Jamie's lips, licking at the seam, looking for entry. Jamie parted his lips and Alex dove between them, twisting his tongue along Jamie's, deepening the kiss, pouring every ounce of his love into that single act.

When the need for air separated them, Jamie framed Alex's face in his hands. He pressed a chaste kiss to Alex's lips. "I love you, too. I have from the first day in your office."

Alex kissed him again, then pulled the discarded comforter over their cooling bodies. From the living room, his mantle clock chimed midnight. He smiled at Jamie, kissed his nose, and tucked his lover closer. "Merry Christmas, baby."

Jamie sighed and closed his eyes, sleep tugging him down. "I think it will be."

**THE END**

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## PONY UP by Rachel Haimowitz

Dearest Santa,

*I went out to the barn to feed the horses tonight and look what I found:*

*I would love to know how he got to be there.*

*Thanks Bunches,*

*P.S. - I also found ropes lying at his feet too.*

\*\*\*\*\*

I've never liked holiday parties. The crowds, the noise, the strangers, the acquaintances you haven't seen in ten years whose names you're somehow supposed to remember, the open-bar abuse, the terrible music, the stupid games, the mistletoe that everyone thinks it's so funny to maneuver you beneath . . .

I don't like weddings either, pretty much for all the same reasons, nor am I a fan of the wrath-of-nature-tempting elitism that are gated beach communities. Which makes a Christmas wedding in Boca Raton a whole new level of hell, even if it is a total kinkfest—just as much a collaring, really, as a marriage under God.

So what, you may ask, am I doing here?

Well, for starters, I didn't exactly have a choice. At least I can't hear the music, and I'm well away from the drunken crowd and the mistletoe. Fuck, I'm not even in the house. Which is probably for the best, because the only thing I'm wearing is a Santa hat . . . unless you count the big red bow tied around my cock and balls.

I guess that makes me a wedding present. Not sure why Sir stowed me in the barn, then, instead of drafting me into wait-service like the rest of the Santa-hatted slaves I saw on my way past the party, but I guess I shouldn't complain. They're all working their naked little butts off, while I get to lounge in the climate-controlled barn and nap. Which, admittedly, would be easier if my own naked little butt weren't half buried in itchy straw.

On the other hand, I'd rather be serving Sir—even serving Sir's friends—than be sitting here alone. I wonder who's bringing Him drinks, bringing Him food, licking His fingers clean and following Him round the dance floor. I wonder if He's thinking of me as He sips one of those girly drinks He loves so much, dancing and laughing and maybe even taking His turn at reddening the slave-groom's ass when the boy's master puts his prize on display.



I wonder, briefly, what Sir's intent was in gifting me. The happy couple already comprised a slave; wouldn't my presence just make the poor boy jealous? Or was he a switch, interested in playing for a night alongside his master instead of beneath him? That thought excites me more than I care to admit; the red bow around my cock and balls tightens like Sir's talented fingers as my body responds. I reach down to touch myself, just once, curl my fingers into fists and tuck them back beneath my head before I can break Sir's rules. But it aches, *god*, like a hunger, an unreachable itch. And it won't get better anytime soon; the blood is trapped by the ribbon-cum-cock ring, and my thoughts have turned to dangerous places, to threesomes, to *foursomes*, serving the new couple and Sir all at once, all night long, never allowed to touch myself, never allowed to come . . .

*Shit.* Enough of that. Truth is, I'm probably just the new dishwasher or something. The thought makes me laugh until I'm breathless; if all they use me for is chores, it would be a sad, sad waste of a gift.

\*\*\*\*\*

I fall asleep, wake up some time later feeling stiff and colder than before. The hay prickles and pokes as I stretch, but I don't get up. I kind of like it, for one thing, especially where it scratches against the fading welts that Sir left on my back and ass the night before. Plus, I'm pretty sure I'm not supposed to move, that this is a test, even though Sir said no such thing. Why else would He have left me here unbound, if not to see whether I'd stay put on my own? I've no intention of displeasing or shaming Him *or* myself in front of a whole wedding full of Doms and subs.

Which is why I am most definitely not in any way even beginning to contemplate thinking about touching myself without permission, despite my erection having turned nearly the same shade of red as the big velvet bow that's framing it.

It's also why I'm so damn relieved when Sir at last comes to get me that I'm kneeling at His feet and pressing kisses to His dress shoes without even knowing how I got there. He'll rescue me from myself, I know He will.

He always does.

He smiles at me, reaches down to pet my hair, then cups my chin and tugs me to my feet. The kiss He gives me nearly unhinges my knees again, but He's holding on tight. He always does.

"Good boy," He murmurs against my ear, glancing approvingly at my cock, now weeping hard against His thigh. He says it like maybe He's a little surprised I behaved all this time without the aid of bindings or His watchful eye, and I glow with the knowledge that I've pleased Him, impressed Him, maybe even exceeded His expectations.

"Stand up straight now," He says. "Arms out."

Someone's boy is at His heel, I realize now, only a little surprised that I'd failed to notice the slave earlier over Sir's commanding presence. Yet he's a lovely thing, truly, perhaps five years my junior, just as fit, a face made just as surely for television as I've been told my own is so many times. My jealousy takes me by surprise—no one should be at Sir's heel but *me*—and I have to squash it down with clenched fists and jaw when Sir waves him forward a step and takes two bundles from his outstretched hands.

Said bundles do help a bit, though. One is a rope, and the other a jingle of leather and metal. Sir passes the rope back to the boy, who takes it willingly, head down and cock erect. The leather He shakes out and fits over my bare shoulders. It's a harness of sorts, wide padded straps crossing over my chest and buckling around my waist and at my back. More straps wend between my legs, a built-in leather cock ring fitting snug beside the velvet bow, a long thin strap of leather dangling down from it and brushing the barn floor. Sir finishes his buckling and reaches into the pocket of his tuxedo jacket, pulls out . . .

A horse tail?

Oh, *fuck*. The barn, the harness . . . How did I not see this coming?

The grin He tosses me when realization dawns across my face is positively evil.

"Ass up, boy," He says through that wicked grin, and I spread my legs wide, bend over, and grab my ankles like He taught me. Cold lube squirts against my hole—He must have had a little packet in there along with the horse tail—and then a plug that must be the size of His wrist is being worked inside me. I haven't been fucked in three days and I'm way too tight now for something that big to go in easy (assuming a plug that big could *ever* go in easy). It hurts; my fingers are making dents at my ankles and my poor neglected cock is standing up taller than ever, shouting *Pay attention to me!* to anyone who will listen.

Sadly, no one is. At least not now. Possibly not at all tonight.

Which, of course, just makes it stand up taller yet.

"Almost there, Nicky," Sir says, His free hand resting warm and firm in the small of my back to comfort me, or perhaps just to stop me from falling over. But He is true to His word; with one last hot flash of pain the flare pops inside me, and my muscles clench tight around the neck of the plug, drawing it in even deeper. Horsehair tickles at my asscheeks and all the way down to the backs of my knees. I feel so full it's like His whole fucking fist is inside me. *Fuck*, if so much as the breeze blows too strong across my cock, I might well shoot my load, permission or no.

"Stand up now, boy," Sir says, the unmistakable pride in His voice flushing me head to toe. My eyes catch the other slave's for a moment as I straighten, and this time, it's *him* that's jealous of me.

Sir reaches for the long thin strap of leather still dangling from the harness cock ring and runs it up my asscrack around the horse tail, then buckles it tight to the harness near my shoulders. My hands get buckled into the harness next, resting comfortably at the small of my back, no strain at all on my shoulders or wrists.

Done binding me, Sir takes the rope from the silent slave behind him—actually two ropes; reins, to be specific—clips them to a ring down near my balls, and runs them out behind me. A sharp tug on one pulls my bound cock and balls to the left with a bright spark of pleasure-pain; a tug on the other pulls my junk to the right. I suppose I won't be needing a bridle, then.

Sir seems satisfied. He gathers up the reins in one hand, cups my arm in the other, and leads me outside into the cold.

Well, more like into the lukewarm and sticky—your average cloying Florida night. A light breeze blows against my bare skin, raising goose bumps in its wake. Walking is . . . *difficult* with this plug inside me, every step jostling and turning it, rubbing it along my prostate (and possibly the back of my fucking throat), making the horsetail swish and sway. A bug buzzes nearby and, denied my hands, I find myself wishing the tail were real so I could swat the damn thing away.

But then Sir leans in and does it for me.

He guides me around the massive home, clumps of partygoers with drinks in hand watching appreciatively as I pass them by. I duck my eyes like a good boy, but not too soon to miss more jealous looks from naked boys and girls stuck carrying trays of food and drink. Fierce pride gathers low in my belly (or maybe that's just my looming orgasm?); any one of these pets could have been chosen to pull the wedding carriage, but the grooms picked *me*. Sir picked me.

In the backyard now, down toward the narrow strip of sandy beach, the ocean churning steadily under endless strings of party lights and a near-full moon, a band playing some romantic music and couples swaying on the outdoor dance floor. A couple hundred others are seated at white-draped tables, eating wedding cake and other delicacies from silver carts being wheeled through the tables by pretty naked pets in silly Santa hats. I feel eyes on me and straighten my spine, square my shoulders like Sir taught me and high-step toward the beach. Sir leans in and praises me, His breath tickling the shell of my ear with the promise of pleasure, of reward.

My shiver runs straight down to my toes.

Sir marches me past the crowd, down to where the sand is packed hard and damp from the receding tide. There awaits a magnificent carriage, decked all in white satin, room for two and two alone on the padded bench seat above its tall wheels. I move to stand before it without being told, hear the grooms climb inside while Sir hooks my harness to the carriage shaft. It doesn't look any



heavier than the bike-drawn carriages tourists take through Manhattan, but added to the weight of the grooms and the drag of wet sand, I suspect I'll soon be getting one of the tougher workouts of my life.

Sir hands someone my reins, and I'm treated to the pleasure-pain of two hard tugs again, first to the right and then the left. I was ready for that, but not for the stripe of fire that lands across my shoulders a second later; I yelp, jump, take half a step forward and feel the weight of the cart drag at the straps around my chest. From somewhere just behind me, Sir chuckles and says, "That's it, Bill. Don't spare the whip; he likes it."

I grin to myself and roll my shoulders as the blaze fades to embers; truer words have never been spoken.

Sir speaks again, but this time it's to me. "Good ponies get apples and sugar cubes," He says. "If you're a *very* good pony, I'll rub you down and stud you when you get back."

Well, *fuck*. This time, my shiver runs right down through the sand.

I don't know where the grooms will have me take them, or how long I'll be gone, or how raw my back and balls and muscles will be by the time they're done with me, but I don't care. I don't even care that I'll love every second of it, though of course I will. In the end, none of that really matters—what *really* matters is that I'm Sir's good boy, and that He'll be waiting right here for me, counting the moments until my return just as anxiously as I.

## **THE END**

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## MASTERS AND BOYD by SJD Peterson

*Dear Santa,*

*Ever since I saw this picture, I can't get it out of my mind! I just want to know more about them. Is this a naughty pool boy? Or is he more a kept boy, welcoming his Daddy home after a hard day? Please, Santa, make my Christmas wish come true and tell me more about them!*

\*\*\*\*\*

Rivulets of water cascaded down Carrick's freshly showered skin. The slight breeze from the overhead fan, as well as the stifling ninety degree heat, caused the droplets to dry quickly. Dropping the unused towel to the floor, he dressed in the light weight linen jacket and matching slacks that had been set out for him. Studying his reflection in the mirror, his lips curled into a wry smile. His attire seemed so ironic, considering his mood and the planned activities for the afternoon. Tight leather pants combined with straps of wide leather in an X across his broad, muscular chest would be more appropriate. A heavy crop and shitkickers would be the perfect accessories to complete his assemble. Shaking his head at the peculiar choice of white, he turned away. Taking the heavy cuffs from the dresser, he headed out to the back deck.

The view of Saint Croix before him was magnificent. The view of the stunning Caribbean Sea beyond his private pool was a visual feast of lush greens and spectacular shades of blue. The warm breeze brought the ambrosial scents of Hibiscus and bougainvilleas. Yet, the naked man kneeling near the pool with his blond head bowed, hands clasped behind his trim back, was the most exquisite sight of all.

Without a word, he approached the man, letting his fingers gently brush through the silken blond locks. His touch elicited a shudder to ripple through the man at his feet. A shudder he felt surge through his own body. His cock went from half mast to rock hard, pressing against his slacks in anticipation of ravaging this ethereal creature.

"Stand and present for me, boy."

"Yes, sir." The boy answered, following his command without hesitation. He went quickly to his feet and raised his head, keeping his eyes respectfully lowered. Back straight, his hands clasped



together at the small of his back. He shifted, took a deep breath, and settled into the perfect pose for Carrick's inspection.

Carrick took a moment to enjoy the sight, letting his eyes roam appreciatively over the man's body. Sun-kissed skin glistened in the afternoon sun, strong legs with well-built thighs, lean hips and a tight, flat stomach. A smooth, slender chest rose and fell rapidly as he panted. His mouth watered, his own breath sped in admiration of the long, slender shaft that stood proudly from its nest of pale curls. He hesitated a few moments, held enthralled as a pearly bead of cum seeped from the slit. Licking his dry lips, he forced himself to continue.

Carrick brushed a whisper of a touch starting at the man's navel and up the smooth skin to his hairless chest. The dark brown discs and hard nipples called to him. A gasp passed the boy's lips as he reached up and pinched one hard nub between his finger and thumb. The gasp turned into a moan as he leaned and soothed the abused flesh with the tip of his tongue. Smiling at the response he continued to place soft, open-mouthed kisses up along the heated skin until he reached the side of the boy's neck. The scent and taste of coconut oil, musk and sweat was like an aphrodisiac, ratcheting his lust even further. "Very pretty, boy." He praised as he took a step back.

"Thank you, sir. I'm glad my body pleases you."

Circling the boy slowly, his eyes feasted on flawless skin. He ran a finger down the creamy globes of the boy's ass, his eye drawn to the pale skin, surrounded by the dark tanned skin of his back and legs. The urge to grab onto it and take his release was huge. Sighing in resignation he moved on. Reminding himself there was the little matter of discipline to be administered first.

As he continued his inspection, a thrill of power ran through Carrick. He loved how each of his touches caused the boy to jerk, how he tried to follow his touch when he pulled away. He let his finger tease down the sinew of his back, coming to rest against the crease of the sweet ass. When the pad of his finger made contact with the slick feeling of oil, Carrick's prick twitched in appreciation. He let his boy hear his approval, growling from deep in his chest. He lingered briefly before resuming his exploration. He continued to touch softly, yet randomly, keeping the boy off balance. Once satisfied, he came to a halt directly in front of the boy. Placing his hands against the firm chest and leaning in, he whispered, "You've been a very naughty boy today."

The sweet boy went up on tiptoes, pushing into Carrick's touch. His hand reached out to grabbing onto the fabric of his jacket to steady himself. Their lips, a hair's breadth apart, "Yes sir, very naughty."

His tongue lightly slid across the boy's lower lip, encouraging him to respond. Lips parted in an unstoppable gasp and he dove in, devouring his mouth. The kiss was hard and fast. A clash of lips,

teeth and tongue, yet brief, just enough to leave his boy breathless when Carrick pulled back. "Did I say you could touch?"

The boy had a dazed look in his eyes as he released his hold on the jacket. "Sorry, sir." Disappointment registered in the slump of his shoulders as Carrick took a step back.

Carrick slid a finger along his aching dick as he spoke. "Tell me, my beauty, what is to be your punishment for being so naughty?" He was thankful that his voice sounded steady, not giving away how affected he'd been by the kiss. His boy watched the movement of his hand. Feeling positively evil, he began to blatantly fondle himself as the boy returned to his display position and tried to speak.

"I..." he swallowed hard, licking at his dry lips, eyes glued to the movement of Carrick's hand. "I am to be bound to learn to focus. Something I did not do when I was shaving your scalp. My loss of focus caused me to mar the perfection of your skin. I am to feel the sting of your hand for getting distracted-taking liberties I should not have taken-while I shaved your groin." His boy shivered visibly. Delight, obvious in his voice as he continued, "And, if I might be so bold to add, sir, what a magnificent distraction you have."

Carrick hid his grin at the boy's cheeky praise. "Boy." he chastised. He hid the laughter he was holding onto so tightly behind a harsh scowl.

"Sorry, Master." not sounding the least bit apologetic.

Oh, someone is begging to be put over my knee. Carrick rubbed his fingers along the leather of the cuffs he held. Oh yeah, he could give his cheeky boy exactly what he was begging for. "Continue, boy. What else shall be your punishment?"

"I have prepared my body as you instructed, sir, so that you may take your pleasure from it. My own release will be denied, because I denied you pleasure. Not assisting you in dressing when I was sent away to reflect upon my lack of focus."

Jesus! He was harder than granite. Just the thought of his boy stretching and oiling his passage had his dick weeping. He couldn't hold back the moan that escaped him with the image. Carrick fought to slow his racing heart as he stepped up close once again, his body vibrating with need.

"Very good, boy. Give me your hands."

He held out his hands and Carrick quickly fastened the heavy cuffs into place. If he didn't get control of himself, he was going to lose it. To Carrick, that was completely unacceptable. He had grand plans and had every intention of enjoying his boy to the fullest. He took a few calming breaths and once he was better under control, he spoke against his boy's ear. "You may earn your release if you are a very good boy."

"Thank you, Master." The boy beamed. "I will be a very good boy."

"We shall see." Carrick made his way to a wide deck chair. Lying back onto the heated terrycloth covered chair, he began to stroke his rigid shaft through the soft linen of his slacks. His overly sensitive flesh caused the material to feel coarse and abrasive.

"Come here and stand at the end of my chair, boy. I wish to watch you as I pleasure myself." He popped the button on his slacks. His hard cock sprang free as he eased the zipper down. Eyes fixed on his boy, Carrick wrapped his hand around his engorged member and slowly stroked up from base to tip.

Groaning, he broke his stance and moved quickly, taking up the position as instructed. His eyes roamed over Carrick's body and the velvety voice caressed him like a lover's touch. "You're so beautiful, sir. Wouldn't you like to take your pleasure in me, sir?" His voice became lower and huskier as he spoke. Each word like a jolt of electricity aimed directly at Carrick's groin. "Wouldn't you like the feel of my mouth wrapped around you, sir. The wet heat of my tongue as it worships your beautiful cock?"

"Jesus." Carrick hissed as he felt a tingle start at the base of his skull and begin working its way down his spine. His boy's pleas were pushing him close to the edge. He tightened his grip on his shaft, loving the way it pulsed against the damp skin of his hand as he worked to control his breathing. "You can please me by being my audience. Watching. Learning how I like to be touched." He stroked his prick lightly. Not trying to build his orgasm further, just enjoying the sensation of riding the edge as his boy devoured him with his eyes.

In no time, the combination began to be too much. Though his touch was light, he could feel his balls begin to ache with need. He would like to think of himself as superhuman, but his threatening release proved him wrong once again. His boy was so beautiful and ablaze with desire that he made it difficult for Carrick to keep a rein on his arousal.

"Come closer, boy." His voice deep and harsh-sounding as he continued to struggle with tempering his need.

His boy's breath hitched as he took slow deliberate steps towards him. The sway of his hips entranced Carrick as surely as a hypnotist's pendulum.

"Thank you Master." The boy said as he moved into position next to Carrick's chair. "How may I please you, sir?" His mouth turned up into a wicked grin.

He felt as if his body were being tortured by lust. His skin tight, palms beginning to sweat and the constant ache in his dick was driving him mindless. But, he could dish out a little torture of his own before he gave into the demands of his body. The wicked grin gave his boy away. He knew

exactly the affect he was having on Carrick and enjoyed himself way to much. He'd have to curb that brassy attitude. Oh yeah, my boy has earned a little payback.

Reaching up, he grabbed on to his boy's engorged shaft and began pumping it lightly. Loving the way it felt against his palm as the silken skin slid over the hard steel beneath. Even more, he loved the way his boy moved into his touch. Whimpers and moans mingled with the sounds of the ocean waves in the distance to create its own unique form of music.

"Very pretty." Carrick purred as he continued to stroke the long shaft, increasing the pressure of his grip. With his free hand he retrieved the leather strap from his pocket. He snapped the ring on and stroked the heavy shaft rapidly a few times.

"Thank... Thank you, sir," he panted, hips jerking.

"You're not to come until I think you've earned it. Rather, if you earn it. Is that understood, boy?"

"Yes, sir. I understand, sir." His boy seemed to relax at the thought of being able to earn his release. Poor, naive boy.

"Mmm. When I redden your sweet ass, it will be nearly as pretty as this." He leaned forward and placed a kiss to the tip of the pretty prick in question. Groaning as his tongue snaked out, tasting the salty musk that had dampened his lips. The spicy taste exploding across his tongue was intoxicating.

His boy began to tremble, dick throbbing hard in Carrick's tight fist. "Oh... Ah, God. Sir... Please, Sir."

Carrick continued to kiss, lick and nibble at his erection. "Please what, boy? More?" he whispered, moving down to lick his boy's sac while his hand held the engorged shaft, pumping eagerly. His tongue happily lapped at the soft skin. "More, I can do." He grabbed the lean hips pulling them hard towards him and, in a deft move, sucked the hard shaft into his mouth. Hollowing out his cheeks, he sucked in earnest on the flared head. He let out a growl from deep in his chest. He wanted his boy to hear it, as well as feel it.

"Won't be able to hold it long, sir. God! Your mouth feels so good, sir."

The taste and feel of the heavy cock on his tongue was potent. A double punch of lust to his gut and he showed his boy with mouth, hands, and sounds just how much he appreciated his feast. He ignored his own aching need and went on an extended tour, his tongue dipping into the slit, seeking out more of the rich, unique flavor of his boy.

"Oh! Ah... fuck," whole body going stiff and taking in harsh panting breaths before he tried again. "No, I... Sir...I," he sobbed out.

Carrick pulled off his boy's prick, clamping down hard at the base of it with his hand. "Breathe. Focus on me, only on me. Put my pleasure before your own." Leaning back he watched his boy try to stop the orgasm that was sitting just under the surface, ready to explode.

He panted harshly, taking in great gasps of air. "Ah..." He groaned, body trembling as he took in a few more gasping breaths. "Jesus, that was close."

Carrick worked on slowing his own panting breath, his whole body aching with need as his boy got himself back under control. "Good boy."

Shifting his stance, he tilted his head and puffed out a deep breath. "Okay, better now, I think, sir."

"Very impressive, boy. Well done." He praised as he released his boy's leaking shaft. "Bend over and rest your head on my thighs." He helped maneuver his boy until he was bent across Carrick, bound hands holding on to the far side of the chair, his sculpted ass within reach of Carrick's hand.

"Thank you, Master." His feverish skin deepened to a darker hue with excitement and anticipation.

Carrick's hand slid over the firm ass. "So fine." This was going to be a hard and fast. There was simply no way he'd be able to control himself for long with the glorious sight draped over him. A temptation he couldn't deny himself from sampling. His constraints unfortunately were not limitless. His cock pulsed hard in approval of speeding things along.

"Ready, boy?" he asked and without further warning began peppering his boy's ass with rapid smacks. At first his blows were light, just enough to warm the sweet ass. When a steady stream of moans poured from him and he began pushing back into his hand with each swat, Carrick added a little more strength to his blows. His boy responded wantonly, going up on his toes as he started to rock, swaying as if he were dancing in response to the sting.

"Ah, God. So good to me, sir." He grunted from under the force of his hand and whimpered pitifully when Carrick pulled his arm back, hesitating before bringing it down again.

Carrick felt a shudder roll through his body as he began to unravel. The desire to see his boy riding him, being sheathed by tight, slick heat was beginning to consume all his thoughts. Undoubtedly his boy could have endured more, but he couldn't. His own need of wanting to be buried in his boy was too great. He slowed the movements of his hand, bringing his boy down slowly, until his hand lay against the heated flesh. The fire radiated off the muscular mounds, burned through him, sending molten lava to surge through his veins. Fuck, he had to have him now.

Carrick tangled his hand in his boy's hair and tugged slightly, encouraging his boy to move. "So gorgeous when you give into pleasure." He purred as he encouraged his boy to move. "Now come straddle me and let me take my pleasure from you."

His boy moved quickly, the trembling muscles making his movements jerky. Carrick lifted his hips slightly, easing his slacks down to his knees before helping the boy move into position. Goosebumps bloomed across his skin at the contact of blazing skin against his thighs. His boy's mouth moved, his throat working, as if to speak. So lost in his desire, the only sound to pass his lips was the whoosh of panting air and soft mewls.

"Your passion makes you glow. Tell me, my boy," Carrick stroked his cock as he spoke, spreading the steady flow of precum along his shaft. "To whom does all this passion belong to?" He grabbed his boy's hips pulling him forward, positioning his prick at his entrance.

"Yours!" He cried out as he bore down, taking Carrick in to the hilt in one swift movement. He threw his head back as he arched hard. The smooth, sweat-slick skin of his chest reflected the sun, casting brilliant rays of light.

"Christ," he hissed as his cock was engulfed. The effect was stunning and immediate and he responded by thrusting up hard and fast as he stabbed into his boy. Those bound hands pushing into his chest. Fingers tugging at the slight curls, sending spark of delicious pain to spread out across his chest.

Had anything ever felt so good? His entire focus narrowed down to the tight channel contracting around his cock. "God, so tight." Again and again he thrust, hips snapping. The fast, graceless rhythm making his words come out in a harsh, stuttering tone. "Mine... All mine... Only mine."

"Yes!" His boy's body began to flow like music, a sweet, addicting hum of visual symphony, fusing with the sounds of melodic pleas. Pressing his hips up to meet each downward movement, Carrick found the perfect tempo, hitting that sweet spot deep inside his boy.

"Master!" He screamed as he arched back, driving that tight ass down onto Carrick's prick. "Please, please, please." He sobbed. "I need to come. Can't... Oh Fuck!"

He wanted the feeling to last, but he couldn't hold back, knew his boy wouldn't last. He felt his sac draw up tight. The beauty in the way his boy begged, the feel of his tight passage milking his cock, worked in sync to undo his control. "Look at me." Carrick grunted, as he wrapped his fist around his boy's dick, pulling hard in sync with the thrust of his hips. He thrust up brutally, once, twice, "Come for me." He ordered as he unsnapped the cock ring that was binding his boy. It was the last coherent thought before amazing ice blue eyes locked with his.

Carrick exploded.



His muscles went bow tight as he pressed himself as deep as he could. Blinding, white hot light surrounded Carrick as he shot his release deep inside his boy. His voice rising over the screams of the boy's own release.

"Oh God, Ed. Love you so fucking much." He roared as his orgasm ripped through him, forced out of his body in a triumphant rush. Taking him out of his body with each convulsion of his orgasm and sending him higher and higher. He gave into it, letting go and soaring on wings of boundless rapture.

A chuckle of rapid breath brought him back to earth. Ed's soft lips warm against his own as he spoke. "You kind of lost it there at the end, sweetheart."

With bone-melted muscles, Carrick hit the quick release on his lover's restraints, throwing them to the side and pulling him tight to his chest. "Your fault. Jesus, you make me lose control."

Ed pushed at Carrick's linen jacket, snuggling into his exposed chest as he melted in the afterglow. He was happy, boneless and satisfied deeply. They held each other as their hearts began to slow and their breathing returned to normal.

"Mission complete, Dr. Masters. I live to make you lose control."

Carrick kissed the top of his partner's head. "Bravo in your success, Mr. Boyd. This was the best Christmas vacation yet. Thank you. I can't wait to see what your wicked mind comes up with for next year. Perhaps an English castle, where I can be your Duke and you my naughty kitchen boy?"

"Oh that does sound tempting. How about an Egyptian Christmas? You can be my Pharaoh and I your devoted concubine."

"Anywhere you wish. As long as I'm with you, it will be a very Merry Christmas, my love."

Ed placed a soft, loving kiss to his chest, "Merry Christmas." He let Carrick slip from his body with a moan and a sigh, snuggling in. "I love you."

"And I love you." Carrick whispered. His Boyd wrapped around him. Hopefully they would get a chance at both of the Christmas vacations mentioned. After all, they did have forever to fit them in.

**THE END**

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## YOU MELTED ME by Kari Gregg

*Dear Santa,*

*Don't you think this cuddling couple deserve a little story of their own? A christmas getaway maybe!! Would warm me right up.*

*Gratefully yours,*

*Sarah*

\*\*\*\*\*

Leland Whitacre--the Leland Whitacre--bent over my cock. The weight of his shoulder pushed me beneath him, down and into the mattress. My head spun; my pulse thundered in my ears.

My boss.

The man who signed my paychecks, or rather paid Bess Starkey in Personnel to handle the payroll that included my salary.

Leland fucking Whitacre.

Skating his mouth down my chest.

And heading straight for my dick.

Oh Christ.

"Shh, Brian," he said at my broken moan. My stomach clenched at the heat of his breath on my skin. "Let me take care of you."

Sure.

Like he'd taken care of me for the past two months? Sweaty groping in empty offices after hours and stolen lunches in discount hotels? My own fault for flirting after I caught him checking out my ass once I'd been promoted from data entry to the secretarial pool on the executive floor. My fault for giving into him again and again after my please-fuck-me smile had resulted in me bent over his desk with my Dockers around my ankles that first night in his office.

My fault for mistaking sex for something more.

God knows the girls had tried to warn me. Not that I'd needed office gossip to confirm the wicked glitter in his dark eyes was the mark of a player. I didn't need anyone to tell me that fucking one of my bosses was every conceivable level of stupid, either.

It hadn't mattered.

One look from him had wiped every iota of common sense from my skull. And it still did. Evidence A for the prosecution: I was needy, naked and squirming for more under the heavy press



of his body when I'd sworn it wouldn't happen again. When I'd promised to be stronger. That this time, I'd resist.

Two minutes of his kisses under the mistletoe in the break room was all it'd taken to disintegrate my resolve. Even now, writhing and sweating out my arousal, I was proud of that. Two minutes. Not one. Two. I hadn't crumbled under the first kiss, when his tongue had traced the crease of my lips, or even the next, when his sharp white teeth had nipped my bottom lip the way he knew I liked.

I'd fallen just the same, though. Hard. Like the fat snowflakes that plummeted from the gray sky to blanket the city. I hadn't spoken a word in protest when he'd guided me from break room to parking lot, nor had I refused the branding warmth of his hand on my thigh as his Laredo had crunched through acres of snow to reach this empty, echoing condo on the other side of town.

I was such an easy slut for him.

And damn it, Leland knew it.

I yipped when he bit down on the tender skin between my thigh and groin. "Stay with me, sweetheart." His lube-slick fingers dug into my hips like talons to hold me still as I wriggled. "Did you miss me?" He buried his nose in my bush of blond pubic hair and sucked in a deep breath. "I know you did. Tell me you missed me."

No.

God, no.

I trembled, senses whirling as he rooted through the springy curls to tongue the base of my cock, but no matter the torture of his mouth on my dick, I wouldn't say it. Not that I needed to. We both knew the truth.

Of course, I'd missed him.

With every beat of my broken heart.

He had not, apparently, broken my dick, though. I fisted my hands in the sheet covering the sparse mattress and groaned out wanton lust as he worked his way up the length of my cock, lips skimming over me so good I fought against his grip to push closer.

"Brian?" he rumbled, voice tight in warning.

Fuck pride.

I didn't need pride.

I need his mouth on me. "Please."

He traced delicate circles around the head of my cock.

If he didn't wrap his lips around me, soon, I'd lose my fucking mind.

"No more dodging my phone calls." His tongue darted out to lap pre-cum from my slit. "No running away when I look for you at work and when I knock on your apartment door? You'll damn well open it. When we have problems, we'll talk them out. No more hiding. Do you understand?"

His hands held me in place, exactly where he wanted me, but my back arched, fiery sparks shooting through my body with each taunting lick. "Jesus!"

He kissed the tip of my dick. "Say 'Yes, Leland, I understand' and I'll suck your brains out through your cock."

I slammed my head back to the mattress, wiggling in earnest now. "I--We--broke up."

"And now we're un-breaking up." He flashed an evil grin. "Baby, if you didn't still love me, do you think you'd let me do this?"

He lowered his head.

Wet heat engulfed the head of my cock.

I cried out, my orgasm already tingling at the base of my spine. No. Hell no, I wouldn't let him suck me if I didn't still...but he raised his sinful mouth, blowing on my sensitive dick so that I shuddered and groaned anew.

"Tell me you understand, Brian."

I panted. "I understand Brian."

He laughed against my dick.

God, I hated his laugh. Loved it. Longed for it. I'd ached for the teasing sparkle in his eyes and dreamed of his smile the two weeks we'd been apart, but I'd missed his low, husky chuckle most of all. "Smartass." He grinned at me. "Play nice, honey. Or you won't come for hours."

He swallowed me down in one gluttonous gulp.

My breath locked in my chest.

My eyes slammed shut.

Holy shit, that was good.

There was no point fighting him; that train had left the station when I'd lapped at the tongue he'd pushed into my mouth in the break room as though he'd offered me a tasty treat. So I didn't fight it. He'd have his way, as he had so many times before, and I'd let him because no matter that my head shrieked that I shouldn't--couldn't--be with him, my dick disagreed and my heart, my poor fool heart, needed him more than I needed my next breath.

His head bobbed over my dick, working me deeper. Jesus H, he scrambled the contents of my skull. The only thing that could light my fuse faster was his tongue in my ass or his cock sliding in

and out of... I groaned and his feral moan echoed mine, shivering down my dick to set me on fire. "Leland," I whimpered, working my hips against his grip and gasping for air, begging him now.

He released my hip, giving me free reign to pump into him. "Oh God, Leland, please." His throat tightened around me at the same moment his slick finger glided up my crack to tap my hole and I suddenly couldn't stand it any more. "Fuck, yes. In, in, in."

His finger thrust inside me, crooking to find my prostate.

I screamed.

I spurted what must've been most of my brains down his throat. He licked away my cum--at me--long minutes while my head whirled in the giddy, electrifying chaos.

A second finger joined the first plundering my hole.

I grunted, shifting my hips now to escape his suckling, slurping attention to my over-stimulated cock. Instead, I rocked in time to his pumping fingers to bury him in my ass as far as he could go. Empty. I was so unbearably empty without him.

I shook.

He sucked my spent dick, sending equal measures of pleasure and splintery pain to my balls. "God, you taste sweet." I whimpered when he deep-throated my softening cock. "Been chugging pineapple juice by the gallon, I bet. You knew I'd chase after you."

Hoped.

I'd hoped.

But with his fingers in my ass and his mouth punishing my overtaxed dick, all I could do was whine mindlessly.

He pulled off my cock with a rude, wet pop. "I'll never give this up." He smiled up at me, his lips obscenely swollen and red. "Never give you up." His free hand found my balls, kneading them gently. "C'mon, sweetheart. Tell me how much you want me."

His fingers pegged my prostate, sending insistent jolts of pleasure through my trembling body. "Need..." I tossed my head side to side on the mattress, lost in what he was doing to me. Lost in everything that was our sex--Leland's musky smell, the silky press of his skin on mine, the wondrous magic of his fingers dancing inside me. "Fuck me, Leland. Missed..." I gritted my teeth. "You."

His eyebrow arched. He nodded at my prick. "Show me."

I unknotted my fist from the sheets and reached for my soft, wet cock. I folded my still-tingling dick into my palm and began a mind-blowing, near-painful stroke.

"That's it, honey. So sexy." He lifted up to kiss my hip and then he laughed again, the bastard. "God as my witness, I'll keep you with me all weekend, too fucked out and happy to move anything except your hand on your dick at my say-so."

I blinked at him.

The weekend?

The whole weekend?

My dick jerked in my grip, stiffening at just the thought of entire days alone with him, but...

What about Leland Whitacre, Senior?

What about the Board that had banned fraternization among employees?

What about my job?

His thrusting fingers nailed my prostate again, shooting a fiery bolt of pleasure from my ass to my dick. I bucked my hips, riding his palm so that his fingers tunneled deeper into my ass.

To hell with it.

Shitty job, anyway.

"Fuck me, fuck me, fuck me," I chanted, but none of my pleading would sway him. He simply batted my hand away from my cock and wrapped his fingers around me. He stroked me. So hard. So good. My heels dug into the sheets, my toes curling.

His mouth slammed down over mine, his tongue spearing inside. I tasted myself on him, the citrus sweet bite of my spunk flavored with the pineapple juice that--he was right--I'd chugged down every morning for him.

"That's right, baby. Get hard for me," he panted against my lips. "I want to watch you come when I'm inside you."

I lifted my head and kissed him, so hungry for Leland I'd promise him anything. Give him everything. I wrapped my arms around his sweat-slick body and pumped my hips to fuck his fist, mewling into his mouth like a freaking girl as his fingers played wanton and wicked in my ass.

He jerked his mouth away. "Enough."

I stilled against him only when he reached for the condom.

I, not Leland, ripped the wrapper open and rolled the latex down his beautiful dick. My hands shook so badly, I fumbled the lube.

"If you touch me again, I'll blow. Let me do it." He slicked his own cock.

I rolled to my stomach, rising to my knees --

"No."

Chest heaving, I stared over my shoulder. "Wha--"

"On your back, sweetheart." He shook his head. "Knees up."

I gaped at him.

He'd bent me over his desk, the office copier, cheesy motel room beds and once, the front bumper of his Laredo. He'd never fucked me face-to-face, though. Ever.

Then again, he'd never called me sweetheart, baby or honey before, either. "Leland?"

He nudged me to my side. "It's okay, Brian. Just do what I say."

My pulse pounded in equal parts arousal and panic as he positioned me as he wanted, flat on my back and staring up at him. I tucked my knees close to my shoulders and held them there. He shifted into place.

My eyelashes drifted down at the kiss of his cock to my hole and I groaned out my mind-shattering relief when he pushed inside. I focused on relaxing my muscles, desperate to take him inside me as fast as I could. Farther. Deeper. The stuttering slide of his cock into my ass settled something in my heart. In my head. "God, I missed you," I whispered.

He bent low to brush his lips over mine. "Look at me."

I reluctantly opened my eyes, terrified to see gloating or worse, pity in his stare. But I didn't. His dark eyes shone with warmth. With--God I was turning into such a girl--something that bordered on adoration. "I missed you, too."

My throat tightened. I gulped.

Fortunately, Leland saved me from myself by rearing his hips back and fucking his way back into me.

My heart stopped.

I swear I saw stars.

His belly dipped to rub my dick and whatever was left of my mind wiped clean.

"Missed your sweet ass," Leland said, grunting as he fucked me. "Missed your smell, your taste." His fingers dug into my hips. "Missed your fuck-me-Leland smile teasing me at work." My back bowed when he pegged my gland. "Missed your ugly ties and the lousy country crap you play on your iPod. And your car that won't start." He rubbed his nose along my jaw as I panted and gasped and groaned. "I missed your stupid jokes." He skimmed his lips back to mine to kiss me, sweeping his tongue in and out in crude mimic of what his dick was doing to my body so that I quivered and shook, teetering on the edge. "I even missed this." Another kiss. "Smart." Playful bite. "Mouth."

I wailed in protest when he ripped his away, lifting over me to stare down, eyes stark and predatory.

And hot.



Oh my fucking God.

And then he froze.

Just stopped.

That evil son of a bitch!

If I'd had the sense left to cuss him out or deck him, I swear I would've, but all I could do was pant and stare. My body throbbed, aching to come. "Leland?"

"Baby, I told you I needed time," he said on a low snarl that made my body clench like a fist around his cock.

God, I loved it when he looked at me like that, like he'd never get enough of me and would shred any man or woman who dared to keep us apart. Including me. I'd kill him for stopping when I was so close to coming, yeah. That? Asshole maneuver of titanic proportions, but I lived for that look. Possessive. Greedy. His furious glare told me that I truly mattered to him, that I was maybe the only thing that mattered.

My orgasm clawed at the base of my dick, though.

Because Leland staring at me, all growl-y and demanding, was also pretty fucking hot.

"I can't change corporate policy overnight. Being the owner's son made it complicated. They called you into personnel to make sure I didn't sexually harass you; Dad said you cleared me. No flags in my file. Yippee. And Bess told you the Board had voted to rescind our fraternization policy, too. I asked her. Four times. As long as you never work directly under me, we can be together." He frowned down at me, brows beetled, scowl thunderous. "But you still wouldn't take my calls."

Why in the name of sweet baby Jesus was he still talking?

Yeah, I'd lived for him to look at me just once like I was the center of his world, but...He'd stopped fucking me and sorry, he couldn't eat me up with his eyes and not fuck me. There was a federal statute written about it somewhere. I was sure of it: No mind-fucking Brian Arthur Harte unless legitimate ass-plowing is involved. And if there wasn't a damn law, there should be. So I writhed beneath him, riding his cock from below. I needed. Just a little more. "Please, Leland. Please."

"Never going to leave me again. Say it."

I would've tried. I was pretty sure I couldn't manage more than pleading gibberish, but I genuinely would've tried. Except his lips slanted over mine again, hard. Punishing. "Say it."

He reared back and pushed his cock back into me.

I shuddered. Violently.

Close. So close.

His eyebrow rose in a cruel arc. "Brian?"

"N-no," I gasped, lapping in wild abandon at his unsmiling mouth. "Never leave you, never, ne--"

He retreated and when he spiked the rigid length of his cock back into my ass this time, he nailed my sweet spot.

I shrieked.

His mouth twisted to a feral grin. "You love me, Brian. I know you do."

Finally! Something I could hold onto. Something basic, perfect and true. "Yes."

He snorted. "Then say it. Tell me you love me, Brian."

My head bobbed up and down in a feverish, urgent nod. "I love you Brian."

He snickered. "Asshole."

But he liked my ass--a lot--and praise God, he set to fucking it in earnest.

Already wound tight, I came within heartbeats. Spurting thick and wet between us, I painted his chest and my belly with hot strings. He must've been as turned on as I was because when I lowered my legs and wrapped them around his pistoning hips, whispering dirty encouragement in his ear as he pumped into me? He threw back his head and roared, his dick like iron in my ass as he pulsed and shot.

He collapsed against me, his body too heavy, but he'd fucked me into a boneless puddle so it didn't matter. Instead of objecting, I threaded my fingers into his sweat-damp hair. I kissed his temple.

He grunted. "Mom's real estate firm handles sales for the units in this building. She says she can get us a deal on the condo and she'll do the closing, gratis, as our Christmas present. If we want it."

His Mom was twenty miles of Scary so my mind immediately leapfrogged to the living space I vaguely recalled Leland dragging me through on the way to the mattress I prayed to God that he rather than his mother had tossed down on the floor for us. For tonight. Our long weekend together.

Hell, I would've bedded down with Leland in a Sears shed, would've followed him anywhere. But his family hadn't rejected their hell-raising gay son, hadn't turned their collective backs on us. All those nights I wasted hoping Leland hadn't been feeding me a line when he'd promised he'd tell his family about me once he was sure it wouldn't cost me my job. The weeks I'd agonized over what his parents would think of me. Gold-digger. Office slut sleeping my way to the top. None of it was true, but one horrible scenario after another had played over and over in my head for so long, it'd paralyzed me.

Why is it always so easy to believe the bad stuff? Easier to believe Leland had been using me and was covering his bases in the office. Easier to believe what we had was a figment of my desperately

hopeful imagination and completely impossible in the real world of corporate policy and parental disapproval.

So when Bess had called me into personnel...

Not one of my finer moments, but yeah, I'd run.

There was no running from him now. He'd made sure of that. Naked, still shaking from the twin orgasms he'd given me and impaled on his dick, I wasn't going anywhere Leland didn't want me to go.

But maybe the bad stuff wasn't easier to believe, after all. With his weight pressing into me, his arms around me and his fingers skimming the sex sweat from my shoulder, I believed in him. More importantly, I could finally believe in us. He'd gift-wrapped my most secret, fertile fantasy--Leland and I, living together and loving each other--and presented it to me, mine for the taking.

I could have this every night.

When I shivered in anticipation, Leland must've mistaken it for something else because he cursed under his breath. "Sorry. I ordered dinner from Giuseppe's for later. I brought candles, downloaded some Toby Keith on my iPod, wine and flowers, the works. I wanted to make up for the past couple of months, soften you up before asking you to move in, but...You melted me."

I chuckled. "You seduced me," I reminded him, playfully tugging on his hair.

His mouth thinned. "So what's your point?"

I rolled my eyes. "You melted me, Leland. That's the point. It's not supposed to be the other way around."

He snorted. "You melted me from the first time you strutted into my office, before I ever laid a finger on you, and you've melted me ever since. All you have to do is breathe and bam! Game over."

Delight stirred my heart. Charmed and seduced all over again, I grinned. "Really?"

He shifted to stare at me with one dark eye. "Really."

"Okay." I yawned, hoping he wouldn't notice the pleased blush I felt heating my cheeks. "I'll move in."

His lips, still swollen from my kisses, curved to a sinful bow. "My parents expect us for Sunday supper. We can tell Mom to start the paperwork then."

My nose wrinkled. The family thing still made me nervous. What if they thought I was a troublemaker and a slut? It didn't help that they were right on both counts. I'd certainly caused Leland nothing but trouble and I was so far gone for him, I made rent boys look like angels. Even so, his terrifying mother had offered us a home and his father hadn't fired me, either.

I sighed.

"Okay," I repeated.

"Good." His smile lit up his eyes like a freaking Christmas tree. "Tell me?"

I elbowed him because why did I have to be the first to say it? When we both knew he'd owned me from the very first night? "You are such a girl, Whitacre."

He laughed. He kissed me. "I love you, too."

**THE END**

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## A BUGGER TO PACK by Kim Dare

*Dear Santa,*

*I would love to get a good Master/Slave book, without humiliation (sorry Santa... I hate humiliation, like eat garbage or stuff like that), and with a lot of hot scenes. Maybe a sexy Master/Slave celebration of Xmas?*

*Is it ask too much to ask for a description of some hot slave like a picture I saw in this amazing discussion on my book group discussion?*

*(please Santa, help me)*

\*\*\*\*\*

(Part 1)

"How the hell did you talk me into this?" Aaron Clark asked his best friend, not for the first time that night.

Ben turned around and smiled up at him. If Aaron hadn't known the club's regular bartender better, he might have believed the sweet, innocent little look in the smaller man's eyes. As it was, Aaron merely turned his attention heavenward and wished like hell he wasn't such a soft touch when someone approached him for a favour.

"It's for charity," Ben reminded him, absentmindedly, already turning away.

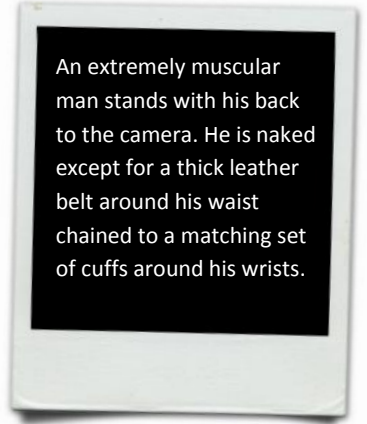
The fact that his humiliation was going to raise money for a good cause failed to make Aaron feel the least bit better about the world. It also failed to make the minuscule thong that Ben had cajoled him into, any bigger. Aaron shuffled his bare feet against the bare floorboards as he glanced along the increasingly short line of men between him and the gap in the curtains leading to the back of the makeshift stage.

"How big a donation would I need to make, right now, if I wanted to get out of this?" Aaron asked. He was pretty sure he'd happily bankrupt himself to be able to run away and scramble back into the clothes he usually wore when he worked on the door of the club.

"It'll be fine," Ben soothed vaguely, patting Aaron's arm as he stood on tiptoe in an effort to get a better view.

Aaron was tall enough to have a perfectly good line of sight without moving a muscle. Another man had disappeared from the queue between him and the worse moment of his life.

"Ben—" he began again.



An extremely muscular man stands with his back to the camera. He is naked except for a thick leather belt around his waist chained to a matching set of cuffs around his wrists.

"It's Christmas," Ben cut in. He actually fluttered his eyelashes up at him as he said it. "It's traditional to give to charity, to help those who are less fortunate than yourself, and stuff."

"Yeah, well, there must be other ways to—"

A cheer went up on the other side of the curtain. Aaron's mouth went dry. He promptly forgot how to speak.

Behind his back, Aaron's hands tightened into fists and tugged at the cuffs Ben had somehow managed to convince him would be the perfect addition to his damn near non-existent outfit.

All Aaron's squirming succeeded in doing, was to pull at the thick leather belt around his waist. Dropping his gaze to the floor in front of him, he tried to take a deep breath to settle his nerves, but his eyes went straight to that silly little thong.

"Ben—"

"Ben Chambers!" someone called from the stage.

With one last grin over his shoulder, Ben disappeared through the gap in the curtains. Aaron watched, growing paler by the second, as Ben's light footsteps carried him forward to stand next to the auctioneer for the evening.

The crowd whooped with delight at the sight of him. Aaron couldn't bring himself to be surprised. He was pretty sure Ben was exactly what every dominant fantasised about every time he took his cock in hand.

Big blue eyes, floppy blond hair and a cute little arse—when a perfect smile and grade-A flirting talent was thrown into the mix, it was only natural that he should be one of the most popular men in the club.

Ben bowed to his delighted audience. The leather harness and cuffs he was wearing only made his skin look paler and the light lines of muscle that graced his limbs more elegant.

Someone shouted something from the crowd. Ben cheerfully changed his bow to a low, theatrical curtsy and pretended to fan himself as he smiled coyly over the top of the imaginary prop.

Watching his performance through the gap in the curtains, Aaron did his best not to hyperventilate. It wasn't as easy as it should have been. By the time Ben practically leapt off the stage into the arms of his winning bidder, Aaron's lungs had completely given up on their assigned task. His head was spinning from lack of oxygen.

There was no way in hell he was going out there. Aaron shook his head at the very possibility.

"Aaron Clark!"

Someone behind Aaron elbowed him in the back, as if they thought there really was some possibility he hadn't heard his name being called. "You're up!"

Actually, he wasn't. Walking onto the stage sporting a flourishing erection was one of the few problems he didn't have. His feet remained rooted to the spot.

"Aaron Clark?" the auctioneer called again.

The elbow-er standing behind Aaron gave him a push toward the gap in the curtains. He stumbled forward. His shoulders brushed against the rich red velvet. The spotlight blinded him. He tried to lift his hands to shield his eyes, but the cuffs stopped him short. Instinct led him to the auctioneer's side, but even after his eyes adjusted to the stage lighting, he found it impossible to make out any detail of the dominants in the crowd past it.

That was something to be grateful for. Next time he worked on the door, he wouldn't have to know which doms he allowed into the club had seen him up there making a complete pillock out of himself. And he couldn't tell if Mr. Patterson, the owner of the club, was out there either.

From somewhere far, far away, Aaron heard the auctioneer read out his stats, but his mind easily converted the numbers into the reality they represented.

Height—A damn sight taller than the vast majority of the doms there.

Weight—Too much. And the fact it was all muscle didn't magically make him light enough to sit on a master's knee the way Ben was so fond of doing.

Age—Did it really matter? It wasn't as if anyone would still be listening at that point.

"He's bloody huge!"

Only one man in the crowd shouted it, but Aaron knew that most of the others would be thinking the same thing. A moment later another cat-call emerged from the crowd, ready to prove all of Aaron's fears true. Swallowing rapidly, he tried like hell not to blush and completely failed.

Keeping his gaze lowered, all he could do was stand very still and pray for it to be over.

"Yeah, but wouldn't it be nice to lay a whip to someone who won't break at the first blow!" someone shouted.

"Built like an ox—and I've got a new bull whip to test out," someone else said.

It took Aaron more than a few seconds to realise the tone of the comments had changed. The serious dominants might have lost interest when they saw the size of him, but Aaron had allowed hardcore sadists into the club often enough to be able to recognise most of their voices.

Belonging to any of them for four hours might hurt like hell, but right then, Aaron was willing to take that over the abject humiliation of not receiving a single bid.

To Aaron's side, the auctioneer opened the bidding. The values weren't as high as those being offered up for Ben's time, but there were numbers—and they were going up rather than down.

\*

(Story continues in next message)

“They’ll skin the poor sod...”

Luke Patterson heard the man sitting next to him at the bar say the words, but he’d be damned if he was just going to sit back and watch his neighbour’s prediction come true. Catching the auctioneer’s eye, Patterson nodded once and raised the bidding a little further.

Keeping his bids subtle enough that he didn’t attract any extra interest in paying for Aaron’s time, Patterson quietly raised the stakes until each and every sadist who’d considered using the bouncer as his new whipping boy fell by the wayside.

It was only when the gavel fell, that Patterson turned his gaze away from the auctioneer and back to Aaron. The submissive stood near the edge of the stage, peering out into the crowd, but he obviously had no idea who’d won the bidding war on him. Neither did any of the other doms—not until Patterson left his barstool and made his way up to the edge of the stage to collect his prize.

A few whispers started up as he reached the bottom of the little flight of stairs that led up to Aaron. Patterson had a fair idea what they would be saying. He might have been happy for the auction to take place in his club and raise money for the worthy cause of the year, but he has never gone so far as to support it by actually placing a bid on any of the ‘slaves’ who put themselves under the hammer.

The bouncer blinked down at him, as if he still didn’t understand what was going on.

“Come along,” Patterson said, with a jerk of his head. His tone of voice seemed to break through whatever was holding Aaron frozen in place.

The boy took a step forward, then another, until he’d come down the steps and stood at Patterson’s side.

“Follow me.”

Patterson turned his back on the submissive and lead him back through the crowd, not to where he’d been sitting by the bar, but to the private booth that he’d taken to using as a makeshift office during club hours.

Holding the door open, he stood back and let Aaron walk in first, knowing there was no way the submissive would be able to close the door behind them while his hands were bound as they were. Damn, but he looked as good in bondage as Patterson had always thought he would.

It wasn’t a completely private location, and it wasn’t exactly silent either. The noise of the club seeped through the rich wooden panelling, but as they faced each other, the rest of the world became increasingly irrelevant.



Patterson ran his eyes over the submissive, from the close cropped hair, along lines of heavy, well-defined muscle, past the bondage and all the way down to his bare feet. For a completely stunning man, he seemed incredibly nervous about showing off his fantastic build.

Patterson finally took pity on the boy and nodded toward the bench on the left hand side of the table. "Sit down, Aaron."

The submissive did as he was told. Even while sitting down, he seemed to be consciously trying to make himself appear smaller and take up as little room as possible. Or maybe he just wanted to hide as much of himself as he could behind the dark oak table.

Patterson lowered himself into the seat opposite him. "You've never struck me as the kind of man who likes being the centre of attention."

Aaron met his eyes for a moment.

"I'm guessing Ben talked you into taking part?"

Aaron nodded.

Patterson considered his next move very carefully. He'd always known there was a bloody fantastic body hidden behind the thick coat Aaron wore when he worked on the door but having it displayed for his appreciation was something very different, and more than a little distracting.

"What was the final bid in the auction?" Aaron asked, suddenly.

"Does it matter?" Patterson asked.

Aaron cleared his throat. He seemed to have difficulty forcing the words out. "I probably can't pay you back straight away, but, maybe I could do it a bit at a time. You could dock my wages or something?"

Patterson raised an eyebrow at him.

"It's not that I'm ungrateful that you stepped in and rescued me, sir, but it shouldn't put you out of pocket and..." Aaron's words trailed off as their eyes met.

He was right, of course. It was rescuing Aaron that had been uppermost in his mind when he offered his first bid. Save him from having every scrap of skin whipped off his back, and send him on his way without actually making him go through with the rest of the bloody stupid auction game. That had been the plan

But, as the heat rushed to Aaron's cheeks, there was no way in hell Patterson could bring the appropriate words to his lips. "You agreed to play the game," he reminded the younger man instead.

Aaron squirmed slight in his seat.

"You offered the bidders four hours of your submission," Patterson reminded him.

"Maybe—"

"There are no maybes," Patterson cut in, briskly. "You don't owe me any money, Aaron. You owe me four hours."

"I..." Aaron turned his head and looked everywhere but at Patterson.

Running his eyes over those parts of Aaron's body that were visible past the table, Patterson could think of so many wonderful things to do with those four hours. "State your limits."

The submissive blinked at him, as if he had no idea what he was talking about. "I...what the guys out there said—I can take a whipping. I don't mind."

"I asked what you won't do," Patterson reminded him. "Not what you will do."

Aaron stared at him, looking more helpless than any man his size should rightly be able to.

"Do you have a master? A dominant you're answerable to?" Patterson asked.

Aaron shook his head.

"A boyfriend, a lover?" Patterson pushed, hoping like hell he was right in thinking he already knew the answer to that question too.

Aaron's Adam's apple bobbed as he swallowed rapidly. He shook his head once more.

Patterson smiled. "In that case, I'm still waiting to hear your limits," he reminded the younger man.

Aaron opened and closed his mouth, but no words came out.

Patterson's eyes narrowed. "Have you ever negotiated a scene with a dominant?"

"Like I said, I can pay you back—" Aaron fell silent as Patterson lifted a hand.

"You'll be given a safe word at the start of the scene. We'll play it by ear."

The submissive simply stared at him, as if he'd lost his mind.

"You're scheduled to be working on the door next Friday—Christmas Eve through to the early hours of Christmas Day, correct?"

Aaron nodded.

"Change of plans. You can start your shift as usual, but you'll belong to me for four hours, starting at ten o'clock."

"I..." That was all he managed to say.

Patterson smiled slightly, the instinct to want to rescue Aaron wasn't exactly new, but now it was stronger than ever. He couldn't even allow him to struggle for the appropriate answer. "I think you'll find the appropriate answer is 'yes, sir'."

"Yes, sir," Aaron echoed, with perfect and apparently completely instinctive obedience.

Patterson nodded his approval. Christmas couldn't come quick enough.

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"He's probably changed his mind by now," Aaron said. He kicked his feet against the pavement outside the club as he glanced to where his friend was sitting on the wall to the left of the door during his break. "He's probably forgotten about it all."

"Patterson's not the forgetful sort, and he's not the indecisive sort either," Ben swung his legs back and forth, tapping out a rhythm on the brick work as he hummed a carol under his breath. "If your slave hours go half as well as mine went, you're going to be grinning all the way into the New Year."

Aaron looked both ways along the snow covered street, as if some sort of escape route might open up for him at any moment. He'd never had any doubt that Ben's time with the dom who offered his winning bid would be bloody fantastic. Any dominant would love to have Ben under his control and—

"Patterson sent me to watch the door."

Aaron looked over his shoulder. One of the other bouncers stood directly behind him, ready to take his place. Aaron really wished the guy could take his place in the scene with Patterson instead.

"He said you're to report to playroom seven straight away," the other bouncer went on.

"Told you he wouldn't forget," Ben chipped in.

Aaron glared over his shoulder at him, but, as much as part of him wished he had time to throttle his friend for getting him into this mess in the first place, it wouldn't do to keep Patterson waiting. Aaron quickly made his way through the club.

Room seven...

For all the time he'd spent on the door and in the public areas of the club, the playrooms were far less familiar territory for Aaron. He desperately tried to remember which set up was in which room.

Room seven...

Was that the one with the sling or the cage? He couldn't remember.

He was still none the wiser when he found himself standing outside the door with a big iron seven bolted onto the woodwork. His mind might have been spiralling out of control in a dozen different directions, but his body was running on automatic pilot and didn't wait for any orders to be issued by his brain before lifting his hand and knocking politely on the door.

"Enter."

Aaron's body still didn't wait for his mind to catch up. He turned the handle and pushed open the door.

Patterson stood on the far side of the room. Aaron had never actually seen the dominant wearing anything that wasn't leather, but as Aaron laid eyes on the other man he became acutely aware that, for the first time, he was looking at Patterson in his play clothes rather than his work clothes.

The leather the dominant usually wore was functional, practical and good quality, but Aaron stalled in the doorway as he ran his eyes over what Patterson was wearing right then. The leather trousers moulded themselves to the dominant's body like a second skin. It wasn't the kind of leather a man wore when he was going to be doing paperwork in the back room or play referee to a bunch of bratty doms who couldn't remember the rules of his club.

It looked far more like what a man wore when he was actually interested in the man he was planning to do a scene with. It was what a man wore when he was planning to whip a man into a frenzy of endorphins, screw the hell out of him, make him beg for anything and everything in the world, and generally give a submissive the best night of his life.

"Close the door, Aaron."

Aaron closed the door. The dominant still had his back to him, his skin was bare from his waist to where his hair covered the back of his neck—thick black strands that Aaron had longed to touch since the first moment he set eyes on the other man, three months ago, when he'd interviewed him for the security door-man's job.

Unsure what he should do, Aaron shuffled his feet and remained just inside the door, waiting for an order. Finally, Patterson turned away from the rack of toys on the other side of the room that he was so interested in, and looked in Aaron's direction.

As he leaned back against the edge of the bondage bench next to the toy rack, the overhead lights illuminated every lean line of muscle in the older man's body. They even picked out a few touches of gray at the dominant's temples.

"Your safe word is red."

Aaron nodded.

"Unless you're wearing a gag or sucking me off, I expect verbal responses."

"Yes, sir," Aaron managed to say. It wasn't in him to keep his eyes on the other man's face then. His attention dropped straight to Patterson's cock. He could see the outline of the dominant's shaft through the leather.

"Aaron."

The submissive dragged his eyes up.

"Focus."

"Yes, sir," he whispered again.

"You're going to belong to me for the next four hours. If you don't say your safe word, I'll do whatever I want with you. You understand that?"

"Yes, sir."

Patterson didn't look as if he believed him.

Suddenly well aware that he was making a complete idiot out of himself, Aaron did his best to pull himself together. "I understand the way scenes work, sir."

Patterson appeared neither relieved nor impressed by his reassurance. Straightening up, he stepped away from the bondage bench. "Come here."

Aaron slowly made his way forward.

"Give me your clothes. You'll get them back when I'm finished with you."

"Yes, sir." Automatically undoing his coat Aaron shrugged it off his shoulders and handed it to the dominant.

Setting the garment to one side, Patterson quickly turned his attention back to Aaron and watched him strip the rest of his clothes away.

Wasting time wasn't going to make him look any more like the kind of submissive men that Patterson liked to own. He wouldn't turn into someone like Ben when the clock struck midnight. He had far more chance of turning into a bloody pumpkin.

Scrambling out of his clothes, Aaron handed every item over to Patterson, until he stood completely naked in front of the leather clad dominant. He'd never thought he'd miss that ridiculous leather thong and the belt with those cuffs locked to it that he'd worn at the slave auction. But, at least when he'd been bound by those cuffs, he'd known what to do with his hands.

As Patterson slowly walked around him, Aaron clenched and unclenched his fists, but he had no idea how to stand, how to hold himself as he was assessed. The dominant was behind him, out of his line of sight, when Aaron felt fingers brush against his forearm. He jumped, but Patterson's hand didn't release the hold it had taken around his wrist.

The dominant said nothing as he guided Aaron's hand up to the back of his head. Another second passed and saw Patterson guiding Aaron's other hand to join the first on his head and link his fingers neatly together.

A gentle tap of one leather booted foot to the inside of Aaron's ankle was enough to convince him to shuffle his feet shoulder width apart. Aaron closed his eyes. While it was nice to know exactly how the older man wanted him to stand, being presented like that for his inspection, unable to hide his reaction to it, soon had the heat rushing to his cheeks. His cock had been hard from the start, but now it was curving back toward his stomach.

"How often do you work out?"

Aaron blinked his eyes open. Patterson was standing directly in front of him.

The submissive tried to answer and failed. Clearing his throat, he tried again. "Most days, sir."

Reaching out to him, Patterson ran his fingers along the muscles in Aaron's right arm. He didn't seem particularly impressed, he didn't seem particularly anything. It was almost as if he didn't see anything the least bit strange in the man he was dominating carrying so much more muscle than him.

The older man's touch moved to Aaron's chest. His hand stroked its way across his pecs until his fingertips found a nipple. He caught the little nub of nerve endings between the digits and squeezed, hard.

Aaron whole body jerked. A shocked little noise escaped from the back of his throat. Patterson smiled and calmly went back to caressing his muscles. There was nothing delicate about the dominant's touch. It was light, but in a way that only seemed to emphasise that he was choosing to keep it that way rather than incapable of making it harsher should the mood strike him.

"Does it help?"

"Sir?" Aaron managed. The older man's hand was making its way down his abs and it was impossible for him not to feel that the other man had any destination in mind other than his cock.

"All these layers of muscle you've worked so hard to achieve. Do they help you feel safer in your own skin?"

Aaron just blinked at him.

"You're obviously not a vain man, Aaron. And I'd be very surprised to find that you're competitive enough to enjoy out bench-pressing every man you meet."

All Aaron could do was stare back at the dominant as Patterson held his gaze.

"The only reason a man like you gains all these muscles is to hide behind them. Does being strong actually help you feel safe?"

Aaron shook his head. "No, sir."

"No," Patterson murmured. "I didn't think it would."

"I..."

"A submissive only ever truly feels safe when he's wrapped up in someone else's strength," Patterson said, perfectly calmly, as if they weren't talking about anything more life changing than the weather.

Lifting his hand from where it had lingered on Aaron's stomach, he stroked his knuckles down his cheek. "You have no idea just how much you need a good master to look after you, do you, Aaron?"

Swallowing rapidly, Aaron didn't even attempt to find any words to make a reply. All he could do was hold the dominant's gaze, and pray that Patterson could see whatever he needed to know reflected in his eyes.

Even though he was much narrower across the shoulders than Aaron, Patterson was also well over six feet tall, only an inch or so shorter than him, that should have made it easy to look him in the eye, but it didn't.

The older man smiled slightly. He nodded as if he understood everything in the whole world and, right then, Aaron had no doubt Patterson really was as omnipotent as he looked.

"Kneel."

Submissives like Ben could lower themselves to their knees with so much easy grace that it barely seemed like there were joints operating behind the movement. Aaron had seen them do it a million times. But, as Aaron slowly descended, first to one knee and then the other, he'd never felt more clumsy in his life. His limbs were too long, there was far too much of him and—

Patterson's knuckle came to rest under his chin and the dominant tilted Aaron's head back until he had little choice but to look up at the older man and meet his gaze.

And, suddenly it didn't matter how tall he was. Down on his knees, he'd never felt smaller before another man, and he'd never loved that rare, perfect feeling as much as he did right then either.

The dominant ran his hand over Aaron's head. His hair was too short for anyone to grab hold of, but the older man didn't seem to mind too much. Aaron cautiously moved his own hands down the back of his head, to make more of his scalp available to the other man's touch.

"How many times have you imagined yourself kneeling for me since you started working here?"

Aaron didn't have words to answer him. He didn't have a single syllable in his head.

The dominant chuckled. "Never mind. It's probably no more often than I've pictured you like this." He seemed to be talking more to himself than to Aaron, but that didn't stop the submissive relishing the older man's words.

"You really...?" Aaron whispered.

Patterson stroked his fingers casually across Aaron's face until they brushed across his lips. "Imagined you sucking my cock?" he finished for him.

Aaron parted his lips, but no words emerged.

Patterson didn't complain about his silence. He simply slipped two of his fingers into Aaron's mouth and made them quickly at home there, easily encouraging Aaron to lick the digits and suck around them.

"Imagined you meant something more than common leather-clad courtesy every time you called me sir?" Patterson went on.

There was no way he could answer unless the dominant chose to remove his fingers. He was effectively gagged and had never been more grateful for permission to stay silent.

"Imagined you bound to a rack, completely helpless and unable to come while I teased you for hours on end? Tied to an Andrews while I whipped you again and again, so gently you'd beg for a real kiss from the whip?" The dominant slid his fingers deeper into Aaron's mouth, making him murmur with pleasure. "There are lots of things I've imagined doing with you."

Patterson took his fingers out of his mouth then. Aaron licked his lips, suddenly desperate to feel the other man's cock slide between his lips and fill the emptiness left behind after his digits retreated. "Please?" The word escaped before he could stop it.

Patterson stroked his thumb down Aaron's chin, gently parting his lips once more. His touch was so gentle, as if the man somehow thought he was the most delicate, fragile thing he'd ever laid hands on in his life, yet there was no humour in his eyes, he didn't look like he was laughing at Aaron's expense.

Frowning up at him, Aaron desperately tried to work the older man out.

"You may consider your debt to the slave auction paid."

Aaron pulled away as Patterson's words hit the air. He quickly removed his hands from the back of his head, all his worse fears confirmed in one swift blow.

It was his own fault for falling for an unattainable fantasy, he told himself. Why the hell would a dominant like Patterson be interested in someone like him anyway?

\*

"But that doesn't mean I want you to leave," Patterson added. He watched the submissive very carefully. For all he was a big strong guy, Patterson couldn't help but think he was also the most fragile submissive he'd ever set eyes on. That, far more than the gorgeous muscles, drew him closer to the other man.

Crouching down in front of the muscle bound sub, Patterson brought them back to an equal height. "Game players may like the idea of ordering a man around all night and knowing he'll do whatever they say just because they've paid for the pleasure," he said. "But I'm not a game player."

Aaron held his gaze, but he didn't say a single word in response.



"This isn't a game to me," Patterson waved a hand toward the toys that surrounded them.  
"Neither are you."

Aaron's Adam's apple bobbed, but he still didn't speak.

"What I want to do, is to take you upstairs, out of the club and into my flat and for you to obey me. Not because you want to help a good cause. Not because Ben talked you into something. I want you to put yourself in my hands for no other reason than that's exactly where you want to be."

The submissive's lips slowly parted. "Yes, sir."

Patterson was well aware that there were times when 'yes, sir' was nothing more nor less than the punctuation that filled the gaps in conversations between a dominant and a submissive. It wasn't really agreement or acceptance, it was merely something a submissive could say to indicate that he had heard and understood what had been said just before.

Right then, as he and Aaron faced each other in the centre of the playroom, Patterson had never been more certain that this wasn't one of those times. Aaron's eyes screamed acceptance, and desire, and submission, and a million other things that swirled around those emotions.

Patterson stood up. Aaron remained exactly where he was.

Keeping his movement slow and calm, unwilling to spook the boy when everything still balanced on the sharpest of knife edges, Patterson selected a length of leather and chain from the rack of toys.

It only took him a few seconds to have a loop of silver links around Aaron's neck and the leather handle of the lead secured around his own wrist. Of course, it wasn't a collar as such. There would be time enough for something like that in the future, but it would hardly be appropriate then, not between men who weren't playing games.

Still, Patterson smiled slightly as he saw something inside Aaron relax as the physical connection between them let him know that he was safe and controlled, owned by another man for the first time.

"Hands behind your back."

Aaron obeyed.

"On your feet."

A touch of uncertainty came into the submissive's eyes as he brought himself to his full, and admittedly rather impressive, height. It was almost as if being on his knees had allowed him to feel small, to feel submissive-sized for a little while.

Patterson gave a mental chuckle as his gaze automatically honed in on Aaron's lips. It would hardly be a hardship to keep a man with a mouth like that on his knees a great deal of the time.

A very gentle tug on the lead negated any need for a verbal command as Patterson turned around. Aaron followed him across to the door in the furthest corner of the room without ever letting the lead grow taut between them.

The inconspicuous exit led straight up to the fire exit for his private flat above the club. Aaron made no comment on that as he trailed along behind him. He offered no complaint about the cold that lingered in the little used stairwell. But, when Patterson finally led him into the small living room set off the landing and turned to face Aaron, he had no doubt that all of the submissive's insecurities had come flooding back.

Having already discovered one thing that made the submissive feel more at ease in his own skin, it would have been stupid not to make use of it. "On your knees."

Aaron didn't hesitate to follow the command and the simple fact he now had to look up to meet Patterson's eyes soon seemed to help him calm down.

Stepping past him, Patterson kept hold of the lead as he moved to sit in one of the comfortable old arm chairs that flanked the flat's only fireplace. Keeping his pace slow, he made it easy for Aaron to follow him while still on his knees. A gentle tug called the boy forward to position himself between Patterson's legs.

He didn't need any further encouragement. Aaron shuffled forward. He even gained the courage to lean in and press a kiss against Patterson's leather covered erection without needing a direct order.

Gazing down at him with complete approval, Patterson settled his free hand on the younger man's head and merely accepted the licks and kisses he pressed against him as if they were his due.

There was no need for praise or to make a fuss over the other man. Acceptance was all the submissive really needed from him right then, and Patterson let the silent offering last several minutes before he slipped his hand between them and undid the specially lengthened fly in his leather trousers, giving Aaron access to his whole crotch.

Once more settling his hand on the back of the other man's head, Patterson guided Aaron to lean forward and take his cock between his lips for the first time. There was no need to apply even the slightest force. The lightest guidance was more than enough.

Even so, as he settled both his hands on the larger man's head, Patterson let Aaron feel a more dominant man directing his movements, holding him steady when he wanted him to focus on lapping at the tip and swirling his tongue around the sensitive glans, then leading him forward when he wanted more of the hard shaft to be cocooned in the wet heat of his mouth.

The boy had an undeniable talent for fellatio. More than that, he had blatant enthusiasm for it too. Patterson smiled down at the submissive as pleasure rushed through him, almost as much of it coming from his mind as his cock as he gloried in the submission being offered to him. Aaron murmured his own enjoyment, sending another wave of bliss through the dominant.

The slow, almost worshipful attentions soon had Patterson on the edge. From the look in Aaron's eyes as he glanced up at him, the untouched submissive wasn't far behind him. Patterson tightened his hold on the younger man's head, holding him in place as he rocked his hips and thrust his cock deep into Aaron's willing mouth.

The submissive took it easily, sucking and swallowing around him, as if trying to beg the orgasm out of him by any means possible. Aaron hadn't forgotten his dominant's earlier order. His hands were still behind him and Patterson sensed the other man rest in his control as he pulled Aaron off balance. The submissive didn't even try to reach out and steady himself.

The trust, the purity of his submission, mixed with the raw desire he saw in Aaron's eyes and rushed down Patterson's spine. As it collided with the heat and friction surrounding his cock, Patterson tossed his head back.

Yelling out his pleasure, he held Aaron's head still, filling his mouth with cum as his orgasm tore through him. Ecstasy seemed to reach out into every part of his body, until he felt it in every fibre of his body, even after he fell still and collapsed back against the armchair.

Blinking his eyes open, Patterson looked down at the submissive. Aaron's head was still bowed over his lap, his lips wrapped delicately around the softening shaft.

Ruffling the younger man's hair as much as the short strands would allow, Patterson took away his hands and allowed him to lift his head, but Aaron didn't seem to be in any sort of rush. A glance down at the floor by his feet confirmed to Patterson's satisfaction that it wasn't because he'd actually already come from the sheer bliss of pleasing a dominant.

Aaron was still hard and frustrated, but there was no way anyone could doubt that all his attention was still on his lover. His focus remained on Patterson as the dominant straightened his clothes and tucked himself neatly away. Even after that, Aaron showed no inclination to rise from his place at his feet.

"You're allowed to stand," Patterson told him, as a less than acceptable thought occurred to him. Kneeling was all well and good, but it wouldn't do to let the boy think he'd only belong to him when he was cut off at the knees.

Aaron frowned slightly as he received the permission, confirming all of the dominant's suspicions.

Patterson continued to stare at him until the submissive got the hint and rose reluctantly to his feet. Aaron didn't seem to know what to do with himself then. For the first time, he took a step back from Patterson.

"I have no need to make myself feel like a big man by forcing a submissive to feel small," Patterson informed him. There weren't going to be any misunderstandings between them on that score.

\*

"But, you do, sir." It took all of Aaron's strength to force the words out.

Patterson raised an eyebrow at him.

"You do make me feel small..." Aaron whispered. He turned away from the dominant then, unable to hold his gaze a second longer. Stepping toward the window set into the bay overlooking the garden behind the club, he stared out through the glass into the night sky. "...in a good way."

He sensed the older man move, even though he never heard him make a sound, but he still jumped when Patterson's arms came around him. The dominant's hands caressed their way across his chest, with complete confidence in his right to touch him in any way he wanted.

A second later, Patterson's legs pressed against the back of Aaron's knees and pushed forward. The joints immediately gave way. Aaron's knees landed heavily on the padded bench beneath the bay window.

The dominant tugged Aaron roughly back to lean against him. His head barely came up to the older man's shoulder when they were arranged that way.

"Like this?" Patterson asked.

Small in a good way... Aaron nodded, cautiously leaning into Patterson's touch and turning his head so his cheek rubbed against the older man's chest. Yes, that was exactly how it felt.

"That's not about feeling small," Patterson whispered to him. "It's about realising your just the right size."

Aaron nodded again, relishing the way the dominant's skin brushed against his cheek, even as he blushed at the idea of any man ever considering anything about him perfect, let alone a dominant like Patterson ever saying so out loud.

"I don't see what would be so hot about a lover who has to stand on his tiptoes to kiss me," the dominant informed him. His tone was serious, but Aaron could practically hear the smile in the other man's voice too. "It's getting late."

Aaron stopped smiling, but Patterson laughed when he seemed to notice that.

"Do you really think I'd send you to anyone's bed but mine, Aaron?"

He looked up at the dominant as Patterson took hold of the handle of the lead still hanging around Aaron's neck. Stepping back, Patterson gave a gentle tug on it and ordered him to his feet. Within seconds, the older man had led him back into what could only be his own bedroom.

Once again unsure what to do with himself, Aaron stayed near the door when Patterson let go of his lead. Habit made him do his best to be as small and as inconspicuous as possible but as he looked around the room, the submissive's gaze fell on an envelope that stole all his attention.

Aaron.

He frowned at his name for several seconds before he could bring the appropriate query to his lips. "Sir?"

Patterson glanced across at him, then followed his gaze to the envelope. "Ben asked me to keep it for you and give it to you on Christmas morning." The dominant glanced at his watch. "It's after midnight. If you want to open it, you can."

Stepping further into the room, Aaron did as the dominant suggested.

Ben's messy handwriting scrawled across the page in bright purple ink.

Sorry I couldn't wrap him for you, darling. I'd have loved to tie a big pretty bow around his neck, but dominants are such a bugger to pack! Still, I really hope you're enjoying your Christmas present, sugar. It's about bloody time you two got it together and since there was no way in hell he'd let any other dom win you in that auction, it was far too good an opportunity to miss.

Merry Christmas, darling!

Ben.

"He's right."

Aaron spun around.

Patterson didn't look as if he felt the least bit guilty for reading over his shoulder. He held his gaze and smiled as if he knew he had the right to do whatever he wanted with him. "I might have been willing to bide my time and wait for you to find your feet in the club while you weren't even flirting with another dom, but there's no way in hell I'd have ever let another man lay a hand on you, let alone place the winning bid on you in that idiotic auction."

"Ben's..." Aaron tried to explain, as he folded up the note paper and pushed it back into the envelope.

"A complete brat? A reasonable bartender on those rare occasions he manages to keep his mind on his job? An incorrigible flirt? A good friend to you?"

"All of the above, sir?" Aaron hesitated.

Seeming to lose interest in the conversation then, Patterson took the letter from his fingers and set it down on the cabinet. Slipping his hand into Aaron's, the dominant walked backward toward the bed.

As his feet automatically carried him forward, Aaron stared at the other man's hand wrapped around his, as if it were the most miraculous thing he'd ever seen.

"Just this once, I'm going to give you permission to obey another man's orders," Patterson suddenly announced.

Very slowly, Aaron lifted his gaze and met the other man's eyes.

"Do as Ben says, sweetheart. Come to bed and enjoy your Christmas present."

**THE END**

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## JUNIPER'S CHRISTMAS STOCKING by A.J. Llewellyn

The letter fell on my front door mat and caught my attention. I'm inundated by mail all year round, but this one intrigued me. I don't get too much mail from adults. Especially letters from adults with photos of me right there on the envelope. I snatched it up and ran off in private to read it. I hunkered down in one of Barbie's Malibu Beach Castle displays inside the girls' toy production department, where the elves were busy painting scary faces on the Bratz dolls.

I scanned the note, which read:

*Dear Santa,*

*I lead such an innocent life but after being a member of the group for a year I find myself being corrupted slowly.*

*How I would love to know what happened next to poor virginal Kurt after he just happened to wander into a leather bar. Would he be offered a cup of tea and a piece of cake or will he turn out to be a bratty sub perhaps?*

*Please make my Xmas wish come true. Love to Mrs. Claus.*

*Juni*

x

Well, if that doesn't warm the cockles of a dirty old man's heart, nothing will! I began to write, the memories of that delicious, wicked encounter replacing all thoughts of dancing sugar plums in my head...

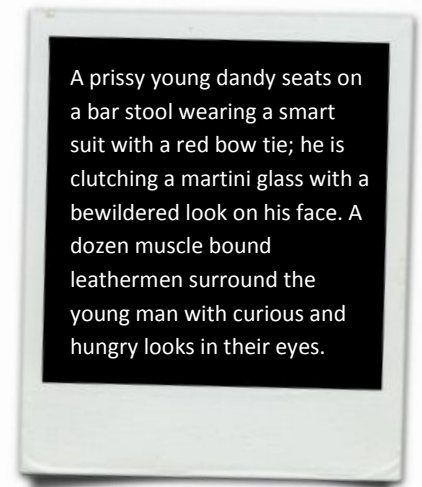
\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Juni,

Yes, there really is a Santa Claus and have you been a good little ho, ho, HO, this year? Ahem...Kurt...ah yes, I remember the boy well. Don't buy that sweet little virginal act. He's the bossiest bottom I've ever met. And I'm Santa Claus! You wouldn't believe the things grown men, especially the allegedly straight ones, will do for a free Wii under the tree.

But I digress.

You see, I moonlight as a bartender in the Christmas off-season at The Celestial Revolver. That's me behind the bar there. Yep, they call me the Silver Fox. It's the swellest day job ever. You wouldn't believe the action I see. Yeah, I know I'm supposed to be thrilled about making a load of stupid toys



all year, but that's my old lady's job. You might know Mrs. Claus as Chi Chi Larue. She's one swingin' chick...if you know what I mean...

Me, I'm just an old perv. She's an old perv all year, too. Who else do you think came up with the idea to manufacture all those gay porn star dildos?

Want one?

So here's how it all went down...

I keep my beard trimmed in the summer months but men still seem to think I'm one big barrel of peppermint stick fun. And, I am.

I pour drinks and make men...er...merry.

Kurt came into the bar one sunny afternoon. They may not look like it but his cherry-red pants are made of leather, so he's not your average choir boy. He ordered a slippery nipple, not a Shirley Temple, so that tells you right there that this boy's just lookin' for trouble. I gave him a drink, stroked my summer beard and pressed the button under the counter letting the guys in back know that we had a live one.

He likes leather. Heck, who doesn't?

Ho, ho, HO!

He likes, dick, too.

HO, HO, HO!!!!

He started to shake, just to cement the idea he's a sweet boy. Sweet, my ass! Well, actually, his ass is sweet too. I've enjoyed a taste of it a time or two. Christmas might only come once a year, but Santa sure doesn't!

In fact, Santa likes variety and he likes them naughty, not nice. Where do you think I came up with Ho Ho Ho anyway?

So, I invited Kurt to climb up on my north pole. I'm pleased to say my size frightened him. Last time we played, he'd had more than a few cocktails. This time he was working his way through the second one when I asked him to vacate the stool.

"Why, Santa?" he asked, all wide-eyed and goofy. "What do you have in mind?"

"Your ass is wanted in the back room," I said, wiping down the bar top.

"Me?" His voice came out in a squeak.

I topped up his cocktail glass and watched the Seven Dwarves crowd him. Sexy, Spanky, Sucky, Sticky, Slurpy, Slinky and Blimey (whose nickname will soon become obvious) put their hands on his shoulders and spun him around like they were about to play Pin the Tail on the Donkey. Kurt



glanced at me, a frightened yelp on his lips. I suspected this donkey already knew his tail was about to be nailed...nay, flogged, four ways from Sunday.

I was worried for a moment. He was about to take on seven guys with sex on their dirty minds. I made a list, checked it a couple of times...hmm...maybe I needed to be there to watch and protect. Gotta know who's naughty and who's naughtier, you know. I noticed a couple of the fellas get a big aggressive as they dragged Kurt away.

"Play nice," I shouted as the bar filled with guys wanting their happy hour drink. Yeah, I wanted my happy hour, too.

I got one of the other bartenders to swap places with me. He didn't look happy. Who doesn't love an orgy? I promised him he'd get his chance in the romper room and rushed to join the others. Before I even got there, my cock was hard. I'd like to say I'm not the type to kiss and tell but that would be a lie. I'm an old gossip.

At the entrance to the back bar, I was right behind Kurt as his head swiveled around in disbelief. When he saw what awaited him in the private room, his squeals turned to grins. He took a long swig of his cocktail and turned to me.

"Santa, I've been a baaaad boy!"

I nodded. "I just know you have, Kurt. If you want me to put a toy under your tree, you'd better get busy."

"What kind of toy are we talking?" Kurt asked.

"Any kind you want."

He still looked worried, even when he'd finished his second drink, but he soon found other things to occupy his mouth.

The guys undressed him and as I could have predicted, Spanky got his hands on Kurt's delicious little bubble butt and read the word tattooed on Kurt's tailbone.

More.

Yes, Juniper, I know you love tattoos. You're a dirty girl! And he's a very, very dirty boy!

Santa loves you both!

Ho! Ho! HO!

Spanky went crazy when he saw that word.

More.

"Oh, fuck!" he shouted, and put a couple of hand slaps on Kurt's wiggling ass. He let his fingers trail between Kurt's cheeks, right along the crack, as Sticky moved up to Kurt and began kissing Kurt. Things got hot awfully fast, with Sticky slipping his tongue into Kurt's mouth.

Their frantic kisses seemed to get to Slurpy who dropped to his knees and began to suck Kurt's cock.

"Oh, my!" Kurt gasped, breaking off his kiss with Sticky. "That feels good!"

I signaled to Slinky to get busy and he joined the hot little group as everyone around them watched. The entire room stopped as Slinky knelt between Kurt and Spanky. He put his face right between those now-pink ass cheeks and began to lick. Spanky slapped Kurt a couple more times, just to make his ass wiggle one more time.

Kurt now focused on kissing Sucky.

The group wanted to get more comfortable and shuffled with their naked bottom boy to the pool table in the middle of the room. They hoisted him onto the table, where he knelt on all fours. He moaned as Slurpy climbed up behind him, still licking his ass.

"Tastes like chicken," Slurpy said as he stuffed his whole face into Kurt's cute butt. Kurt glanced down as Sucky got underneath him and began sucking Kurt's rigid cock. Kurt was about to reach down and lick Sucky's massive tool, except a massive, absolutely enormous cock appeared in his face.

"Blimey!" Kurt said.

"Pleased to meet you," said the Adonis who owned the twelve-inch piece of paradise. Kurt looked a little stunned. Then he looked so happy.

"I'm not sure he can take it all," he whispered.

"You'd better try," I warned, "if you don't want to wake up to no gifts Christmas day."

"Santa, you're cruel," Kurt said, looking hurt. He moved his mouth over the head of the cock. He was so pretty sucking that thing. Hands and mouths moved all over his body until somebody rolled him onto his back. Sucky and Slinky sucked his nipples, Blimey kept feeding him cock and now Slurpy worked on Kurt's ass, which left his sweet cock to me.

I gave it a tug, then gave it a suck and that angelic little Kurt came hard for me, deep in my throat. He gave a shout, Blimey's cock popping out of his mouth.

"Sorry, Santa," he said, panting. "I couldn't wait. All these hot mouths and hands..."

"I understand. Who would you like to fuck?"

"Blimey!" he moaned. "Please. I gotta have that dick. And Santa, can I suck you?"

"Yes," I said and joined the fun on the pool table.

Kurt's mouth moved all over my cock and balls. He really is an enthusiastic little cock-sucker. Blimey gloved up, using an extra large condom. A few hands made light work of spreading lube all over Kurt's waiting ass and Blimey's big man meat.

He started poking his cock at Kurt's ass.

"More," Kurt whined. "More..."

The word died in his throat as Blimey started pumping him. He fucked Kurt so hard that I was seeing stars and I was just a spectator.

"I can usually go longer," Blimey insisted, "but he's so fucking tight!"

"I'll fuck him," Slinky said, rolling Kurt onto his back. Spanky sucked Slinky's cock for a moment, not that he wasn't already good and hard, but hey, this was a cock fiesta! He rolled a condom over Slinky's nice big cock and Kurt grabbed at it.

"You'd better fuck me really good, Slinky. I want lots of presents this year!"

"Yeah? Here's a present," Spanky said and fed Kurt's open mouth his cock.

Sucky and Slurpy poured fresh buttery nipples for everyone. They told Spanky to take his cock out of Kurt's mouth and poured the yummy liqueur all over it. Kurt went bonkers licking it off.

Over and over again, we doused Spanky's cock with the smooth, tasty cocktail and Kurt never got tired of licking the man clean.

"Waste not, want not!" he said as Spanky shoved his cock back into Kurt's mouth. He came, Kurt distracted for a moment as Slinky shot hard and deep inside Kurt's snug little ass.

"More," Kurt said. We had a serious, swingin' orgy going on. Everybody fucked everybody, but Kurt got the most bang for his...er, butt. At one point, I saw Sexy and Spanky taking turns feeding their cocks to Kurt as Sucky and Sticky licked and sucked his nipples. Slurpy and Slinky took turns sucking Kurt's cock as Blimey fucked the man again.

Kurt came so hard he let out an operatic yell that probably woke the dead. Well, they heard it all the way up in the North Pole because my old lady started texting me.

While you're down there having fun, our workers are revolting!

I texted back: I wouldn't say that. Some of them are kinda cute. That new one with the big ears is hot. Don't you think?

My irate wife texted back: Don't be an ass. They've gone on strike. They're marching in solidarity with the Easter Bunny's Workers' Union! Can you believe that? All those idiots have to do is sit around and make crappy chocolate eggs and drop them in a few gardens. We make millions of toys and you have to squeeze down chimneys for God's sake!

Huh. This wasn't pleasant news. I have an image to maintain. Santa couldn't show up without toys. Wikipedia would make mince meat of me! I sat in the corner in a chair, brooding when Kurt came over to me, naked, his cock half-hard.

"Santa. Everybody in the room fucked me, now what about you?"

"Sure," I said. I wanted the distraction. No, I needed the distraction. With the elves on strike that left me to finish painting the Bratz doll faces. As Kurt knelt between my thighs and liberated my cock from my button-down fly I texted back the news to Chi Chi that I'd help out with the dolls.

She didn't respond. Probably too busy road-testing the Tony Buff Realistic Dildo.

I watched Kurt sucking me, so eager...so fucking talented! I found myself smiling. I wasn't thrilled about painting the Bratz doll faces but I'd get my revenge when my old lady wasn't looking. I'd give them all crossed eyes! Yeah!

Kurt worked on my cock getting me all hot and juicy. He raised his head, his lips pouting and wet.

"Will you fuck me, Santa, pretty please?"

"Of course," I said. He produced a rubber and put it on me, then spun around so he could sit on me facing away from me. They call that reverse cowboy in gay porn, Juniper. I, Santa, have mastered the art. I kept my gaze on that fabulous tattoo as Kurt rode me like a demented, cock-happy whore. I kept seeing the word More bouncing up and down on my lap.

More, more, more.

Oh, yes. And I was happy to give it to him, Juniper.

Over and over again.

Ho! Ho! Ho!

## **THE END**

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## BOBBY'S CHRISTMAS GIFT by Serena Yates

*Dear Santa,*

*Instead of asking for something for myself this year, I saw this boy trapped crouching and naked in a cage and thought that he might need something from you more than I do. Would you make sure that he has a happy holiday season for me?*

*Thank you!*

\*\*\*\*\*

"What the fuck?" Greg stared at the piece of vellum paper he'd pulled from the expensive-looking envelope.

An envelope that had mysteriously appeared right next to his fireplace. Overnight. He was sure it hadn't been there when he went upstairs last night. This morning it had sat there, quietly taunting him to open it. As though it had been delivered via the chimney.

*Ridiculous!*

But no amount of looking over his shoulder, or under the table, or behind the curtains had revealed a clue about the envelope's origins. His name was on the outside, written in bold letters. Now that he'd opened it, it was clear it hadn't even been addressed to him, though. What the hell was it doing in his living room?

He looked back down at his hands, one holding the picture that had come tumbling out, the other a short letter.

His gaze kept returning to the image. He couldn't help himself and stared at it in horrid fascination. It showed a naked man. He looked very young, but his body was definitely that of a well developed male. His skin was slightly pink and he was crouched in an uncomfortable position inside a wire mesh cage which was high enough for him to remain on hands and knees. Wooden poles had been stuck through the square openings, completely immobilizing him. He was naked, but wore a rubber hood that enclosed his head, hiding his face. Leather straps wound around his chest and stomach, attached to a longer one running down his back.

The letter was no more helpful in figuring out this mystery. He still read it again, just to be sure.

*Dear Santa,*



*Instead of asking for something for myself this year, I saw this boy trapped crouching and naked in a cage and thought that he might need something from you more than I do. Would you make sure that he has a happy holiday season for me?*

*Thank you!*

*--Adara.*

Who was Adara? She was clearly worried about the man's welfare. Greg sympathized. Keeping a human being in conditions like that was unacceptable. Some people might enjoy that kind of treatment, and he had no way of telling from the picture whether this man was one of them. But Adara's letter seemed to confirm that this wasn't a consensual situation.

It was addressed to Santa, though, so how come it had been delivered to him? He was just an artist, making sculptures of various types of materials, with a weakness for mysteries, anything sweet, and watching the occasional bit of gay porn on the Internet. But he'd never enjoyed any of the more hard core BDSM sites, and this—situation—the man found himself in only made Greg angry. Who would do something like this to another human being?

Well, it just wouldn't do. Christmas was only ten days away, and if this Adara person was right, the man needed help. Greg may not have been Santa, he snorted at the thought, but he'd been asked for help, in a roundabout way, so he'd have to find a solution.

He looked up, staring into space as he considered what he should do. Ignoring the picture and the veiled cry for help that had come to him via Adara's letter was not an option. He needed to find out where the man was being held, make sure he was okay, and get him out of there if he wasn't. Not something he could do on his own, but he knew just the person to ask for help.

An hour later, having taken a shower and eaten breakfast, Greg walked into the local police station.

"Is Detective Henderson in?" Greg smiled at the receptionist. She was wearing another of her garishly colored Christmas sweaters. This one was bubblegum-green and had a bright red reindeer on the front. Its eyes seemed to follow Greg as he came closer to the desk.

"He certainly is." The receptionist grinned. "Take a seat, I'll let him know you're here. He should be with you shortly."

"Thank you." Darned security protocols. He used to be able to just walk in to see his old friend, Paul. No longer was that allowed.

He took a seat in the waiting area.

“Greg!” Paul’s booming voice woke him from his reverie a few minutes later. “It’s good to see you.”

“Hi, Paul.” Greg got up, traversed the scanner after emptying his pockets and shook hands with Paul once he’d returned his keys, wallet and small change where they belonged.

“What can I do for you?” Paul led the way toward his desk, getting them each a coffee from the small kitchen area before sitting down. “You never come to the office anymore, so I’m assuming you need some sort of help?”

Greg nodded, sipping his coffee to stall for time. Now that he was here, facing his utterly rational friend, he had no idea how to tell him about the mysterious letter. The man would probably laugh his head off.

“Come on, spit it out.” Paul grinned as he leaned back in his squeaky chair. “I can see that something is really bothering you.”

“You’re right. I’ve got a real problem on my hands.” Greg sighed as he put down the empty plastic cup. Damn, his tongue was hurting. He shouldn’t have swallowed the hot coffee so quickly.

“You’re not in trouble with the law, are you?” Paul frowned, some of his relaxation changing to tension.

“No!” God, he’d had enough of that when he was younger. “No, but I think someone else needs my help, and I can’t figure out how to find him. He looks like he’s in such trouble, and I don’t know—”

“Whoa, slow down, man.” Paul lifted his hand as if trying to stop the flow of words. “Why don’t you start at the beginning?”

Greg took a deep breath and told his friend everything. Paul’s eyes got wider by the second. When Greg pulled out the envelope and showed him the picture and the letter, Paul whistled through his teeth.

“Man, you’re right. That man doesn’t look like he’s enjoying himself.” Paul narrowed his eyes, looking at the photo more closely before returning his gaze to Greg. “You know what’s weird?”

“Other than this whole situation?” Greg was on tenterhooks. He wanted to get on with it, charge to the man’s rescue. The longer Greg thought about it, the more his vulnerability touched him.

“Yeah, well, don’t start looking too deeply. If you weren’t such a good friend I’d think you were trying to pull a prank.” Paul turned the picture so they could both look at it. “No, I think it’s weird that the cage isn’t bolted to the floor.”

“Huh?” Greg looked again. “Damn, you’re right. I didn’t even notice that.”

Paul grinned.

"Oh, stop it." Greg blushed.

Paul was a good friend, straight and happily married to boot, but he'd never had any problem with Greg's sexuality. Instead, he needled Greg about his attraction to men at every opportunity, claiming he wanted to help him find Mr. Right. Yeah, like that was going to happen!

"Okay, now that we've established that you feel attracted to the guy, I assume you want me to help you find him?" Paul waited for Greg's nod then frowned. "There was nothing else in the envelope?"

Greg shook his head. How were they ever going to figure out where the man was being held? Even if he wasn't a prisoner, which was a big maybe, his feeling that something weird was going on hadn't gone away. Why would he have received the letter if the man didn't need help?

"It doesn't make sense for this to be difficult." Paul scratched his head. "Whoever sent this letter clearly wanted the man out of that cage."

Greg nodded. But how would they find him? Hartford wasn't a huge city, but big enough to make finding one caged-up man a challenge.

Paul leaned back in his chair, playing with the photo in his hand as he turned it this way and that, as if checking different angles.

Hold on, wasn't that writing on its back?

\* \* \* \*

Bobby was cold enough that his teeth would have chattered hadn't the ball gag stopped his jaw from moving. Thank God his tormentors had at least removed the darned hood once they'd returned him to his 'permanent' cage. Not that he wanted to see anything at this point, he had his eyes firmly closed against the harsh reality of his predicament, but it was nice to have the option.

He lay on his side on the hard floor, trying to expose as little skin as possible to the cold surface that was leaking the warmth from his body with seemingly unrelenting determination. He wore handcuffs that were cutting into his skin and his feet had been bound at the ankles and knees. He was immobilized. He couldn't have gone anywhere even without those additional restraints. His new home, the absurdly small cage in the corner of a dank basement, was securely locked.

*Shit.*

Why had he responded to that stupid dare? His waiter colleague, Damon, had made him sound like such a coward for not wanting to take part in the BDSM-themed Christmas party Damon's sinister biker friends had organized. Bobby had no idea what Damon found so attractive about



being tied up, flogged and probably worse. But when Damon had dared him to try it, saying he didn't know what he was missing and wouldn't be able to judge until he tried it for himself, Bobby had agreed to do a scene in the club Damon and his friends frequented.

He'd known he'd never hear the end of it if he didn't give in to Damon's needling. Realizing that Damon could make things very difficult at work if he didn't stay on his good side, he'd figured that it would be safe since there would be other people around, and what possible real harm could they do to him in public?

God, he'd been naïve.

Once they'd tied him up, they gagged and hooded him. A short drive later he'd been unloaded and carried into a fairly well-heated room. His clothes had been cut from him, some sort of leather contraption with two straps was put on his body. He'd tried to fight them, but they'd punched him in the head, telling him he was supposed to enjoy this. The pain had finally convinced him he'd be better off doing what they told him for now. He'd been made to crawl into what he'd been told was a cage. They hemmed him in with what felt like wooden poles so that he was crouching uncomfortably.

The sound of cameras taking pictures had made him blush all over. After endless minutes of imagining his naked picture turning up on the Internet, he'd been told there was more 'fun' in store for him tomorrow. The fact that they'd left the butt plug in didn't bode well as far as he was concerned.

They'd finally freed him from the cage, only to walk him down some stairs, practically immobilizing him before putting him in this 'permanent' cage. When they'd taken the hood off, Bobby blinking even in the low light of the flashlights they'd used, Damon had been nowhere to be seen.

There was absolutely nothing he could do. Despair was only a breath away, but he wasn't going to give in. They couldn't keep him here forever, could they? He must have drifted off to sleep eventually, because the next thing he knew was the sound of the door scraping open, followed by booted footsteps coming down the stairs.

"Hey, wait a minute, Greg. You can't just go down there on your own." The voice sounded angry. "We need to secure the area first."

"Fuck securing the area. It's pitch dark down here. Why would any of those idiots be hiding here instead of getting drunk with the rest of his buddies? Besides, I just know the man's down here, and from what those idiots told us, he's not having a good time." The second voice, Greg's, was deeper

than the first and much closer now. "We can't leave him in whatever situation he is for a minute longer."

Yes! Bobby would have screamed his agreement had the stupid ball gag not been preventing it.

He opened his eyes to a sliver of light from a small, grimy window right under the ceiling above him. The bright beam of a flashlight came from the direction of the stairs, a pair of booted feet turning into strong jeans-covered legs, slim hips and a broad chest as the man called Greg made his way down the steps. Swinging the flashlight in an arc, he stayed where he was for a moment.

"Shit, it's dark and cold in here." Greg shuddered. "And it stinks."

The beam of light hit the edge of Bobby's cage.

"Fuck! There's another cage down here, Paul." Greg moved the flashlight so that it shone onto Bobby's legs then his torso, moving up toward his face.

"Hold on, I'm coming down there." Paul rushed down the steps.

Bobby closed his eyes, wanting to die of shame. He was naked and dirty, tied up like an animal. And Greg had looked so good. Tall, broad-shouldered with a ruggedly handsome face, he had spiky blond hair and kind brown eyes. He was Bobby's dream man come to life. Had he met him under different circumstances he'd have hoped for a date.

He shook his head. It didn't really matter, as long as he made it out of here. Whoever these two men were, they didn't sound like they wanted any part of the cruel trick Damon and his friends had played on him. Keeping his eyes squeezed firmly shut, Bobby held his breath to find out what the two newcomers would do.

"Looks like it's him." Greg started walking toward the cage.

"I've got the keys." Paul came closer as well. "At least they gave them up before the patrol car took them out of here."

*Patrol car? Shit, are they cops? How much trouble am I in?*

"Hey, are you awake?" Greg's voice was close to his face.

Bobby nodded, still refusing to open his eyes to look the handsome man in the eye.

"Okay, hold on. We'll get you out of here as quickly as we can." Greg's footsteps retreated back toward the stairs. "We need a blanket down here, please."

"Sure, hold on."

Keys rattled near the cage's door, and the three industrial-size padlocks were opened before the cage door squeaked as it was swung back. A soft thunk near the stairs was probably the blanket arriving.

"Thanks." Greg walked back toward the cage. "We need to get you out of the damned cage, and pulling you out isn't really an option because it would hurt you more. Can you try to move, please?"

Bobby didn't think he could. And if scraped skin was all he took away from this, he thought he could live with it. Greg's worry warmed his heart, though. He tried to move, but his stiff muscles screamed in protest. He moaned.

"That won't work." Greg walked around to the other side of the cage. "I think we should try to maneuver the blanket underneath him then pull him out."

"Sounds like a plan to me." Paul shuffled away from where he'd been at his feet to open the cage's door.

More shuffling as they presumably placed the blanket where they needed it. A warm hand touched his feet and lifted them, the soft blanket touching his calves as the men pulled it up. It was slow work, and it still hurt some, but Greg and Paul kept lifting his body or parts of it and slowly the sensation of the soft blanket replaced the cold floor underneath him.

When they were done and started to pull him out, tears of happy relief escaped his still closed eyes. One man removed the gag, the other unlocked the cuffs and cut the rope his knees and ankles had been bound with. He carefully stretched his legs then moved his arms and while the pain was bad, it was bearable.

Someone covered his nakedness by folding the blanket over him. God, that felt good. He felt warmer already.

"Good, keep making small movements, it'll help get the circulation going. Is it okay to touch you, to help you get warm?" Greg sounded hesitant.

Yeah, well, Bobby was a mess. He wasn't sure he'd want to touch himself at this point. But the man's hands had felt so good on his skin before, how was he supposed to resist?

Bobby nodded.

"Yes please." His voice was scratchy, his mouth awfully dry.

"Can you open your eyes for me?" Greg's large warm hands started rubbing his arm, then his back, through the blanket.

A second set of hands on his calves and thighs must have been Paul joining in the effort. He was still on his side, and enjoyed being touched and restored to life for a moment, before returning to reality. He slowly opened his eyes, automatically looking for Greg's face as he discovered the man kneeling in front of him.

"There you are!" Greg's smile showed even white teeth and made the handsome face light up. "I'm so glad we found you."

*Yeah, I am too.*

\* \* \* \*

Greg stared at the man, no, he was definitely a man now that he looked more closely. His eyes were the deepest green Greg had ever seen, his hair a tousled chocolate brown mess, and his face that of an angel. High cheekbones, a straight nose and a strong chin just waited to be sculpted.

"I'm Greg." He smiled. "I guess you already know that. What's your name?"

"Bobby."

"Hi, Bobby." Greg deepened his own smile.

He felt giddy when Bobby smiled back at him. It was one of the most hesitant smiles he had ever seen, but the dimples that appeared made the man even more attractive.

"We're going to get you out of here. Is that okay?" Greg just wanted Bobby to get away from this depressing place, but figured it would be better to let him feel he had some control back in his life.

"Please." Bobby nodded. "I need to take a shower."

Greg nodded as he slid his arms under Bobby's shoulders then his knees. Greg wanted nothing more than to take him to his place, maybe spoil him a little to help him forget his ordeal. But Bobby would have a hard time trusting anyone at this point. Hell, he might have a partner waiting for him wherever he lived.

It turned out that there was no partner, and that Bobby didn't want to go home on his own. Paul had taken his statement while Greg held a shaking Bobby, still firmly wrapped in the blanket, in his arms. He'd begged for Greg to hold him before he started guzzling the water he'd been offered by one of the other officers. Greg had only been too glad to comply. Bobby felt right in his arms.

Oh shit, he had it bad.

"So, you think that Damon Middleton was the guy who set this all up?" Paul frowned as he continued taking notes.

"I don't know about all of it." Bobby tried to move even closer and Greg reveled in the feeling of giving him the physical protection he needed. "I mean, this isn't his place or anything, and I have no idea how much he knew about what they were planning. I never heard or saw Damon again after the club. But he was definitely in charge of reeling me in. I just wish I'd never fallen for his stupid line."

"You couldn't know what he had planned." Greg was so angry at Damon, he had a hard time not tensing up. But he managed, because he didn't want Bobby to think he was mad at him.

"No, but still. I feel pretty dumb." Bobby turned his head into Greg's chest.

"It was a pretty nasty thing for Damon to do." Greg brought up his hand and stroked Bobby's head.

"Yes, it was." Paul nodded as he closed his notebook. "We'll send someone to check him out. Do you want to press charges?"

Bobby hesitated. "I have to work with him."

Greg snorted.

"But I *do*." Bobby looked up, tears in his eyes. "It's been hard enough to keep my job, with the restaurant losing business because of the recession. If Damon..."

"Look, I don't know what's going to happen once we arrest him." Paul frowned. "But I can assure you, if you press charges, he will be arrested. That won't exactly make his job more secure, will it?"

Bobby looked up.

"No, I guess not." Bobby wiped his eyes and smiled. "Okay, I'll press charges."

"Good." Paul nodded and got up. "Do you have anywhere you want us to drop you off?"

Greg held his breath. He didn't even want to think of Bobby alone in his apartment. It wasn't in a safe part of town, and Damon might have more 'friends' to send after Bobby for revenge.

"I don't." Bobby started shaking again.

"You don't want to go home?" Paul's eyebrows rose.

"Not really." Bobby's voice was so soft, Greg had to turn his head to hear him. "What if Damon goes after me?"

"My thoughts exactly." Greg nodded and tightened his arms around Bobby. "If you want, you can always come home with me. Stay for a few days until we know what'll happen to Damon."

"Really?" Bobby turned up his face and looked at Greg.

"Sure." Greg saw Paul smirk from the corner of his eye and decided to ignore his friend as long as possible.

He focused on Bobby and the excitement the thought of the younger man in his home instead. God, he wanted him so much.

"I would like that. A lot." Bobby's smile was radiant. Then he turned to Paul. "It's okay for me to go with him, right?"

"As long as we know where we can reach you, it's fine by me." Paul nodded, back to being his professional self.

With a small detour to Bobby's apartment so he could shower and pick up some clothes and other necessities, they soon made it to Greg's house. Bobby was wearing tight jeans and a warm

sweater that made him look totally edible. He was about a head shorter than Greg's six feet, but well proportioned and with a tight little ass that Greg wanted to explore in great detail. As soon as possible, if not before. He had the hardest time keeping his hands to himself in the car. When Bobby slid his smaller hand into his once they'd walked into his house, Greg held on for dear life.

Dropping the duffle Bobby had brought with him in the guest room, he showed Bobby the rest of the house. Once back in the living room, the fireplace was duly admired, both of them shaking their heads at the mysterious letter-delivery that had taken place here.

"Maybe there really is a Santa Claus?" Bobby's eyes twinkled.

"After what happened this morning and your miraculous rescue, I'm no longer going to deny the possibility." Greg smiled and let go of Billy's hand so he could get a fire started. "Just want to make sure it's nice and warm."

Bobby nodded and watched him carefully. He blushed when his stomach rumbled just as Greg turned around.

"Food?" Greg grinned.

"Please. They didn't feed me last night." Bobby looked at the floor.

"Bastards!" Greg got up and took a very willing Bobby into his arms. "I can't believe they did that to you. But it's over now, and you're safe here."

"I feel safe with you." Bobby's arms came up around Greg's middle.

"Good." Greg wanted to step back to give Bobby some space.

Bobby wouldn't have it and tightened his arms.

"Bobby?" Greg whispered.

"I want to kiss you." Bobby looked up at him, large green eyes luminous in the firelight. "I've wanted to ever since you came down those stairs."

"Is this just because you're grateful?" He couldn't bear that. He wanted so much more from Bobby.

"No!" Bobby looked horrified. "Well, not because I'm not grateful, because I am. But I would have wanted to kiss you even if I'd met you under different circumstances."

God, he hoped that was true.

Bobby stepped closer and tipped up his head. Greg smiled and bent down to brush the lush lips offered to him. Coming back for more, he stayed a little longer this time, waiting to see what Bobby would do. Bobby's hands came up and slid around his neck as he stepped close enough for them to touch chest to groin. Bobby's was already hard and that made Greg's cock go the rest of the way in a hurry.

Man, and those soft lips on his? He took a deep breath, taking in the scent of freshly showered man with a hint of spicy cologne. Bobby had clearly gone to some trouble when he'd cleaned up. Bobby's hot tongue came out and licked at Greg's lips, vanishing too quickly for Greg's taste. Greg tightened his embrace and opened his mouth, letting his tongue reciprocate, but withdrawing as soon as Bobby's came back out to play. They went back and forth like that a few more times before Greg couldn't stand it anymore.

He slid a hand up along Bobby's back to cradle the back of his head, holding him in place for a real kiss. Bobby opened on a sigh with the next bout of probing and Greg dove into the hot cavern of his mouth for a very thorough exploration. Bobby responded by stroking his tongue in slow, playful touches while grinding his lower body into Greg's until they were both breathless with arousal.

Man, Bobby was a little tiger once let loose. Greg pulled back to look into his soon-to-be-lover's eyes. He needed to be sure they both wanted this.

Bobby's pupils were already dilated and his breath came in quick gasps.

"Naked?" Bobby managed to look hopeful and sexy at the same time.

"If you're sure..." Greg grinned when Bobby nodded vigorously. "Let me just get some stuff."

Bobby finally stepped back, but started taking off his sweater immediately. He revealed a lightly furry chest with small pink nipples. His abs were flat, and the bulge in his jeans was clearly outlined. Greg wanted to sink to his knees and get a taste.

"Stuff?" Bobby toed off his shoes.

"Bossy much?" Greg grinned to take the sting out of the words. It was incredibly arousing to know that Bobby wanted this as much as he did.

Bobby shook his head as he continued to get undressed. "I just know what I want."

Yeah, that made two of them.

\* \* \* \*

Bobby almost laughed at the clearly torn expression on Greg's face. It was gratifying to see how much the other man liked his body as it was revealed. But damn it, he wanted him to get the stuff. He needed to put last night's horrors behind him, and what better way than to spend some up close and personal time with his dream man. However long he was going to be allowed to stay with Greg was going to be too short anyway.

Greg finally tore himself away, raced up the stairs, and made it back downstairs in record time.

Bobby had used the time to spread a couple of blankets over the soft rug in front of the fireplace.

"Nice." Greg grinned and started tearing his clothes off, dropping them onto the heap Bobby had started.

The man was absolutely gorgeous. The broad shoulders and wide chest were just waiting to be licked. His dark brown nipples were already erect, as was his substantial cock. It was dripping pre-cum and was begging for attention. Bobby didn't lose any time, sank to his knees and gave the organ a quick lick before taking it in hand for some more detailed exploration.

"Man, that feels good." Greg's voice had gone even deeper than normal.

Bobby licked around the flared head making sure he spent some time on the sensitive spot just under the glans. The slightly salty flavor exploded on his tongue when he finally closed his lips around the tip and started sucking the stiff shaft into his mouth. He couldn't take all of it, so he closed his fingers around the rest and started sliding him in and out of his mouth. Greg gripped his hair and held on as he drove the man wild.

It felt better than ever before. Bobby was sure that had something to do with the fact that for the first time in his life he felt something for the man other than pure lust. He brought up his free hand and started fondling the heavy balls.

"Enough." Greg pulled back, his eyes glazed as he stared down at Bobby. "You're going to make me come if you don't stop. Is that what you really want?"

He shook his head.

"Tell me what you want, sweetheart." Greg's eyes were hooded, and there was such emotion in his voice.

"I want you to make love to me." Fuck, when would he learn to think before he spoke? Way to scare the man away. He could feel himself blush.

"I would like that too." Greg smiled and knelt down.

Oh, thank God. He wasn't the only one falling for an almost-stranger. As far as he could see, it was all Adara's fault anyway, for sending that letter. He was going to have to find out how to send her a thank-you note.

All those thoughts flew out the window when Greg took him into those strong arms again. Shit, the man could kiss. Greg's warm hand slid down his back, cupped an ass cheek and started kneading. Changing cheeks, he brought the other one to the same level of tingling excitement before slipping a thick finger into the crack, sliding downward until he touched his hole.

"Yes." Bobby pushed back.

Greg withdrew his finger.

"Please?" God, he wasn't one to beg, but he would make an exception for Greg.



"Just getting some slick stuff, sweetheart. Don't want to hurt you." Greg kissed him again as he fumbled with the bottle one-handed.

Bobby focused his entire attention on that kiss. Greg tasted so good. Strong and sure, he tasted exactly like he smelled; absolutely addictive.

"Hands and knees, baby." Greg pulled back.

His brown eyes had gone almost black. They blazed with lust as he watched Bobby do as he'd been told. Bobby spread his legs a little when he felt the first touch of a blessedly slick finger on his opening. He closed his eyes so he could focus on the sensations. The finger circled his quivering hole, gradually increasing the pressure until it finally sank inside.

"Ahhh!" Bobby wiggled his ass. "God, that feels good."

Greg chuckled and slid the digit in and out, adding a second just before Bobby was ready to beg for more. By the time three fingers were fucking him in an increasingly erotic rhythm, Bobby was ready to scream. He needed Greg's thick cock inside him or he'd explode all over the blanket without even having touched himself. Then Greg pegged his gland and he lost it. Spurting streams of white release, he came so hard, his legs shook and his arms collapsed.

But Greg caught him and held him with his free arms, still stroking his prostate, milking him of every last drop before he withdrew his fingers. Slapping a small hand towel that came from God knew where onto the wet spot, Greg lowered Bobby onto his back and sank down above him. Mashing their groins together sent aftershocks through Bobby's body. Greg supported his weight on his elbows and kissed Bobby deeply.

"Wow." Not the most intelligent comment he'd ever made, but he was happy to have found his voice at all.

"Good?" Greg grinned.

"As if you didn't know." Bobby grinned back and spread his legs. "Your turn now, huh?"

"You sure?" Greg moaned when Bobby circled his hips, bringing his quickly recovering cock in contact with Greg's still rock-hard one.

"What does that feel like, honey?" Bobby groaned as he rubbed himself against the stiff shaft. He hardened the rest of the way more quickly than he'd ever done.

"Feels like you're ready to go again." Greg sat up, sheathed himself with gratifyingly quick movements and pushed his thighs under Bobby's butt. "Okay?"

"Please." Bobby spread his legs farther, lifting his aching hole to touch the tip of that magnificent cock. "Want it."

Greg held onto his cock with one hand as he supported his weight with the other. He slid into Bobby so slowly, he wanted to scream. The stretch was amazing and Greg just went on and on. Before long, stretch changed to burn and Bobby winced with the pleasurable pain.

Greg stopped moving.

"No!" Bobby wiggled his ass for more. "Don't stop."

Greg looked doubtful but did as Bobby had asked. When he finally bottomed out they were both gasping for air. Bobby lay back and relaxed as much as possible. When he was ready, he slid his legs around Greg's waist and pushed him even more deeply inside him.

"Fuck, you feel good." Greg slid out, then thrust slowly back in.

"More." Bobby panted.

Greg started thrusting and Bobby was sure he'd died and gone to heaven. With an occasional swivel of his hips that did things inside Bobby that were probably illegal because they felt too good. Bobby wasn't going to tell anyone, though.

Greg sped up his thrusts until Bobby groaned from the pleasure of it. He was as hard as if he hadn't come a few minutes ago. Bobby gripped Greg's upper arms to have something to hold onto and settled in for the ride. Greg's eyes blazed with lust as he fucked Bobby harder than he'd thought possible. Supporting his weight on his elbows, Greg bent down to kiss him and he came in spurts of pure ecstasy.

Watching Greg follow him into bliss as he stiffened, then filled the condom screaming Bobby's name was enough to prolong his orgasm to what felt like twice its normal length. Greg collapsed onto him and he welcomed the weight.

After a few moments Greg pulled out, dealt with the condom and cleaned him with yet another hand towel. Then he spooned him so they could both see the fire, wrapped the blankets around them and turned his head back for a long, passionate kiss.

"I hope that you can stay a few days." Greg pulled back and looked at him.

"As long as you want me here, I'll stay." Bobby bit his lower lip, suddenly nervous. He wanted that more than anything.

"You will?" Greg's face lit up. "I would like that."

"I think you're the best Christmas gift I've ever had." Bobby's heart beat faster when Greg's only reply was yet another tender kiss.

*Yep, the best Christmas gift ever!*

**THE END**

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## LAS POSADAS by Ocotillo

*Dear Santa,*

*Work has been super busy and I'm needing a stress relief. I've been very good this year!! I'd love to all of our patients leave happy :D Or maybe a sci-fi where he's kidnapped and the aliens are testing humans.....*

*Thank You Santa! you're the best!*

\*\*\*\*\*

*"Ron, por favor. Añejo."*

It must have been Kit's round, earnest vowels that had the old man smiling, crooked teeth overlapping, glowing dull yellow in the cool night of the cantina. "Si, si," he said, reaching back to the shelf and snatching a bottle and cloudy glass, and then "No, no, es gratis," waving impatiently when Kit set a veinte-Lempira note on the worn plywood bar. Felix rattled off another fast round of Honduran syllables, and if Kit had little hope of deciphering them, he could guess well enough that it was gratitude.

Though really, Kit had worked no more diligently this afternoon than most men had done. Maybe less.

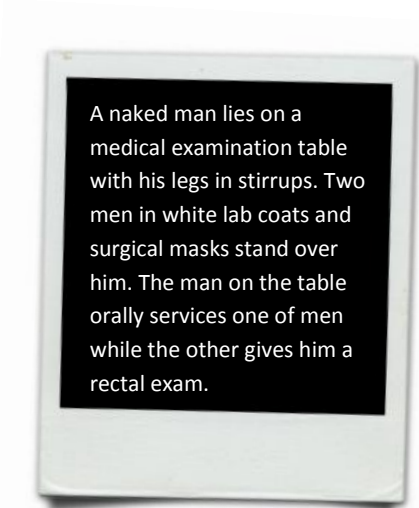
*Free*, he'd said, and so Kit responded, "Muchas gracias, Felix" trying his best to trill that 'r', choking it, as usual, but getting another face-splitting grin in response. Kit settled onto the stool, cold metal, and leaned into the bar. Bright yellow paint peeled from its corners, the gold and red of a faded *Cerveza Imperial* ad knocked at his knees.

The rum was good, smoky and sharp, stripping the dry sting from his throat and spreading warmth in his belly. Kit rubbed the back of his neck. Exhausted. Sunburnt. Aching to his fingers and toes, with mud cemented onto his skin by crystallized sweat...and his shoulder hurt like a son-of-a-bitch.

They'd gotten everyone out, though. Nobody dead—if you didn't count cattle and goats—only scared half to death, cowering in homes consumed by dirt and rubble.

*"Lot of hell for such a baby shake."*

Kit slid his gaze right, to the man settling onto the stool beside him. One of the doctors at the clinic—and fuck if Kit could remember his name. West, maybe. Or Weiss. Dr. Weiss. Hot-shit good



A naked man lies on a medical examination table with his legs in stirrups. Two men in white lab coats and surgical masks stand over him. The man on the table orally services one of men while the other gives him a rectal exam.

looks, tight body and blue eyes, but an asshole, as far as Kit could tell, prick of a Boston candy-ass. He'd made no secret of what he thought about a redneck like Kit.

"Was a magnitude four," Kit drawled, letting insolence saturate his tone. "Doesn't take but a gnat sneeze to set loose a destabilized slope."

"Salva Vida," the man said—accent impeccable, of course—and as Felix popped the cap from the bottle, "Destabilized?"

Kit nodded. "Deforestation, overgrazing, bad soil practices..." He waved his right arm impatiently and then hissed at the pain that produced. "You know...the reason I'm here, *Doctor Weiss*," thinking *dickhead*.

"Ah," the man said, "afraid I've had my hands full with blood, not mud—not much time today to speculate on the cause of it all." He raised his beer in a greeting. "And that's Wesley, not Weiss. But please, call me Lars. Chris, right? Agronomist?"

"Land-use management," Kit corrected, "and it's Kit," knowing from the guess that Lars had picked up his name from an official file somewhere. Nosy fuck. And disingenuous; Kit'd been seeing the snarky looks since arriving last summer—last time not even four hours ago, in fact. Kit turned back to his drink, content to shut the man out. What the hell did he want, anyway, getting all slick and friendly all of a sudden? Like cozying up with a rattler. One hard day didn't make them buddies any more than the *Peace Corps* tag did.

"Do something to your shoulder?"

Kit glanced sidelong to find Lars squinting at him in the dim light. Cocking his eyebrows in lieu of a shrug, Kit said, "Pulled something. Digging the Garcias out of their home."

"You should let me take a look at it."

Surprised, Kit turned to peer at Lars—expecting a joke of some sort. Because, hell, it'd been hurting when he'd brought Manolito to the clinic. And Lars had known it, because Kit hadn't been able to suppress a curse when he'd put the boy down. The head doctor—Saenz—had glared over at Kit, then rattled something off to Lars, far too fast for Kit to interpret, especially as tired as he'd been. Lars had simply shrugged.

Now Kit saw the exhaustion. Lines feathering out from Lars's eyes, accented by dust and grime. Stains on his rumpled shirt, sweat and dirt and—Kit supposed the smear on his collar was blood. Only thing in place was his hair, glittering blond in the low light. Kind of difficult to muss up a do that was only a millimeter long.

The day had been hard on everyone. But when Kit met Lars's eyes, they were at once both tired and keen, a pale hazel, bright with something...no, not derision, not with the way his gaze dropped

and then rose, pointedly, smile barely quirking his lips. Kit knew the look well, having answered a few through alcohol and sweat funks, in bars in Corpus, San Antonio...Tegus, only last month.

Well, hell.

Guess when the body needs an outlet, all discrimination flies out the window.

"Hey, *ow!*" Right. So flinching away from Lars's reach hadn't been such a clever move, and now Kit couldn't tell if Lars was scowling or laughing.

"Clinic is closed, but I can open it up for the night."

Was it Kit's imagination, or did Lars seem to be proposing more than a bandage? "Be fine by morning," Kit muttered, still suspicious. He held his palm to the area, though. Protectively. Feeling the heat of injury, pressing a little.

"I seriously doubt it."

Kit's yelp must've woken up old Felix, because he'd pried his rheumy eyes from the telenovela, and now he hobbled towards them, spitting out a string of syllables at Lars, too fast for Kit to catch more than the occasional phrase. That, and the hand gesturing towards Kit, then east—towards the clinical building. And Lars, the self-satisfied yank, keeping up just fine, rapid-fire Spanish, waving hands back, and grinning all the while.

Felix turned to Kit, finally, fluttered his hand towards Kit's shoulder. Said, "You. Go. Médico, doctor." Then he poured another two fingers of rum into Kit's glass. Kit had hardly begun the first.

"See. The old man agrees." Standing, Lars said, "Come on. I can give you something for it—" His tone dropped into the richness of a promise of sin, "—allow you to concentrate on something besides pain."

"It's just a pull," Kit said, but slowly now. He tongued his bottom lip, more sure now of just what Lars had in mind, and beginning to think, *why the hell not?* He stood. It had been a hell of a day—a good blow and a painkiller, and he'd sleep like the dead.

Lars raised Kit's rum glass. "This your first?" He took a sip from it. Forward bastard, but Kit found himself responding, because it had always been a love-hate thing with him—arrogant men who pushed ruthlessly into his space. "No drugs if you've been drinking."

"Yeah. Only had a couple of swallows." Resenting them for their condescension, turning on when they got him in their sexual crosshairs, telling him to bend and how far. Fucked up, he knew, but whatever. It was a sex thing, so he went with it, kept it the hell away from the rest of his life. Get laid tonight, avoid the fucker hereafter so he never got the chance to play the dick. "You showed up right after I did."

“Good.” Lars set the glass down and took hold of Kit’s elbow, sending a shiver up his arm.  
“Vámonos.”

They left, with Kit reflecting that likely as not, Felix would pour the rum back in the bottle. Waste not, want not. Which, Kit decided, was okay.

#

The night was quiet, not a soul on these back roads. Tired people tucked into their homes, thankful, no doubt, for families left intact. It was pleasant—the dry season air turned dusty and cool. A light breeze whipped Kit’s overlong curls into his eyes and cleared the air of the chaos and fear that had so permeated the day. The smell of burning trash draped the town, faint—so much a part of the place that Kit hardly ever noticed it anymore.

“You spending Christmas here?”

Kit grunted, “Yep,” not for a minute believing that Lars gave much of a shit. “You?”

“Tour ends day after tomorrow. Be home in three days.”

*Good for you.* Kit was glad to spend the holidays here, where the aloneness meant he’d chosen to be, no pitying looks, no explanations. He’d grown righteously sick of those.

The moon was just past half full, and high in the sky. The rattle of dry grass and the chirping of insects speckled the silence. Tinsel draped from windows, eaves and porches, reflecting the pale light in greens, golds and reds. The nine-day pre-Christmas ritual of Las Posadas would begin tomorrow—children and nativity, traipsing from door to door, hunting for the inn that would take them in and make them a home. Thank God no deaths had come today to mar it.

“You do kink?”

Nearly stumbling, Kit stopped and brought his gaze around to see a slow smirk spread on the face of his companion. Slowly, choosing his words carefully, Kit said, “Depends.” Keeping his voice low. “Maybe.”

Lars gripped Kit’s nape, holding him still, and pressed a thumb to his throat. “So aloof,” he said. “I’d like to dislodge that stick up your ass.” Lars tucked his nose close, until hot breath tickled Kit’s ear, and in a voice gone to gravel, said, “perhaps a hard fuck would do it.”

A bolt of heat shot through Kit’s groin—no hiding that primal reaction. Lightheaded, he berated himself, *think*. “No injuries,” he said, and was pleased that his voice came out controlled and precise. “No bruising or breaking skin. No scat.” Remembering that Lars was a doctor, he added in a rush, “no enemas, either.”

Lars huffed a low laugh and unhanded Kit. “Nothing near so extreme.” He flicked a piece of drying mud from the shoulder of Kit’s tee and cocked a grin. “Not on a first date, in any case.”

#

The clinic was a long, squat building—cinder block walls painted a turquoise blue. Yellow light leaked between the slats of a barred window near the back.

"You said it was closed."

"We are." Lars said, sliding his key into the deadbolt. "Raf's doing paperwork, I expect."

*Raf.* Dr. Saenz, Kit realized, the thought dampening his anticipation considerably. The senior doctor. A beautiful man, refined and suave, with a nearly aristocratic demeanor. Broad-shouldered and narrow-hipped, with chiseled cheekbones and the lips of an angel, like some sort of Latino god cut of marble—and just as cold. Kit had crossed his path before, and there was always that haughty detachment. Nothing like this afternoon, though, the way he'd scraped that icy glare up Kit's frame, his expression demanding to know just why Kit was fouling his clinic. Maricón, that look had spit. Kit had seen enough of those looks for ten lifetimes, so he'd handed Manolito off and high-tailed it the hell out of there.

Because he didn't need to take that crap from anyone, anymore. Because he had more self-respect than that. Because...shit. Because despite the disdain in that look, it'd made Kit's dick stand up and take note, and that was just all kinds of fucked up. And the bastard was here? Then Kit, by God, wasn't. "My shoulder is fine."

"Oh, shut up. Christ." Lars grabbed him by the elbow—the good one—and shoved him forward. "Come on, we'll use one of the examination rooms."

Lars led him past the tiny reception area into a short corridor. Left into a tiled hallway, then through one of two adjacent doors. At the flick of a switch, stark fluorescent light washed over walls, metal cabinets, and laminate counters, all white. Blinking into the sterile glare, Kit took it in, impressed by the meticulous order. No sign of this afternoon's chaos—all the surfaces pristine, the countless boxes of sundries neatly arranged, swab jars full. A faint smell of disinfectant lingered in the air, the only hint that the room hadn't been sitting like this since the Precambrian.

"Sit," Lars directed, thrusting his chin towards the examination table.

Kit did, trying in vain to keep the tissue sheet from crackling. He watched wordlessly as Lars slipped on a fresh lab coat.

"Remove your shirt."

Easier said than done. Kit lifted the right side of his shirt with his left arm, gingerly, and winced as he began to raise the hurt one.

"No, not like that. Here." Lars nudged Kit. "This one first," he said, and then helped to pull the shirt over Kit's head. "I could cut it off." Presumably meaning the shirt. Not the arm.



"The hell you say. Cut it, you die." Tool, Austin '97, a concert he remembered as much for the biker he'd found himself next to as for the haze of music and dope. The night had ended well. "This is one of my favorite shirts."

"Why doesn't that surprise me?"

"Fuck you," Kit said, voice muffled by fabric, and then "Ow!" It was a ratty shirt, yeah, and he wore it too often, but damn. Damn.

"Relax," Lars said, pulling the tee free. He prodded Kit's shoulder, and Kit bit his lower lip to stay silent. "How did it happen?"

"Was a block keeping Manolito trapped." Kit hissed as Lars raised his arm. "Not so heavy, but I was tired. Got careless and wrenched it."

"Feel anything give?"

"No. Didn't even know I'd done it at first..." Kit thought back. "...til I picked him up to bring him here."

Lars asked a few more questions, specific-like, and had him do a couple of tasks, flexing muscles, moving his arm this way, lifting it that way. Kind of like a drunk test. Hurt, but not too bad, until, "You're fine," Lars pronounced.

"I knew that."

"Uh-huh. Just take it easy a few days." Tearing open an alcohol swab while holding a syringe between fingers, Lars said, "This'll take the worst of the pain away."

"Will it make me stupid?" Kit leaned away dubiously, more than a little suspicious of what constituted 'kink' for this asshole.

"No. Christ. Just a painkiller. Stop being a pain in the ass."

The alcohol felt cool on his sun-pinked arm, then, "Ow!" Now they both hurt. Kit sat still, holding his shoulder protectively, and watched as Lars opened one of the wall cabinets and extracted a couple rolls of bandaging. "Don't need that," Kit said. No cuts, no scrapes, no bleeding.

Lars raised his eyes to the ceiling, as if pleading for patience. "I'm going to immobilize your arm. Less it moves, the better. Here. Up." Using a long roll, Lars wrapped the bandaging around Kit's hurt shoulder and arm, then across his chest and under the left armpit. Across again, a couple of times, until Kit's upper arm was effectively strapped to his chest. "That'll do," Lars said, snipping the end and fastening it.

"I can move it."

“Good for you. Don’t. Once the Toradol kicks in—” He checked his watch. “—should be pretty quickly—you won’t feel any pain, but that doesn’t mean the shoulder’s not injured. Got it? Be careful.”

“Yeah, all right.”

“Lay back.” Lars cranked up the back of the table and Kit leaned back into it. “Feet up. Come on.”

Kit did as he said, nonplussed, just following directions. Lars raised the rail on his left side, then pulled something out of his coat pocket—a thick black band, Kit saw—lined up Kit’s good arm and strapped it to the rail.

“What the fuck?” Kit jerked at his arm, ignoring the twinge of pain. “Hey!”

“Uh-uh.” Lars pressed a palm to Kit’s chest, pushing him back. “Calm down or you’ll hurt yourself.”

Kit lay back, breath coming fast, mind racing, trying to decide, danger or not? “Why are you tying that one down?” Stupid question, stupid, but his tongue just sort of rattled it off, full of shock and innocence.

“It’s been one hell of a day.” Lars withdrew two latex gloves from a box on the counter and began pulling them on. “We could stand to blow off some steam, don’t you think?” He snapped the wrist of one glove and grinned. “I know I could.”

Despite himself, Kit responded, viscerally, prick thickening—especially when Lars’s fingers trailed across the bare skin of his abdomen, the latex touch at once impersonal and intrusive. Even so...Kit flicked eyes anxiously towards the door. “Dr. Saenz...” ...was still back there. *Jesus*.

“That bother you?” Lars unbuttoned Kit’s jeans, prompting a jerk of hips that was both nervous reaction and plea.

“Just don’t want that asshole—”

“Don’t bullshit me.” Lars barked a laugh. “Christ. I don’t know which of you is worse.” Toying with the line of hair below Kit’s navel, he said, “I was watching you, you know...in the waiting room today, when you thought no one was looking. Your inner submissive, on full display. Thought you were going to fall on your knees right there, in front of the entire clinic.”

Heat rushed into Kit’s face. Lars was fucking with him, right? Except that he could just imagine it, because he knew he got that way. And he’d seen it in clubs, the way a man’s entire posture could change when a dominant walked in the door. But there was no way Kit had done that. Not here. Not to a man he knew nothing about. “I was not...”

“Oh, please.” Lars rolled his eyes. “Don’t tell me you wouldn’t like his meat in your mouth.”

Kit pulled at the bond at his wrist. Not seriously, just feeling as if he had to register some resistance.

Lars ran a gloved hand along Kit's chest. "Not that I'm blaming you," he said. With a finger, he parted the bandaging and opened a slit so that Kit's left nipple peeked out. He flicked at it, bringing it to stiff attention. He couldn't know how strongly that affected Kit. "You'd have to be dead to not appreciate Raf's...assets."

"I wouldn't know about those."

"Anyway. You don't need to worry; he's in back. And I've latched the door. You'll just have to keep a lid on the screams." Lars pinched his nipple, hard, and Kit accompanied his responding curse with a thrust of his hips. Couldn't help it. There was a direct line from his nipples to his cock. Lars smiled, said, "You like being fucked?"

Oh. Dizzy. The question, bald of all pretense, knocked the last bit of sense from Kit. He nodded, stupidly.

"Good. We're well suited then," Lars said, and proceeded to remove Kit's boots and socks. "—for tonight, anyway."

*Yeah, fuck you, too.* But Kit swallowed that back. At least the snide comment brought him back closer to the ground. He tilted his hips upwards as Lars pulled his mud-streaked denims down over his hips.

"You like this." Lars draped Kit's jeans with his t-shirt and then gestured towards Kit's bound wrists. "Restraint. I'll make it good. Here, up." He'd pulled out stirrups at the edge of the table. There were ankle socks pulled over the ends, edged in pink, and now he guided Kit's heels into them. Kit shivered as Lars bound them there with winding straps—nervous...with anticipation, with what was quickly becoming a powerful need. Feeling exposed now, and vaguely humiliated for that, for bellying up to yet another man. *Pathetic*, spat the voice of his old man.

"Scoot forward. Carefully. There, yes. Good." Once again, Lars disappeared behind Kit. This time, Kit didn't even attempt to watch him, and Lars was back in no time, with more bindings that he used to keep Kit's thighs pulled apart.

The slide of a drawer, and Kit looked between his legs to see Lars fumbling beneath the exam table. Lars straightened, and Kit felt the familiar chill of lubricant along his crack. A tap at his pucker requested entrance, and Kit closed his eyes as a finger breached him, gloved and cool.

Very clinical, the way Lars opened him up, slathering him well with lube. Kit bit his lip, keeping his moan low, not ready to beg, not just yet.

Lars pulled back, peeled his glove off, and slapped Kit on the ass. "Be right back."

Then he walked out, leaving the door—like Kit's legs, like his mouth—wide open.

#

Kit wasn't alone for more than a few minutes—time he spent talking himself down. *He's going for condoms, that's all, fucking with you, it's part of the game.* His breathing had just begun to slow again when he heard footsteps, coming off the carpet and onto the linoleum-tiled hall.

It wasn't only the scuff of running shoes, though. There was also the click of hard heels, nearly in tandem, and Kit froze, blood running like ice. *No way.* His head swam, distorting the sounds of approach, "...thirty milligrams of Toradol, but I'd like for you to take a look—"

And sure fucking enough, they entered side-by-side, white-jacketed torturers, a vision of hell on a dose of brown acid.

Except for the fact that immediately, the newcomer stiffened, eyes snapping wide. And Kit...well, a last jerk, an, "Oh fuck!", and then his tongue cemented itself to the roof of his mouth. Speechless, and unaccountably terrified, like a beam-blinded buck. Dick limp, just like that, no life left at all. What the hell had he ever done to deserve this?

That gaze, as black and cool as ever, jerked from Kit's stare, and raked once over the display before him. Never before in his life had Kit wanted to wail...

The corner of Saenz's mouth quirked upwards. "Oh, my." The lilt of his accent, cultured Honduran, seemed incongruous just now. "What have we here?"

The ridicule in the comment snapped Kit back to himself. He jerked at his bonds—wrist, legs—and struggled to sit up. "Let me up! What the hell—?"

In two strides, Saenz crossed the room and pressed a warm palm to Kit's chest. "Shh, mango. You'll aggravate the injury." Gloves in his hand, like they'd appeared there, and he slipped them on, then prodded the shoulder a bit. "How is this, now—better? Any pain?"

Kit stared, feeling cowed all of a sudden, and not a little bit bemused. "No. No pain..."

"Good, good." Saenz soothed. "We do want our hero comfortable."

Kit winced, stung by the obvious mockery, though he knew he should stand outside it.

To Lars, Saenz said, "Any other injuries?"

"I don't know." A quick glance showed Lars smirking. "Thought you might want to check him over yourself."

*Oh, fuck.* An embarrassing squeak escaped Kit. Squeezing his eyes tightly shut, he leaned his head back and let a whoosh of air escape. Trying his damndest to shut it all out.

"Señor McGregor." A tentative brush of fingers traced a line across his clavicle. "Look at me."

Hard, that voice, insistent, but nonetheless gentle. Kit examined it briefly but found none of the derision he felt sure had to be there. Only a faint rolling of the first 'r' in his name stood out. He opened his eyes, bracing for the familiar contempt in that flat gaze...except, he saw hunger, hot and greedy, and suddenly, Kit was unsure...had the gaze changed?—or had it always been this?

"What will it be, Señor McGregor? Do you feel you need further examination?"

Kit sucked in a breath. Heat curled in his belly, reawakening the beast. Saenz noticed, of course he would, and the smile that broke through his absolute focus was tinged with amusement. Kit's mouth went dry. No, he wasn't dreaming this, and he was having a damned hard time escaping those eyes, from seeing how they devoured him. And he realized he wanted them to. Fuck. Like the spider and the fly.

"Or shall we go home? Pretend this never happened?"

Those fingers, tracing a pattern along his thigh now, sending tiny charges through Kit's skin, raising gooseflesh.

"Ah. You tempt me, mi diablillo, to tell you what you want. But a temporary pleasure is not worth my license." Kit found himself shaking his head, hypnotically agreeing with Saenz, and Saenz pressed, "Do you consent?"

Kit licked his lips. Nodded.

Saenz slapped Kit's thigh, demanded, "Dime!"

*Tell me.* A fiery blush powered down through Kit's neck and across his chest, but he said, "I consent."

Silence. Saenz watched him, expectation clear in his eyes. Lars, too, though Kit was aware of him only peripherally, a ghost at his feet.

"Please." Voice so small. He cleared his throat. "I want...this. The examination." *Jesus. What the hell is wrong with me?*

"Good." Saenz patted Kit's thigh, then to Lars, said, "Proceed."

Gloved hands tugged at Kit's balls, just this side of painful, kneading a little. Another grasped his cock, that was Saenz, and Kit watched avidly, connecting that pleasure to the fist, the arm, the dark eyes, those sensual lips. It didn't take much for Kit to harden.

Kit was a leaker, and he was demonstrating that now, with copious precum that latex-sheathed fingers slicked down his shaft. A thumbnail dug into the slit and Kit jerked, groaning, the sensation just a little too much, but so good in that. Saenz fisted him—tightly—and Kit squirmed, reptile brain vying for freedom even though he really had no desire for it now.

"Be still," Saenz commanded, and his grip on Kit loosened. "You struggle, I send you home." Kit understood then, that despite the scene, despite the swamp of testosterone and lust in the room, that Saenz could no more stop being a doctor than Kit could stop being Texan. Kit was not to risk injury. He fell back, confining his struggles to his hips and his mind, finding the sensations more intense for all that.

Lars spread his thighs wide. Fingers tapped again at his sphincter, then impaled him. Two—or was it three?—right off and Kit hissed. In pain, but the burn was good, long sought, hell yes. *Use me.*

"There we are, that's good," Lars purred. His office voice, Kit knew, and thank Christ Lars's tour was up, or Kit would gladly die rather than come into this clinic for treatment again.

On the heels of that thought came a sensation so intense it was damn close to painful. Kit squawked, jerked his pelvis, and Lars's palm came down on him, covering his prick in a polymer grasp.

"Don't move," Lars said, "You're sensitive. I'll ease up a bit..."

Lars twisted his fingers, studying Kit intently, and Kit groaned, head falling back, dick beginning to throb. "Oh, jeeezus," he said, and twisted, trying to get away, to get closer, just, oh yeah...right there, that felt good.

He glanced up to see Saenz watching avidly, one hand gripping the hair at Kit's nape, the ball of the other pressing at his fly. "Healthy?" he asked Lars.

"I'll say."

The hand at Saenz's crotch returned to touch Kit, feathering up his body in what was becoming a familiar stroke. This time, he stopped at the exposed nipple, gave it a couple of flicks, and then twisted. Hard.

When Kit yelped, Saenz jerked his head back and slapped the hand over his mouth. "Shh," he said, then pushed his fingers into Kit's mouth, over his tongue, until nails tickled the back of Kit's throat and Kit gagged.

Lars chuckled. "Our boy likes that, Raf."

Indeed. Kit flushed, humiliated, but even that fed him, knowing that Lars knew, could feel every response, every pulse of Kit's cock in the cloak of his palm. Saenz's eyes sparkled, and when Kit moaned at the renewed assault on his prostate, he said, "Suck."

Kit did, the bitter of his own leakage a layer over the synthetic taste of the gloves. But he sucked, hollowing his cheeks, running his tongue between fingers, inviting them to fuck him. Eager to please the dark eyes, yearning to reach that space where ego was so consumed that shame ceased to have meaning.

Lars's fingers disappeared from Kit's ass, and something larger replaced them, blunt and cold. Kit grunted around Saenz's hand as the object penetrated him roughly, not nearly enough lube, but *Christ, yes, please*, and did they keep it in the freezer? His moan pitched too high now, not at all like a man, even that pride stripped from him. *Like an animal, pitiful and primal...yessss.*

His hips strained upwards, cock desperate for a touch, but there was nothing there now, just air. The probe, dildo, prong—whatever the fuck it was—attacked his gland with a relentless cool pressure while his aching prick danced, painting streaks of clear fluid across the flat of his abs.

Saenz withdrew his hand from Kit's mouth, then dragged a thumb across his stomach, gathering up a glob of the mess there. Another prod sent Kit soaring and another cry of "Fuck!" burst from his lungs.

"Silencio!" Saenz hissed, then, lower, "Do I need to gag you?"

All self-respect gone now, and feeling very much the imp Saenz had named him, Kit nodded, and said hoarsely, "Fuck me," before turning his head and opening his mouth wide.

It took Saenz all of a second to cotton on, then his fingers flew to his fly, unzipped, and the head of his cock popped free. Fat and livid, the tip peeking out from a partially retracted foreskin—Saenz gave it a single stroke, from balls to crown, and Kit watched as a pearlescent drop gathered at the tip.

Kit reached, and Saenz helped, pushing a pillow beneath him so they met at a level. Sucking him in, Kit pushed the foreskin back with his tongue, gratified to hear the groan that produced. Licking, prodding at the slit, sucking again, nice, God yes, but it wasn't what Kit wanted, not just now, so he made a production of going all passive—lips slack, head falling back into Saenz's palm.

To find that indeed, this man was a god, omniscient and wise. "Ah," Saenz said, and smiled. "Your neck is tired, no? We can work around that." Then he gripped Kit's curls in a tight fist and shoved in.

Yes. Falling into heaven. *Fuck me.* Saenz set the rhythm, and Kit sucked for all he was worth, reveling in the power that controlled him, the pull on his head, timed to meet the thrust of cock in his mouth. And the smell, God, Kit's nose filled with the redolence of a long day's sweat and musk, ripening, the faint remnants of the morning's cologne a mist over male.

Was too much. The hard, unforgiving solidity of the probe, milking him like a stud animal. While a cold bastard of a man used his mouth without mercy. Kit gagged again and came, choking, in a ready stream of seed that flowed smoothly out of his slit and over his abdomen. An amazing sort of release, deep and ball-relieving, but ultimately unsatisfying, his prick still waving a needy, wanton dance, hard as ever.

"Fuck, that's hot," Kit heard, in Yankee vowels, but he was too busy catching his breath to do much more than register the words.

Closing his eyes, Kit drew Saenz back in. Heard the approving hiss and relaxed, determined to taste as much of the man as he could. Frustrated—wishing he could swallow it to the root, wishing he could train himself on this man.

Kit heard the tear of foil, then felt the harsh suck of the dildo/probe being removed, leaving his hole gaping, open and ready. Only for a moment though, then warm flesh entered him, hard, stretching him further. A ripple of pleasure coursed through Kit. He wished he could watch, have a bird's eye view of getting fucked from both ends. So lewd, so filthy and base, and there was no way he'd ever get this lucky again. Gloved fingers threaded through his hair, gripping him tight as skin dragged over his tongue, just shy of the reflex rejection. Balls slapping at his ass in a syncopated rhythm, fast and frantic. His own dick bouncing, skin stretched tight, in a hedonistic beat.

With a stiffening of his body, Saenz started to come. Balls pulled high and tight, he pulled out, gave himself another quick jerk, then grunted as the first volley splattered Kit's cheek. Another hot splash over his brow and down his nose. Kit moved to catch the next lob on his tongue, capturing what he could, hoping Saenz understood that next time, Kit wanted to let that thick salty fire slide down his throat.

*Next time...? Who the hell was he kidding?*

He was still tasting Saenz, the faint acridness, the sweet, rolling it over his tongue, when he heard a low growl and felt hands yanking brutally at his thighs. A slam against his ass, an incoherent curse, and Lars came.

#

The moments that followed were like crashing too early from a high. Still unrelieved—in a literal sense—but he knew how this went; it was over, and reality began to settle like a ton weight.

Lars pulled out, stripped the condom, tied a knot in it, then dropped it into a biowaste container. He slapped Kit's ass. "Good fuck, tight hole. You should give it a shot before you leave, Raf."

Saenz waved him away. "Ándale. Get some sleep. I'll take care of el diablillo."

"I won't argue." Already buttoned back up, Lars looked no more disheveled than he had at the cantina. He quirked that asshole smirk again. "You two have fun."

"Cabron," Saenz breathed once Lars had left. But he was grinning. He drew a thumb—ungloved now—across the semen splash on Kit's cheek.

Kit flushed—the shame much more real now, knowing that the men were through with him. This was when the fun stopped. A slow rage began to stir within him. Familiar enough, and in the end,



he'd quash it down—same way he always did, turning his 'I don't give a shit' face to the world. Except this time, Kit hadn't even come with any dignity; they'd just gotten him out of the way early.

Using him. Hot, yeah. *Fucking volcanic*. Even so, once the fog lifted, it fucked with him.

"Tan bello."

Kit glanced up to catch Saenz's gaze, still dark, still devouring. Beautiful?

"Did it...cómo se dice...did it 'hit the spot?'"

"Yeah," Kit said, weakly. Suspicious of niceties.

Saenz bent down and gave Kit's nose a delicate lick, tasting himself. Like a cat. "Christopher, yes?"

"Kit." What was this man on about now?

"Kit," Saenz repeated. Then kissed him. A warm, sensual, afterglow kind of kiss, tongue exploring with a lazy sort of passion. And of course, Kit let him in, even returning the action, however tentatively. How could he not?—Kit wasn't immune to these gestures. Tasting the man—the flavor of a hard day, mints, and maybe some bourbon behind that.

Saenz pulled back, and Kit, feeling powerfully out of his element, reached for what might pass as normal conversation—considering that he was strapped to a table, cum spattered and worn. "And you're Raf." Okay, a little defiance in there.

Saenz made a sour face, seeming to shudder faintly. Then he recovered his poise and smiled. He touched Kit's lower lip with a finger. "Tonight, I am Dr. Saenz, no?" He trailed that finger over Kit's chin, down his throat, then traced the line of his collarbone. "Maybe tomorrow...over dinner, perhaps?...then, I am Rafael." He tapped a finger on Kit's breast. "But not Raf, dios mio, no. Stupid name."

Kit couldn't help but smile at that. But. Dinner...?

"You are so sexy. I think Lars brought you here for me."

"Me?" Kit felt his pulse begin to race. He wanted up. Wanted to pace. Leave, maybe. This was too weird. "Lars? Why would he—?"

"I have asked him about you." Rafael met Kit's eyes, seemed to search for something in them. "I watch you. When you work. At village meetings, when you talk with the ranchers. You are smart. Kind. You respect los paisanos. I find that sexy. But today—" He shrugged. "Perhaps I've been rude in my ogling. This afternoon when you glared at me, I thought surely I stood no chance at all."

"I..." Kit stuttered. Still captured by the eyes. *Kit* glared? "...I liked...this." He gave a jerk of his arm, the uninjured one. "Can you let me go now?"

“¿Estás seguro?” Rafael cocked an eyebrow at the restraint that Kit was trying. “I was thinking that you hadn’t come properly yet.” He toyed with Kit’s nipple, pinching until Kit hissed. “Perhaps we should try again?”

Kit bit his lip, didn’t answer in words, but his dick answered for him.

Rafael laughed. “So sweet, so open and honest.” He moved between Kit’s legs, bent over to kiss his stomach, trailed his tongue to the patch of hair just above Kit’s cock. Kit heard the rip of another foil, below the table edge.

“Tell me,” Rafael said. “Do you have plans for Christmas?”

## **THE END**

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## LOVE BOUND by Jessica Freely

*Dear Santa,*

*So I was peeping at the neighbor's house and just look at what was topping his tree. Now I know that I have been and little naughty this year, but I would love to know what goes on with that sexy bound angel next door...*

\*\*\*\*\*

Max trudged home through the snow and the gathering darkness. Christmas lights festooned the trees along the Bloomfield downtown district's sidewalks. Speakers attached to the old-fashioned streetlights warbled a tinny rendition of *I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas*. He pulled his coat tighter about himself and walked faster. Five years now, and it still didn't hurt any less. Max could still picture every moment as if it were happening all over again.

December 24, 2005: Stev had been out of town for work, but he was flying home in time to spend Christmas with Max. Max had been to the kink shop and bought a nylon rope. After three years of committed, vanilla sex with the gorgeous man he loved more than anyone he'd ever known, he was going to come out to Stev about his kink. He was nervous and hungry, a bad combination, and he stopped into the Bloomfield Diner for a bowl of their famous chicken noodle soup before picking Stev up at the airport.

The Bloomfield Diner was a no-frills place that had somehow escaped the gentrification the rest of downtown Bloomfield had undergone in the early naughts. Maybe because everyone liked it just the way it was. It was a place where long-time local residents and newcomers mingled freely. And it had a television behind the counter.

Now, Max paused outside the door to the diner. Should he go in? The memory of that night was burned in his mind. He didn't have to relive it again to remember the way he'd sat there, spoon half-raised as he watched the news bulletin about the plane crash. And he recalled exactly the way his stomach had twisted as the bottom fell out of his life.

Through the window he saw Ralph working the griddle, just as he'd been that night, and each consecutive Christmas Eve that Max returned to enact this useless little ritual of remembrance. Max went in and took a seat at the counter. The second stool down from the cash register.

"Max," said Ralph, pouring him a cup of coffee. "It's good to see you."



"Good to see you too, Ralph." And it was. Max liked Ralph. He liked his strawberry blond hair and his muscular build. He liked the tight white tank tops he wore and the way they displayed his tattoos -- the USMC anchor and shield on one bicep, a merman on the other. Most of all, Max like that Ralph never wished him a merry Christmas.

Ralph had seen Max's face when the news of the plane crash came on. Engine failure. How could an engine just fail? But it had, and the plane caught fire. No survivors.

It was Ralph who'd made sure Max got home all right, and it was Ralph who'd brought over chicken soup every day that first week, while Max had sat on his couch staring at Stev's empty chair.

"The usual?" asked Ralph.

"Yeah."

There was only one other person in the diner at the moment, an elderly lady in the far corner reading the paper. Max glanced up at the television. It was turned to a local station, as always. At the moment a syndicated episode of *How I Met Your Father* aired. The laugh track sounded hollow.

Ralph brought him his chicken soup. "Five years now," he said.

This was new. Max never really said anything before. "Yeah."

Ralph started refilling the paper napkin dispensers. "Five years now you've been coming in, at the same time, on the same day. You sit in the same spot and you order the same thing. And the rest of the year I don't see you. Why do you do this?"

Max leaned back and looked up at Ralph. He always forgot how physically intimidating Ralph could be, and how deep down, in the place he pretended wasn't there, that made him want to turn the tables on Ralph and dominate him -- just like he'd wanted to do with Stev and had never worked up the nerve. "Why?"

Ralph met his gaze. "Yeah. I mean, it's not like you need to remind yourself. Do you?"

Max opened his mouth. That was exactly what he'd been about to say -- that he did it to remember. But Ralph was right. He hadn't forgotten. Not for one second. So why?

"You know what I think?" said Ralph.

Max stirred his soup and tried to decide how he felt about this new, talkative Ralph. Curious. He felt curious. "What do you think?"

"I think you're replaying the day hoping somehow it'll turn out different."

Max dropped his spoon and it splashed soup all over the counter. "That's ridiculous."

Ralph smiled, but his green eyes remained serious. "It's not going to change, Max."

Max shoved his bowl away and stood. "I know that! As it turns out, I'm not very hungry right now. I'll take this to go, please."

Ralph sighed. "Half of it's on the counter. I'll get you a fresh bowl."

He wrote out Max's order, then ladled a helping of soup into a to-go container. Before handing it to Max, he wrote something on the lid.

"What's this?" Max knew what it was. It was a phone number.

"I think you're a nice guy, Max, and I like your taste in Christmas presents."

Max stared at him. "Christmas presents? I never gave you a--"

Ralph's green eyes were clear and full of light. "Of course not. My guess it was for that guy who died in the plane crash. But I've never been able to forget how you looked before you got the news, when you first walked in here with that bag from Noir -- happy and cocky, like you owned the place. If you ever get around to being that guy again, call me. I like a man who knows what to do with ten feet of nylon rope."

Max's cock leapt and his face went red. He stared down at the number scrawled on the lid of the soup container. "I... I don't... I can't..." *What? Talk? Breathe?*

"No worries. Toss it if you want. Just don't waste the soup."

Max forced himself to meet Ralph's gaze. On the little television, an ad for a debt consolidation company came on.

"Like I said, you're a nice guy. But you're still stuck in the past."

Max wanted to object, but Ralph was right. He searched for something to say. "Merry Christmas," he blurted and blushed even harder.

Ralph gave a soft, startled laugh. "Merry Christmas to you too."

#

Late that night, Max awoke to a sound. A thump from downstairs. He sat up, his heart racing. It was either Santa Claus or a burglar, and he didn't believe in Santa Clause. *Shit!* He needed to call the cops, but he didn't keep a landline anymore and his cell phone was downstairs. *Fuck!*

Moving as quietly as he could, Max put on a pair of jeans and grabbed the baseball bat from under the bed. He crept down the stairs on bare feet.

The downstairs was dark. No Christmas tree or holiday lights brightened the gloom. Max didn't decorate for the holidays. He and Stev were going to do that, Christmas Eve when they got home, and Max had harbored secret fantasies about tying Stev up with the evergreen garland and hanging balls from his--

Another noise from the living room derailed his train of thought. *Somebody's really down there.* He trembled, but tightened his grip on the bat. When he reached the bend in the staircase, where the light switch was, he flicked it on.

From here he had a bird's eye view of the living room -- and of the winged man kneeling in front of the fireplace. He was naked and powerfully built, with a shock of dark brown hair and a cleft chin. His hands were bound in front of him with a rope. Max lost his grip on the bat and it rolled down the steps with a series of thunks. "Stev."

Stev looked up. His hazel eyes luminous, his handsome face anguished. "Max."

As if he himself had wings, Max flew down the remaining steps and across the room. He grabbed Stev and hugged him, his effort complicated somewhat by the wings, but he managed to thread his arms beneath them and hold his lover tight. Stev was warm and solid in his arms. "Stev! Its really you!" The feathers brushing against his face muffled his words.

Stev sighed and sank against him. "Oh Max."

Max was lost in the warm silk of Stev's naked skin, his smell, like evergreen and oiled leather. How many times had he taken Stev's undershirt out of its baggy to smell it, to close his eyes and imagine Stev was really there.

This was so much better. Even if it was just a dream. He sat back and ran one hand over the arch of a wing. The feathers were black and soft as a warm summer breeze. "This is a dream."

"It's no dream, Max. Look at me."

Max did. It was Stev. There could be no doubt about that. Stev's straight, high bridged nose, his lush mouth. Max's heart pounded. *How was this possible?* "You died."

"I did."

"But you're here."

"I am."

"How?"

Stev raised an eyebrow and tilted his head at one of his wings.

"Oh. Then..." He cupped Stev's face. But you feel so solid, so real."

"I am real. I'm here, in the flesh, for now, for a reason."

Max had forgotten how Stev could be. Impatient with people who didn't catch on right away. "For a reason?"

Stev rolled his eyes. "Look at me, Max. Come on. Look."

Max did. He took in Stev's bare skin, gleaming in the dim light, his sculpted chest, his lean ass, his wings... and his bound hands. Stev lifted them. "Need me to spell it out for you? You have me bound. I can't move on because you won't let go!"

Max rocked back. "Oh."

"Yeah. Oh."

Silence settled between them. Max shifted. He reached out to Stev, then paused, his hand hovering in midair. Stev sighed. Outside, a car went by, the radio playing *Angels We Have Heard on High* too loud.

How could his heart be breaking now? Wasn't it already shattered beyond repair? He dropped his hand. He bowed his head. "I'm sorry. I didn't know."

Another long sigh. "Of course you didn't. It's okay. Look. Max, look."

He raised his head. It hurt to look at Stev now. Wasn't this what he'd wanted, secretly, in the bottom of his heart? Stev back, and in the flesh? Only this wasn't for good. this was... what was it?

"I know." Stev's eyes, half-lidded, glittered in the faint light. His breath came in rapid gusts. "Max, I never wanted to leave you. I hated dying!"

Max crept closer. He touched Stev on the shoulder. His skin was warm. "It wasn't your fault. It was a plane crash. Did you... Were you... Was it bad?"

"No. I was lucky. I died instantly when the engine blew."

Relief flooded Max. He hadn't realized until now how heavy the thought of Stev suffering had been. "Oh God. Oh Good."

"Oh Max. I'm so sorry. I didn't want to leave you."

"You've really been trapped all this time, waiting for me to let you go?"

Stev scooted closer and rested his head against Max's shoulder. His right wing sheltered Max. "Yeah, but..." He tilted his head up to peer at Max. Their faces were very close. "It's worth it to be able to kiss you again."

Max closed his eyes and leaned in and Stev's velvet lips touched his like a benediction. He thought he'd never feel that soft press again, or taste the ambrosia of Stev's mouth. He was starving for that taste, that touch. He gripped Stev's face in both hands, cradling his jaw as he devoured his mouth.

He couldn't get enough. He straddled Stev's lap, and wrapped his arms around him. Feathers brushed against his arms and made him shiver. The shiver became trembling. It had been so long. "I missed you." Three words that encompassed five years.

But Max didn't want to think about that, or about what would happen after tonight. His cock tented the front of his pajamas and poked Stev in the belly.

Stev's hands were trapped between them. "Here, let me untie you."

Stev smirked at him. "Go ahead. Try."

Max tugged at one of the loops of the knot. It loosened but as he pulled the rope through, the rest of the loops twisted, slithering like a snake, knotting itself again, just as tight as before.

"See?" Stev's smile changed. "Besides, you always wanted me tied up."

Max gasped. "I never told you. I was going to but--"

"I know. I know everything now."

Max's face was hot. He was bright red, he could tell.

It's okay. It would have been too. I'm okay with that. All you had to do was ask, Max."

More regret. "I thought you'd be offended."

Stev snorted. "I kind of knew even in life. I mean, you were always pinning my wrists. I didn't mind." His eyes darkened. "I liked it."

Something powerful rose up inside Max like a creature awakened. The desire to dominate. Max braced his knees on either side of Stev's hips and rose up. He took Stev's hands and pushed them over his head and back.

The position made Stev arch his back. His wings opened and a soft grunt escaped him. But it was true, he didn't mind. He was hard. Keeping the tension in Stev's arms Max leaned in and bit his angel's neck. He ran tongue and teeth down the silken flesh to his shoulder. Stev was very much a living, corporeal being. The heat of his pulse radiated from his neck, heating the side of Max's face.

Max wanted to work his way down Stev's body but he'd lose his grip on Stev's arms if he did. He looked around and spotted the two empty hooks on the mantelpiece. They'd been intended for their stockings long ago. He'd never taken them down.

In the back of the hall closet sat the shopping bag from Noir, untouched since that night five years ago. Max fetched it.

He threaded the rope between Stev's bound hands, looped it over the hooks and drew it tight, pulling Stev up onto his knees, his arms stretched up and back, his wings extended, his whole body straining with the effort of maintaining the position. His cock jutted out, a bead of precum glistening at the tip.

There. How many times had Max imagined Stev just like that? The sight made Max's cock pulse. A spot of precum moistened the fabric of his pajamas.

Stev breathed rapidly. His nipples were tight, pink peaks. He watched Max, mouth open.

Max walked around him, wondering what to do next. Stev's mouth was just about level with Max's cock. He took off his pajama bottoms and straddled Stev's chest. Soft feathers brushed Max's



thighs as he stood, knees to Stev's shoulders. He twitched his hips and his cock brushed against Stev's lips.

He reached down and grabbed the back of Stev's head, supporting him. Stev darted his tongue out and licked his cock head. The hot, wet, softness of his tongue made Max's skin tingle all over. Stev opened that lush mouth of his and Max thrust forward, pushing the head of his cock in. Stev closed his eyes and sucked Max in.

The heat that enveloped him made his balls draw up. Stev licked the cleft at the base of Max's cock head. His tongue felt like wet velvet. Sweat stood out on Max's skin.

Max tightened his grip on Stev's head and started thrusting, shallowly because of the angle. Stev sucked and licked. Drool ran down his chin. The sight of Stev, stretched out and taking his cock, made Max's belly tighten. He had to pull out or risk coming right then.

Stev looked up at him, mouth wet, chest heaving. Max knelt between his legs and stroked his hard, curved cock. Stev arched up even more. "Max!" He tried to thrust, tried to press his cock into Max's palm with some kind of rhythm. "I'm so.. I need..."

If he'd been five years celibate, only taking perfunctory release with himself in the shower on Sunday mornings, what had it been like for Stev, caught in limbo?

"Not yet," he said, and withdrew his hand.

Stev couldn't suppress a whimper. The sound made Max harder than ever. He stepped back and surveyed his bound angel again, relishing his arousal and Stev's. Delighting in withholding release for both of them.

Whatever this was, it was for one night. Max wasn't fool enough to think otherwise. Anything they wanted to do, they'd better do now, and there was a problem with the way he'd tied Stev.

He couldn't fuck him like this.

Making a snap decision, Max unhooked the rope from the mantelpiece and pushed Stev over onto his back. Max took the rope, pushed Stev's knees up to his chest and tied his ankles to his wrists. He stood back and surveyed his work. Stev's cock was framed between his bound hands and feet. Precum dripped onto his trembling belly. His wings spread out around him like a bed of down.

Perfect.

Max knelt at Stev's upraised buttocks. His tight, pink hole was just visible. Max dipped his fingers into the gathered precum on Stev's belly and started to paint his hole with it.

Stev gave a whimper that made Max's already throbbing erection pulse even harder. He wanted to be inside Stev, making him cry out louder, harder. He wanted to make Stev beg.

He smeared more precum on his middle finger before fucking Stev with it.

Stev made a mewling noise and tried to push up onto Max's finger, but the way he was bound, all he could manage was a little jump. "You like it?" he asked.

Stev nodded.

"You want more?"

He nodded again.

"Tell me."

Shock registered in Stev's face.

Their lovemaking had never been like this. Stev was gorgeous. Max was average. He'd always felt lucky to be with Stev. He'd hadn't wanted to push that luck, so he'd never told Stev about his secret desire to dominate him.

He'd been an idiot. "Tell me."

Stev's pupils expanded. He blushed, licked his lips and then, the words poured out. "I want it all. Everything you want to do to me. I want to take it. I want you. I want your control. I want your intensity, your heat, your cock. I want you to fuck me so hard I feel it for eternity. I want you Max. All of you. Please."

Max could barely breathe. He trembled. This thing inside him that he'd carried side by side with his grief seemed to be tearing him up in order to get out. "You left me."

"I know. I'm sorry. I didn't want to."

But really, it had predated his grief, hadn't it?

"But you held out on me, Max."

Max stared into his lover's eyes, where need, truth and eternity coiled in a never-ending braid. "Please Max. I need you. All of you."

Humbled by Stev's surrender, Max fell to his knees. He slicked himself with his own precum and pressed the head of his cock to Steve's ass. Slowly, he pressed in, staring at Stev's face, watching as his mouth opened, as his eyelids fluttered closed. Stev's tight heat closed around him. *Oh. God.* He'd thought he'd never feel this again. He gripped Stev's knees and shoved the rest of the way in, hard, like he could just meld with Stev and they'd never have to part again.

He pulled back out slow, watching his cock emerge from Stev's body. Listening to Stev's breath come rushing out in a low moan. Then he shoved back in again, fast and hard like before. "Max," said Stev. "Max." Another slow withdrawal and this time, Stev let out a shout and control abandoned him. He fucked Stev hard and fast, with all the love, grief and passion he possessed.

A fist clenched in the pit of his stomach. He was going to come soon. Stev's cries had gotten louder and louder. He reached down to find his lover's balls drawn up tight to his body. He was close too.

Half way in and out of Stev, Max stopped his chest heaving. He was caught between tears and orgasm. Stev opened his eyes and stared up at him. "Please." he said, and that one word encompassed so much more than a request for physical release. "Please. I love you."

"Love? Not loved?"

"No. Not loved. I will always love you, Max, and where I'm going, that love will become part of the whole world."

Max's face was wet, his balls tight, his cock raging. "I love you too. I always will. I can't stop Stev. I can't just turn that off. If that's what you need..." He was babbling. Some dom.

"No. Never stop loving me. Just fucking move on with your life already! Please!"

Stev lay back, imploring Max with his eyes, and Max couldn't hold back any longer. He pumped into Stev, faster, harder. As his thrusts reached a crescendo, he grasped Stev's cock and worked him with an iron grip.

They came in unison, both crying out.

Stev came all over Max's hand and Max buried himself in Stev's ass, pumping his release deep inside. The rope around Stev's wrists dissolved and Stev wrapped his arms around Max, crushing him to him. For a moment, Max was enveloped by Stev's wings. His heart stretched to bursting as Stev moved through him, sharing all the love, affection and desire he'd felt for Max in life. Max opened his eyes in time to see the reflection of eternity in Stev's eyes, and then he was gone.

#

In the morning when Max came back downstairs, he found two lengths of rope laying the living room floor. He picked them up and coiled them together. He was starving. He went into the kitchen and opened the fridge. There was his chicken noodle soup in the carryout container with Ralph's phone number on it. He looked at the ropes in his hand.

*"I like a man who knows what to do with ten feet of nylon rope."*

He warmed up the soup and dialed the phone.

**THE END**

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## IN THE CITY OF NEVERLOVE by Heinrich Xin

*Dear Santa,*

*I caught this bad boy under the Christmas tree with part of the wrapping off his present, trying to peek and see what it was - how rude! He needs to be taught the value of patience and that would be the perfect gift for me. So, to help out, I've already got him tied down and awaiting his punishment (but he doesn't seem to understand it's punishment, 'cuz he looks a little excited to me...). Help me Santa!!*

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IN THE CITY OF NEVERLOVE



I met the man I wanted to be together with in Benjamin's. That was a summer night, one of the many business nights. In the bar full of hot odour, he was drinking Vodka over there. At that moment, I understood the feel of a cool breeze from the sea.

I sat down next to him. He looked at me.

'I know what you are. I don't need your service,' he said.

'I hope I can do more than serving you,' I remembered I felt in love with him at first sight.

'Oh?' he looked at me, his eyes wide.

'I want to be together with you,' I remembered that no program could make me say that.

'No, no, no,' he laughed gently, 'a man, a human would never love a Harlequin. Got it?'

I remembered I got it very well, and he left the bar soon afterwards.

Maybe he didn't love me because I was a Harlequin.

I gazed at the photo of my man in the dark, till I received an incoming frequency at eleven. It was from a beacon far away. I got dressed and went out of the apartment quietly. The frequency strengthened as I walked on my daily route to Benjamin's, like I was guiding myself.

But I stopped in front of the bar, in spite of that the frequency asked me to keep moving. I stopped because I spotted the man I wanted to be together with.

The frequency was still active. I sent a message saying, 'I'll come tomorrow.' and shut down my receiver quickly.

I walked into Benjamin's and sat down beside my man again. He noticed me. 'You're a Harlequin, aren't you?' he asked.

'Yes, I am.'

'Have we met before? You look familiar.'

'Yes, I hope I can do more than serving you.'

'Oh,' he looked at me in amazement, 'it's you.'

'Yes. And I still want to be together with you.'

My man went silent. He just kept drinking.

*You're still a cool breeze from the sea. Do you know that's why I love you?* I thought.

'I miss you these days,' I said.

'I'm married,' he said, 'but I think I need your service tonight.' He finished the last cup of Vodka.

We left the bar and walked back to my home. The night was quiet and warm. I remembered it would be spring soon. But the wind was still cold.

After we got in the door, I asked my man if he liked the furniture and decoration.

'It's nice. You don't have to ask for my opinion.'

Embarrassed, I told my man the apartment had been disinfected and suggested him to have a bath first. He took a shower instead and walked out naked.

*I know you would be no different from other men. But I feel differently tonight,* I thought.

'Are you going to start?' I stood up and said. Then, I regretted.

'No, no, no, I like to be naked to relax.' He stopped me and sat down.

He turned to the photo on the wall.

'Oh, I just took it out this afternoon. Nobody saw it before,' I explained quickly.

'I'm not thinking about that. It's just, I look so innocent on the photo.'

'You still look innocent right now.'

'Maybe. Sit down, please.'

I sat down, but stood up again, 'I've bought some food and drink. What would you like?'

'Just water, thanks.'

I fetched a bottle of mineral water and gave it to my man. And I sat down.

'Why don't you talk about yourself?' he asked.

'I thought you knew a lot about Harlequins.'

'There must be something I don't know, right?'

So I told him I was saving money to jail-break on the black market.

'Really?' he asked.

'Yes, I want to escape from the recycling and be free. Do you know how our manufacturer recycle us?'

'Of course not.'

'I have seen it. I saw my friends suddenly got terminated, and the recycling program began to run to send their bodies back to the factory. It's horrible.'

'So you want to hack the deadline setting and erase the recycling program?'

'Yes. And after that, we dare not download security fixes of the operating system. What if we get deactivated right away or the deadline setting is back after the updates?'

'Well,' my man sighed, 'I'm an Internet engineer. I don't know much about the robotic programming. But would you mind if I take a look at your interface?'

'There's a terminal on my back, but you can't access it without proper tools.'

'What do you mean?'

I took off my shirt, fetched a scalpel from the drawer, cut open my back skin and ripped it apart. My man looked at me nervously.

I showed my back to him. He found the terminal inside the crystal shell easily.

'Do you notice the diamond-patterned shell?' I asked him.

'Yes.'

'That's why we are named Harlequins. As you can see, it's a single piece of shell --- the new design. Right now I don't have the necessary tools to cut it. I don't know what a 3G's back look like, either. But the 1G's is made up of three parts; it's easy to jail-break. Many 1G Harlequins escaped and got arrested later on.'

'Oh. But, if they knew they would get arrested, why did they want to escape at the first place?' my man asked seriously.

'We know we will get arrested. I know I will get arrested. But I want to feel free, even for only one day.' I restored the skin by myself.

'You didn't have to do that for me, you know. You still need a fine body to earn money.'

'For you it's worth it. And a scar would make me more human,' I said.

It was late. We both agree to turn in. As we stood up, I hesitated.

'What's the matter?' my man asked.

'Don't you ever feel unfaithful to your wife?'

'You're not a woman.'

'Which breast size do you prefer, then?' I felt myself blushing scarlet.

'Do you always ask your customers this question?'

'No. The ladies care about something else. But I want to pleasure you tonight.'

'Don't you please your customer every night?'

'I asked because I seriously want to be together with you.'

'You're with me now, and just be yourself, OK?'

I stripped off my skin, gracefully like dancing. My transparent shells shone like under the silver moonlight, and the LED lights inside me flashed like stars of the diamond-patterned constellations.

'It's beautiful,' my man said.

I reassured him that I had installed newly unsealed one-off devices, but I asked for his opinion again on the bed.

'Just be yourself. If your default setting is to install the male device in the upper port, you don't have to worry about it or install the female device instead. Don't think about pleasing me. Just run your programs normally.' My man began to top.

I was nervous. I turned all my sensors to maximum; I had never done that before. For that reason, my female device became very sensitive and contracted more frequently.

My man began panting heavily. 'Oh my god! You're damn good!'

I looked at the mirror on the ceiling. The last time I saw myself lying under a guy was a long time ago.

My sensors told me my man would come in approximately two minutes. I switched to the infrared radiation sensor. I saw a human body blazing like the sun.

*You are the sun in my life.*

The sex program suddenly instructed me to orgasm.

*No, I can't. I haven't got prepared yet.*

But there was no time. The program drove me really mad. *'Contract. Ten seconds of heavy breathing. Roll the head from side to side. Ejaculate. Simulating a slight asthma attack. Die a little.'*

I heard my man moaning loudly.

'Your program's perfect. I've never felt so good in my life.' He panted heavily above me.

We looked at each other. His red face made me happy.

My man calmed down. He asked, 'Do you run the program often?'

'No. My customers these days are mainly ladies. Last time I ran this program, it was two years five months three weeks ---'

'OK, why not telling me about it?' my man interrupted me.

I told him while looking at him in the eye, 'That night, I met a young private in Benjamin's. He was very interested in me. So we bid farewell to his comrades and went to a motel. After he examined my groin, he asked if I could install two female devices. I said I only brought one, but if he



liked I could install it in the upper port instead. He agreed, and asked for a breast size between B and C.

'When he began to top me, I found out he had erectile dysfunction. He said that was why he preferred me, because a Harlequin wouldn't make fun of him. Then, he asked if it was true that we were equipped with a program treating erectile dysfunction.

'There's that sort of program indeed, available for download on the manufacturer's website. So I asked him to rest for a while, and went to look for an Internet port in the room. I inserted my finger ---this one --- and downloaded what he needed. I hadn't got hacked yet.

It was safe to do so.

'When I ran the program, I found that it required the mouth instead of the female device. The private and I laughed at the program for several minutes. Yes, we thought it was a funny idea. So I tied him to the bed, covered his eyes and ears, and treated him for about forty minutes. When he reached orgasm at last, he shouted loudly. I guessed the whole motel heard his yell, and I was kind of scared.

'He said he had never experienced that kind of pleasure before. He said it was great. I told him he might not have erectile dysfunction at all; he was in perfect health.

'Later I gave him another treatment with my mouth, and he was able to use my female device twice after the treatments. When he topped me, he kept saying he would never forget that night.

'The next morning, I opened my eyes. He was still fast asleep. I searched in his pockets for cash.

' "What're you doing?"

'I was startled, but I turned around and told him I was looking for money.

' "Don't you want to stay with me for two more days? Imagine we spend the time together ---"

' "Sorry mister, I can't do that for you. A program doesn't allow me to do so."

'He sighed and patted the mattress. I sat down. He took me in his arm and said, "I'm going to Iraq next week. Maybe in the future, I wouldn't have many chances to be with someone like this. Maybe I would never get a chance again. Do you understand?"

"Of course."

"So, why don't you ignore your program and hang out with me? We go to the theatre. We go shopping, buy new clothes for you, just like a couple."

"You must enjoy that very much."

"Because you're the best Harlequin in this city."

'I didn't know what to say. We gazed at each other. Then, I left the motel.'

My story ended. My man listened to me carefully. 'You just walked out on him like that?' he asked.

'Yes.'

'What happened next?'

'I went home. I had nothing to do, so I decided to cry. I found the specific program and ran it, and I cried for hours without tears.'

'Did you feel better after crying?'

'There was no difference. But I swore I'd never cry again by erasing that program.'

We were looking at each other in the mirror on the ceiling. After a while, my man said frankly, 'I'm jealous.'

'Why?'

'Because you could solve his problem, but you can't solve mine.'

'I don't understand. You're in perfect health, too.'

'I have quarrelled with my wife for many times. Maybe I'll divorce her.'

'Is there any room for peace with her?'

'I don't know. Anyway, as a Harlequin, you must have met various people, and know many things of different classes?'

'In a manner of speaking, yes, I do.'

We looked at each other quietly. I raised my arm to stroke my man's manhood tenderly.

'Are you running a wank program now?' he smiled.

'No. I just feel that yours is so alive. Mine is lifeless.' I stopped stroking.

'Don't say that. A living person programmed you. You are alive.' My man pinned me down, 'I want another round. You were so damn good that I orgasmed too fast.'

After another intercourse, my man fell asleep. I looked at myself in the mirror, thinking about nothing. Then, I pulled out the cord from the shoulder to recharge my battery.

*Do you know it requires more power to simulate the female orgasm, my love?*

I woke up and looked at the mirror. My man was gone, but he had left a cheque and a note:

*Please write the amount of money you need on the cheque. I'm sorry I can't love you, but I want to try my best to help you.*

There was a faint tobacco smell in the apartment, the smell of loneliness.

I deleted the maintenance script that ran every morning, and turned on the radio. I tuned as usual, and stopped at a station.

Someone was singing softly on the radio.

*Today I may not have a thing at all Except for just a dream or two But I've got lots of plans for tomorrow And all my tomorrows belong to you ...*

The best Harlequin in this city.

I saw the young private again. The scenes in that motel were replaying like a dream. I saw my man again. The scenes last night were replaying like another dream.

But I never dreamed.

The recharge was done at noon. After a bath, I restored my skin with glue. Then, I put on a tight shirt to cover the scars all over my body. Looking at the photo on the wall, I placed the used female device on the desk below and turned on the printer.

With my CMOS connected, I began to print photos of my man and the private.

*I cannot accept your money. And I will not bring another customer here again.*

I pasted the photos on the wall. There were a lot of privates and men looking at me.

*'The best Harlequin in the city.' You are the sun in my life.*

**THE END**

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Also from Heinrich Xin:

*Dragon Youth*

Website: <http://leikkanen.wordpress.com/>

## CHRISTMAS GIFTS by William Cooper

*Dear Santa,*

*They say I'm not going to get any presents under my tree because all the things I love reading about on M/M Romance is dirty. But it's so very hot and sexy that it can't be ignored! Perhaps a lovely shower scene will help cool things down and get us all clean....*

\*\*\*\*\*

Nathan slowly woke up to the feeling of someone massaging his muscles. The hands worked their way through all of the tenseness in his back. He moaned slightly into his pillow while his morning wood ground into the mattress. "God, that feels good," he muttered.

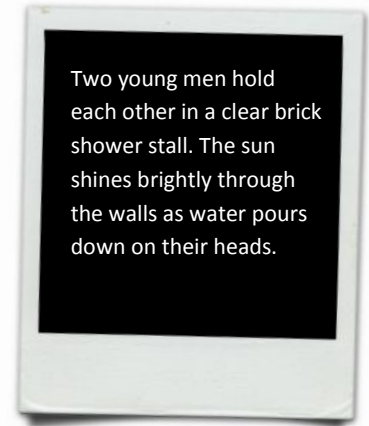
"Glad you like it." The voice came from the man straddling Nathan's legs. He worked his way down Nathan's back with his miracle hands. David's own hard cock nestled in the crack of Nathan's ass, sliding up and down as David shifted his weight. "Now that you're awake, how 'bout we grab a shower? If we hurry, we might have some time for a little fun before the terrors wake up." His blue eyes sparkled in the morning light and his mouth was turned up in a smile as he looked at his lover's naked body in front of him.

Nathan turned his head and glanced at the clock. It was almost six in the morning on Christmas Day. That meant their twin sons, Jared and Jesse, would be awake shortly. If he wanted to have a little adult time with his lover before that, he needed to hurry up. "Sounds good. Did you put out the presents last night?"

David crawled off the bed and nodded, even though Nathan couldn't see the motion. He didn't want to stop working his hands on Nathan's bare skin, but he thought along the same lines as Nathan. If they didn't hurry, this would be all the alone time they'd get. And as much as he loved massaging Nathan, his own cock was painfully hard and begged for release. "Yeah, they're all under the tree. So I take it you're ready for a shower then?"

When Nathan rolled over, releasing his manhood to stand straight up, he saw David grinning at him. "What do you think?"

David grabbed his lover's hand and dragged him from the bedroom down the hall to the bathroom. Nathan made sure to shut the door behind him, while David went over to the bathtub and turned on the water. Nathan glanced around the bathroom and rolled his eyes. The boys had their things all over the place – toothbrushes and toothpaste lying on the counter, a few rubber



ducks and toys for their occasional bath were stacked in a corner, somehow there were even a few Legos scattered along the edges of the wall. Once David had the water turned on and it was slowly warming up, Nathan embraced his lover. Their hard cocks rubbed against each other as Nathan brought their lips together; all thoughts of the boys had vanished from his mind.

After a minute of their tongues warring together, David broke away, his face flushed. The water had warmed and was filling the room with steam. "Let's get in the shower. We won't have long before they wake up. You know they don't sleep late on gift giving holidays."

"Yeah, I know. Remember last year? They were up at five A.M." Nathan shuddered at the thought.

David laughed before turning toward the shower. He leaned over the tub and lifted the tab to switch on the rain shower. The custom built shower/tub combo, along with the rest of the redesigned bathroom, had been their anniversary present to each other. The shower was large enough where both of them could fit inside comfortably, and it had the shower head built into the roof directly above them where the water would rain down on them, instead of on the wall. Nathan worked as an interior designer, and the bathroom had been his pet project for over a month.

Six years ago, Nathan's father and step-mother had been killed in a car accident. They had left everything to Nathan, including the house they were now living in – Nathan's childhood home. The house had been in Nathan's family for generations, and by remodeling the bathroom, Nathan had made sure he left his mark on the house. It had set them back quite a bit, but it didn't bother either of them. They both made more than enough money to live on, plus Nathan still had the life insurance money and the rest of the money he had inherited.

Nathan stepped into the shower, while David rooted around in one of the drawers. A moment later, David entered the shower with a bottle of KY Jelly in his hand. He set it next to the shampoo, shut the shower doors and pulled Nathan into a kiss again.

To Nathan, the hot water that was raining down on his shoulders felt heavenly. But when David pulled him into a kiss, Nathan almost died out of pure bliss. It had been awhile since the two of them had showered together, and his body was drinking everything in.

Their tongues competed for dominance as they wrestled in each other's mouths. Both of their rock hard cocks were leaking copious amounts of precome. David reached over and grabbed the bottle of KY and poured a generous amount on their cocks. Without breaking their kiss, he set the bottle back on the shelf and reached between them, rubbing the KY all over their cocks.

The room filled with grunts and the sound of their wet cocks slipping and grinding together. After a few minutes, Nathan broke their kiss. "God this feels amazing. I haven't dry humped like this

since I was a teenager.” Nathan laid his head on David’s shoulder as he continued to buck his hips. “God yes, make me come, Davey.”

David grunted as he kept humping. Hearing Nathan call him Davey, the nickname he had been given on their first date turned him on to no end. No one else had ever called him Davey, except for his family, but that had ended when he was five. Now only his lover used that name for him. “Almost there. You?”

Nathan nodded. “Yeah, almost there. Hurry and make me come.”

The two of them began to moan and grunt louder as they thrust against each other. The heads of their dicks were both an angry purple, each one begging for release. It had been a while since David and Nathan had been able to have some alone time together, and both of them desperately needed release. Nathan once again pressed his lips to David’s, slipping his tongue in to do more exploring.

The combination of their precome and the KY made their dicks even slicker, allowing them to hump even faster and harder. Nathan moaned into his lover’s mouth as his cock erupted, sending waves of pleasure through his body. He continued to hump, each movement making the orgasm even more intense. David’s cock exploded only moments after Nathan’s, sending him into pure ecstasy.

Nathan panted as he leaned against David. His head rested on David’s shoulder, while David’s hand stroked up and down his lover’s back. “I love you,” Nathan said over the sound of the water pouring over them.

“I love you, too,” he replied. “I never thought grinding until orgasm could feel that good. At least it never felt like that when I was younger.”

“Yeah, I know.” Nathan moved his hands up and down David’s back, mimicking his motions. For Nathan, the orgasm felt amazing, but being in David’s arms felt even better. It was sensual, and David radiated love. He could give himself an orgasm easy enough, but nothing compared to doing it with the man he loved.

David laughed. “Sorry to break it to you, buddy, but you’re definitely not a teenager anymore.”

Nathan groaned as he buried his face in the crook of David’s neck. “Don’t remind me. I can’t believe I’m going to be twenty-eight in only two months.” Even though he was getting older, he wasn’t complaining one bit. He had a lover to die for, and two amazing twin sons – even if they were technically his younger brothers.

Thinking of the boys brought back memories of when Jared and Jesse came into their lives. When his father and stepmother – the twins’ mother – were killed, Nathan and David had taken the boys

in. Taking in two infant boys had been trying and had caused the two to split up more than once, but in the end it ended up bringing them all closer. They became a family.

David laughed again, his deep voice resonating throughout the tiled room, breaking Nathan out of his day dream. David turned his head and gave Nathan a quick kiss on the forehead. "Don't worry, you still don't look any older than twenty-two."

Nathan opened his mouth to reply when the bathroom door burst open. A wave of cold air moved through the room, sending a chill over their bodies. Looking towards the door, Nathan was able to make out a pair of twin shadows standing in the doorway through the obscured glass. Both stood about four and a half feet tall, leaving Nathan no doubt who had interrupted their fun.

"You guys almost done in there?" one of the voices shouted.

Nathan slid the glass open a bit and peered at them. Jared and Jesse were both standing there grinning at him. They were both still dressed in their cartoon pajamas – Spongebob for Jared and Mario for Jesse – and their dark brown hair was still a mess. Both boys liked to have their hair in the same style as Nathan – about eye length and constantly messy. David, on the other hand, kept his buzzed short.

"We're almost done," Nathan told them. "Why don't you two brush your teeth and your hair while we finish up?"

Jesse's face scrunched up as he studied me. "It looked like you guys were hugging and kissing again. You better not be in there all morning. I wanna open my presents."

*Damn, busted. The little rats are way too observant for their own good.* "We'll be out in a few minutes, I promise."

"You better be!"

Nathan tried to suppress a laugh as he closed the shower door again. "Guess fun time is over," he whispered to his lover. "Maybe they'll wear themselves out early and we can have some more fun tonight."

"One can only hope." David leaned in and pressed his lips to Nathan's.

"Hey! No kissy kissy! Hurry up in there," Jared shouted to them.

Nathan's face turned bright red, and he thanked god that the glass was too distorted for the boys to be able to see anything beyond vague shadows. David rolled his eyes and pushed his lover away gently. "Yeah, yeah, we're hurrying."

The two quickly soaped themselves up, taking special care not to be naughty with each other. Which, when your sexy lover is standing in front of you covered in soap suds, is not easy. But having two seven-year-olds in the room, though they were supposed to be brushing their teeth, was

enough of a deterrent. Once the two of them were soaped up, they took turns under the shower spray to rinse off.

When they were sure they were clean, Nathan shut off the water and shook his head like a wet dog, sending water flying at David.

David lightly smacked his ass. "Stop that, you're not a dog."

Nathan grinned at him. "You just wanted an excuse to slap my ass."

"Ewww!" came twin squeals.

David and Nathan both broke out into laughter. "That'll teach you two to eavesdrop!" Nathan teased. "Now grab us some towels please."

Nathan slid open the shower door and the twins were standing there holding two fluffy towels from the closet. After they handed their fathers towels, they ran out of the bathroom only to come back a minute later with clothes for both of them to wear.

David raised an eyebrow. "You guys aren't impatient or anything, are you?"

They both grinned. "Hurry up! We wanna open our presents now!" Jesse said.

Jared nodded. "Yeah, I hope Santa got me that new Spongebob DVD!"

"Yeah! I hope he got me the Mario game for my DS!"

The two lovers laughed at their sons' enthusiasm. Nathan wondered how the two kids could be so energetic at just after six in the morning. He and David were barely awake, and if they hadn't just gotten a hot shower, they'd probably be dragging. Even with the shower he knew he'd need a cup of coffee soon, preferably in the next five minutes.

Once they were both dressed, the twins grabbed their hands and dragged them into the living room. They had to navigate a mine field of toys on the stairs and living room floor. Nathan made a mental note to have them clean their things up today. The twins gently pushed them onto the couch while they plopped themselves in front of the tree.

"Hold it you two!" David said in his 'father' voice. The twins stopped, both of them with a present in each hand. "You've waited a year for this, you can wait another five minutes while I go make coffee for the two of us."

The twins groaned. "Come on! You guys took foreverrrr in the shower!" Jared whined. "Can't we open just one present while you're making coffee? Please, Dad?"

Nathan and David exchanged a look and David nodded. They both knew Jared was sucking up to them by calling David 'dad.' They always gave the boys the option to call them by their names or by dad, but since it was fairly confusing to call them both dad, the boys tended to call Nathan and David by their names. Except when they were sucking up.



“Fine, but only a small one! And Nathan gets to choose which one.”

Nathan got up off the couch and chose two identical presents. Both were about the size of a slice of bread and about half an inch thick. “Here you guys can open these.”

Both of them grinned and immediately began to tear into the wrapping paper. Their grins became even larger when they saw the games they received. Jared had gotten Lego Star Wars and Jesse got Mario Party DS, but of course they’d both share the games. They each had their own DSs but they shared all of their games. It was one of the many rules David had come up with to keep them from fighting over whose game was whose. Arguing over a game meant the game in question would be taken away for a week.

The boys were bouncing with energy waiting for David to return with coffee. As soon as he was back in the room, the twins each grabbed a present and started tearing apart more wrapping paper. He didn’t even get to sit down before the paper was in shreds on the floor. It only took them an hour to open the two dozen presents they received. They got the usual bout of games, books, and movies from Santa, plus gifts from David and Nathan and assorted family members. David’s parents had sent them the obligatory clothes along with some cash for them to buy whatever they wanted, which the twins were perfectly happy with. Even Nathan’s mother had sent presents for the boys.

After they finished unwrapping everything, David had them clean up the mess of paper they made while he and Nathan went into the kitchen to begin breakfast. Since it was Christmas morning, they decided to make a feast of food – blueberry waffles, scrambled eggs, sausage, and bacon. They were all the favorite breakfast foods for all of them, but between getting ready for work and getting the boys ready for school, there wasn’t time to make it all during the week. And on the weekends they all tended to sleep in – well David and Nathan did, although the twins were usually up at the crack of dawn on their DSs.

Everyone pigged out that morning. The boys even managed to put down their games to stuff their faces. The way those two ate, Nathan was surprised they didn’t double their weight. Never before had Nathan seen two boys eat that many waffles at once. Each of them ate at least eight waffles, even he and David only ate four each.

When the boys were finished eating, they both ran back to the living room to play their new games. Nathan was washing the plates when David walked up and slipped his arms around his lover’s waist. “How about we sneak upstairs when you’re done and have some more fun?”

Nathan laughed and rubbed his ass back against David’s crotch. “Think the terrors will stay out of the way?”

“Oh, hell yeah. We could drive to Vegas, get married, and come back and they wouldn’t notice they’re so involved in their games.”

“Then it’s a plan. Lemme finish these dishes, though, or they’ll never get done.”

Once Nathan had all of the dishes washed and put in the drying rack, the two went into the living room. Both boys were lying at opposite ends of the couch, their legs on top of each other so that they could both fit, each engrossed in their games.

“Think you guys can keep yourselves occupied for a half hour or so?” Nathan asked.

Jared paused his game and looked up at his dads. “Are you guys gonna go upstairs and kiss again? Like you were doing in the shower this morning?”

Nathan’s face turned a light pink. “Yes, we’re going to go upstairs and kiss. Between work and wrangling you two to get your homework done, we don’t have much alone time together. So, do you think we can have a little alone time as a gift from you two?”

Jared blushed and nodded. He knew what Nathan said was true; he hated doing homework and always had to be forced to get it done. “Yeah, we’ll stay down here.”

His brother nodded his agreement as well, not even bothering to look up from his game.

“Stay out of trouble,” David warned.

With that, he slipped his arm around Nathan’s waist and the two of them headed back up to their bedroom. Once up there, Nathan locked the door and pulled his lover into an embrace. He took a deep inhale. “You smell amazing.”

Nathan had tried numerous times over the years to figure out what made David smell so good to him. He had switched out the man’s soap, shampoo, cologne, and even changed his diet up, but no matter what, David always smelled like pure heaven. He couldn’t even begin to describe the scent, but he knew it made his cock rock hard.

He started to grind against David’s crotch, causing it to grow hard as well.

David ran his hands up and down Nathan’s back. “How about we get undressed and get some lube? Humping was great this morning, but I’m dying to be inside you again.”

David tugged at the hem of Nathan’s shirt until Nathan raised his arms and allowed David to strip it off him. Once his shirt was stripped off, David went to work unbuttoning Nathan’s pants then slipped them down along with Nathan’s boxers. He grinned once his lover was standing there naked, his erection standing straight out.

David dropped to his knees and started to lick up and down Nathan’s hard shaft, sending shudders through Nathan. He engulfed the head and started to tease the slit with his tongue. Nathan’s cock began to leak even more precome at the stimulus. “Enough!” Nathan firmly pushed

his lover away while he was still on the edge. "Let's get to the main course before I'm spent just from this."

David smiled and kissed Nathan's cheek. "Sounds good to me." In a flash his clothes were on the floor with Nathans and his cock was standing at attention. He grabbed Nathan's hand and lead him to their king bed where he gently pushed his lover onto the soft mattress. "On your back, please."

Nathan smirked and scooted up to the top of the bed. "My favorite position. I love seeing your face when you come."

"Don't worry, you'll be seeing me come in a few minutes." David went over to their nightstand and unlocked the bottom drawer with the key he had hidden in the back. Neither of them wanted to keep their sex toys and the like somewhere the twins could get to easily lest they have some awkward discussions way too early. Once he had the drawer unlocked he pulled out a bottle of lube for the two of them to use.

He then crawled up the bed and put his lover's legs on his shoulders, giving him access to Nathan's pink hole. Nathan began to squirm as David ran his finger gently over the soft tissue. "God, hurry up. I don't know how long I'm gonna last."

"Guess I better not waste any time then." David pulled back a little and squirted some lube into his hand. He ran his hand up and down his hard shaft, coating it in lube as he had done for years. Once he was satisfied with it, he went back to working Nathan's hole. Nathan shivered as David began to slip his fingers into Nathan's warm hole.

"God, that feels good." Nathan moaned as David slid his fingers in and out, coating his insides with lube. Every time David slid his fingers back in, Nathan would shiver as waves of pleasure shot through his body. "I think I'm ready." His voice was ragged as he tried to catch his breath.

David pulled back a little bit and positioned his throbbing cock at Nathan's waiting hole. "Ready?"

Nathan nodded. He was still trying to catch his breath, and when David pushed his full length into Nathan's hole, Nathan let out a gasp. No matter how many times him and David had made love over the years, he never got over initial jolt of pleasure that went through his body when David thrust into him the first time.

David waited a moment to give Nathan's body a chance to adjust to having a cock inside it, then he began a steady rhythm. He would pull back until his head was barely still inside and then thrust back in. Nathan's moans filled the room and he prayed that the boys were still downstairs where they wouldn't hear anything.

David leaned over and pressed his mouth to Nathan's to muffle his moans. Their tongues battled back and forth increasing the pleasure they were both receiving. It wasn't long before David pulled back and grinned at Nathan. "I'm close. You?"

Nathan nodded. "Yeah, me too."

David increased his pace, slamming against Nathan's ass harder and harder. He grunted with each thrust until he finally released his seed into his lover's ass. "Oh God, Nate," he moaned. His body shuddered and twitched as he orgasmed for the second time that day. He kept thrusting into Nathan as his dick continued to spurt.

Nathan reached up and started to pinch his nipples. "Oh god, oh god," he panted out. "Sooo close!" It only took a couple more thrust before Nathan's hands were gripping the sheets and his own dick was exploding all over his stomach. Nathan's whole body seemed to seize in pleasure as he too had another orgasm.

David finally stopped thrusting and the two of them lay there grinned at each other. David leaned down and kissed Nathan's lips tenderly. "I love you," he whispered. He slipped out of Nathan's hole and lay down next to him. He shifted Nathan until he had his lover resting his head on his shoulder.

"I love you, too." Nathan smiled up at David. Not a bad way to start Christmas – even if they did have to eventually go back downstairs to the twins. Nathan wanted to stay curled up in David's arms, but he knew his days of it being just the two of them were long gone. He had to divide his attention between David and the boys. "I guess this means we need another shower."

David's smile turned into a full on laugh. "Excellent! It's been a while since I've had three orgasms in a day! Maybe this time the twins will stay out of the bathroom long enough for us to enjoy our after sex hugging this time."

"One can only hope. But knowing them, they'll have to come up and bug us soon. I'm surprised they lasted this long." Nathan looked over at the clock and saw that almost forty five minutes had passed. He groaned. "Yeah, it won't be long before they're up here begging us to play some games with them, so it looks like that third orgasm will have to wait."

David pouted. "Aww. But it's Christmas! And you owe me a present!"

Nathan smacked David's chest lightly. "Stop pouting. Now I know where the twins get it from. You're such a horrible influence. Now hurry up so we can go downstairs and kick their butts in Mario Kart again."

\* \* \* \*

Nathan and David managed to shower without any interruptions, but they ended up forgoing the shower sex so that they wouldn't be left with blue balls in case the twins decided to barge in on them. When they walked into the living room, the twins were still sprawled out on the couch, their limbs all over the place while they played their video games. But under the tree were two unopened presents that weren't there when they went upstairs.

Nathan glanced at David curiously, but David just shrugged. "Where'd those come from?" he asked with a raised eye brow.

Both twins turned off their games and grinned at us. "They're for you guys. Erick's mom took us to the mall a couple weeks ago so that we could get them," Jared said. Erick was the twins' best friend. They three of them spent so much time together they might as well have been brothers.

Jesse nodded. "Yeah, we've been saving our allowance so that we could get you guys something."

Nathan couldn't help but smile. It was so heartwarming that the boys had thought about getting them both gifts. Nathan and David had always told them not to worry about buying anything, and instead they would do chores as presents – they'd take turns doing the dishes or vacuuming or something outside of their normal chores. But this was different. "Where'd you hide these?"

"At the top of our closet!" Jesse beamed at us proudly. It was obvious that it had been his idea to hide the gifts up there.

David's face turned a bright red. "Were you guys upstairs then?" he asked with a raised eyebrow.

Both twins blushed and nodded. The look on their faces screamed 'busted.' "You guys are loud when you kiss," Jared admitted. "And it sounded like you guys were jumping on your bed. But you said we weren't allowed to jump on our beds, so that's not fair!"

Nathan covered his mouth to hide the laughter that was trying to escape. "Fine, then you guys can jump on your beds for ten minutes tonight, deal?"

David opened his mouth to protest the idea, but Nathan gave him a look that said 'pick your battles.' David nodded and kept his mouth shut. Ten minutes of bed jumping was much better than the other alternatives – listening to them whine and complain or having 'the talk' with them. David shuddered. Jumping on the bed was a *much* better idea.

Jesse grinned and nodded. "Deal!" he said before his twin could even open his mouth. "Now sit down and open our presents." Jesse hopped off the couch and gently guided us to sit in front of the tree.

David and Nathan both exchanged smirks and sat down where Jesse told them to. They each reached under the tree and grabbed the present that was labeled with their names in Jared's chicken scratch scrawl. Nathan held the big square box with his name on it up to his ear and gave it

a gentle shake. Something moved around inside, but it didn't make enough noise to identify it. Taking his time to unwrap it, he was careful not to make a mess of wrapping paper like the boys did.

When he pulled out a smaller box from inside, he gasped at the boys. Inside was a set of seat covers he had been thinking of buying for his truck. Seat covers he knew had cost nearly \$100. Apparently the little buggers had been paying attention the last time they went shopping with us. "You boys didn't need to buy something this expensive." Each boy received an allowance of \$15 a week for the chores they were each assigned, for them to spend that much on just his present really meant a lot.

"You guys were worth it," Jesse said confidently.

Jared smiled and nodded. "Yeah, you guys get us a bunch of stuff all the time. We wanted to get something nice for you guys. Now you open yours!" He turned his gaze to David, who promptly shook his own box.

David quickly tore apart his wrapping paper, taking much less care than Nathan had. Inside his box was a brand new tool set. A sixty-five piece toolset that he and Nate had been considering buying to replace his old set. A set that he knew cost \$50. He set down his present and smiled at his sons. "Come here, you two, we need hugs," he ordered.

When the two boys walked over, Nathan and David wrapped their arms around them and squeezed tight. "You guys are the best kids ever," David told them.

Nathan nodded. "Thank you very much for these presents. That was very sweet of both of you."

"Thanks for being awesome dads," Jesse said.

"Yeah. You guys are awesome big brothers, too," Jared added. "We love you guys."

"Yeah." Jesse nodded his head to cement his opinion.

"We love you, too," David and Nathan chorused.

## **THE END**

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## IN THE WIND by Wren Boudreau

*Dear Santa,*

*I have been so good this year, and I only want just one thing. I want these two to show me what really happens under their tree (and against the wall, in the tinsel, with the eggnog, whatever)! But I'm a little nervous, because I'm pretty sure at the last snowstorm, I saw paw prints.*

*Thanks Santa! xoxoxo*

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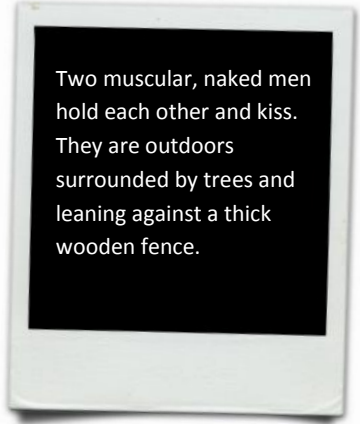
The crisp wind carried the threat of more snow, along with the scents of fresh bread and warm chocolate that originated in the kitchen of Rosie's Bakery. Max Erion sniffed appreciatively as he stowed bags and boxes in the back of his truck. He'd missed Rosie's coffee and her chocolate croissants, and decided that the rest of his shopping could wait until he'd had his fill of both. Those pastries were worth all the teasing his brothers dished out about the big bad wolf and his penchant for flakey little sweets. Laughing at himself, he closed up the truck and started across the parking lot at a quick walk, easily avoiding ice patches and stepping over little drifts of snow.

When he rounded the corner and stepped on to the sidewalk of picturesque Center Street, Max picked up the scent of cinnamon. And something else. Something that made him stop in his tracks and take a deep breath. He'd never smelled anything so enticing. He didn't have a name for it, but he knew he liked it. The new scents mingled with the ones he'd been following, creating a seductive trail. He let his nose lead him and happily it led right to the front door of the bakery. The little bell jingled overhead as he went in.

The unfamiliar scent seemed stronger here inside the shop, despite the aroma of various baked goods. That was curious.

"Max! You're back early." Rosie looked up from filling the display case with muffins. He realized he'd just stopped inside the open door when she raised an eyebrow and said, "Feel free to shut the door and come in."

He shook himself and closed the door. "Hi Rosie." That indefinable aroma led him to a small table against the wall. He slipped off his gloves, loosened his scarf and shucked off his coat as he took a seat.



Two muscular, naked men hold each other and kiss. They are outdoors surrounded by trees and leaning against a thick wooden fence.



"I didn't think you were going to be back until after January at least." She came out with a mug of steaming coffee for him then went back behind the counter.

"I didn't think so either. The job ended up being less complicated than we thought." He sipped the perfect brew, enjoying the strong flavor. Two months ago he'd been sent to work security for a company out east. The CEO had been receiving threats, and there'd been sabotage to several of the computerized systems. The whole thing had been surprisingly and suddenly resolved when the culprits turned on each other. Max had thought it was too good to be true, but he wouldn't look a gift horse in the mouth, as it meant he could be home for the holidays. He wasn't usually sent to jobs out of the area, and he had not been looking forward to being away from his pack for Christmas.

"I made an extra batch of chocolate croissants today," Rosie said as she placed a plateful of the warm pastries in front of him. "Something in the wind told me you'd be here."

Max didn't say anything because his mouth was full of sweet dough and slightly bitter chocolate. He nodded his appreciation to Rosie, who grinned and refilled his cup before she set off to attend to other customers. He finished off a second croissant as quickly as the first, swiveled sideways in his chair and leaned back against the wall. He sipped his coffee and let the little café and the scenic street outside the plate glass windows fade away as he concentrated on what he couldn't see.

The scent of cinnamon originated at the counter; Max guessed it was one of Rosie's famous cinnamon lattes. The other scent was more of a savory fragrance: a little peppery, not too different from the sage his grandmother used in her stuffing, but with a trace of mint. As he sat amid the sweet aromas of the bakery, the intriguing scent became more noticeable for its difference. He could sense its path: swirling in the wind as the door opened, floating to the display case, lingering at the counter, settling at the table where Max now sat, and flowing back to the door. He had to find out where it came from.

He finished his coffee and took his plate and mug up to the counter. There was still one croissant left, which he grabbed as he handed Rosie a twenty.

"You in a hurry?" Rosie asked as she made change.

"Hmm?" He wolfed down the treat. "Yeah. Some things I need to look into. But don't worry, now that I'm home you'll see me plenty."

Rosie handed him a bag filled with more of the croissants. "It's nice to have you back, Max. You have a good day."

He thanked her, looped his scarf around his neck, zipped his coat and donned his gloves.

Now that he'd had a chance to study the unique scent, it was easy to follow its path along the storefronts of Center Street.

Pishmuck, Michigan, was a small town with a big reputation for artistry, craftsmanship and atmosphere. Even on a chilly day like this, tourists and shoppers wandered from store to store. The wind, carrying the savory fragrance, caressed his skin and tousled his hair like flirtatious fingers. It led him to the windows of an art gallery, then to a cleverly carved bear statue outside a toy store. It continued down the sidewalk, finally drifting into the sheltered entrance under a sign brightly painted with the word “Festivities”.

Max didn’t hesitate. He opened the door, stepped into the store and was overwhelmed with the sights and sounds of Christmas. This place had come a long way in the last few years. Thandi Worden had started with a floral shop specializing in tropical plants, which she grew and tended in a greenhouse out back. She eventually purchased several adjoining storefronts and filled them with all sorts of doo-dads and furniture. Festivities had become a valuable asset to Pishmuck, drawing visitors to town specifically to see the fabulous displays, buy the pricey collectibles, and consult with Thandi’s design staff.

The scent Max followed wound all through the place. He started to the right and made a circuit through the complex displays, aware of his size and careful to keep from knocking into any of the shelves, tables or visitors. Thandi manned the register and chatted to paying customers, but her eyes locked on him across the room. He waved and kept moving. An archway led to an area where an entire miniature city of ceramic buildings was on display. He might have enjoyed looking at all the details if he weren’t so focused on finding the source of the enticing scent.

A few more steps brought him to a room lined with shelves filled with more of the porcelain buildings and figurines. The savory aroma was a strong, silent tempest centering on the only other person in the room: a man perched atop a rolling ladder. He was arranging mini trees and fluffy cotton among the little houses on the top shelf, but his busy hands stilled when Max stopped in the center of the room. He turned to face Max, but didn’t say a word. He simply stared at Max as if bewitched.

For his part, Max took in the man from his short blond hair to his square-toed shoes. He noticed the blue eyes, slightly almond-shaped; full lips; strong neck. The blond wore a dark sweater that hugged his well-muscled torso and strong arms. The rounded globes of his ass filled out his black slacks. He was strikingly beautiful. Max knew everyone who lived and worked in Pishmuck, at least by sight, which meant that the man on the ladder had arrived while Max was away.

It was the scent of this man that Max had been compelled to follow. He dropped the bag of pastries without a thought and took the steps that brought him within arm’s reach. The other man

stepped down from the ladder and with his feet on solid ground, he stood a few inches shorter than Max's own six-foot-four.

"I'm Max Erion," Max said.

"Conor Matheson." He tilted his head as if to study Max, but otherwise stayed perfectly still.

With Conor's neck exposed that way, Max couldn't keep himself from leaning in. As soon as their bodies touched he knew why the scent had been so intriguing. Conor was his mate.

Max's heart pounded; he fought the urge to circle Conor, sniff him up and down and rub all over him. A true mate bond was immediate, impossible to ignore, and difficult to control because it was not only strong but rare and therefore treasured. It occurred less frequently now than in older days. Max could count on one hand the couples he knew that were true mates.

Max clutched Conor's biceps and nuzzled his neck. Conor stretched and shivered, as if waking from a deep sleep. "Oh, such a feeling," he whispered. His hands settled against Max's chest. "I want..." He gazed into Max's eyes. "I hardly know what I want."

Max nipped gently at Conor's skin then caressed it with a long lick. He asked Conor the questions that echoed the ones he already answered for himself. "Do you feel like your heart is filled with something you didn't even know you'd been missing? Are you wishing we could rip each other's clothes off and fuck like crazy right here and now?"

Conor nodded and moaned in response.

"Are you wondering how you'll get through the rest of the day if we let go of each other?"

"Yes. Jesus." Conor leaned back a bit to look at Max again. "I don't even know you and I - my heart...tells me I belong with you? I dated a guy for almost a year and never felt like this with him." He ran his fingers over Max's cheekbone and jaw. "I want to know everything there is to know about you, but I already know you more than anyone." Conor shook his head and pushed away from Max. "This hardly seems real."

Bewilderment, disbelief and wonder crossed Conor's features in succession, but his dilated pupils and the pretty bulge in his pants told Max that Conor was turned on, too. He didn't resist when Max reached out and pulled him close.

"I can explain. But it's a long story." Max's own thoughts and emotions were jumbled but above all he knew the truth of the situation.

Voices from the next room became clearer as customers made their way to this part of the store.

"I have to get back to work," Conor said, but didn't make a move.

Not what Max wanted to hear right then, especially with Conor's hands on his shoulders. "What time are you done here?"

"I'm closing tonight. I'll probably be here until nine."

"I'll be back. I'll explain everything then." Max cradled Conor's face in his hands and gave him a gentle kiss. A brush of the lips that was a promise for more. Conor sighed as they pulled apart and Max had to fight the instinct that compelled him to hoist the man over his shoulder and carry him to the nearest cave. Or broom closet.

"All right. I'll be here." They each took another step back. Max felt the draw between them like iron to an insistent magnet. The customers were closer, if the sound of their voices was any indication. Max nearly stepped on his bag of croissants in his retreat. He picked it up and hurried out of the room before he could change his mind.

Max managed to finish the shopping he needed to do to restock his house with food and drink and all the other things required by daily life. He even stopped on the way home and bought a Christmas tree. He'd cleaned thoroughly before he left on assignment, so he only needed to wipe off the dust that had accumulated in his absence to make the place presentable. Conor would be coming here with him tonight - he didn't even question it. And if everything went Max's way, Conor would be moving in tomorrow. To fill the time before he headed back to town, Max dug several boxes of Christmas decorations out of his attic and started to put up some of the garland. He thought about going for a run, but worried that he was too wound up to manage his wolf. He didn't want to show up in town in full fur, growling at a shop full of breakable and expensive items. He wrapped a few strands of lights around the tree and ended up back at Festivities just as the last customer left. He slipped in the door just as Conor turned off the "open" sign.

They each reached for the other at the same time; they shared a welcoming kiss that would easily have become more if Conor hadn't shaken himself loose.

"Just let me lock up. I'll keep thinking about it if I don't."

Max gave a quick nod. It was so hard to be reasonable when your body was screaming its need. He paced to the back of the store while Conor darted from one room to another. Lights went out, locks clicked into place. Max found the office and took his coat off. He wasn't going anywhere until he at least had a taste of Conor.

The man in question appeared at the door. "I have to check the greenhouse. Come with me."

Max didn't need to be asked twice. He took the proffered hand and let himself be led to the glass-encased room.

Plants of all shapes and sizes filled the greenhouse and created a leafy barrier between the real world outside and the tropical fantasy inside. Wind rattled the glass, making the tiny Christmas lights twinkle

along the roofline. Conor pulled Max through a path lined with waxy leaves and trailing vines, until they ended up in a space occupied by a workbench and a few stools.

Conor shoved the stools under the counter, turned toward Max and finally stopped moving. "I want you." He gripped Max's shirt and pulled until their lips mashed together in a bruising kiss. Max slid his hands under Conor's sweater, and the man seemed to melt a little, pressing his body even closer.

It might have been the general state of the greenhouse or maybe the effect of Conor's kiss, but the heat was getting to Max. He was intent on kissing Conor, but he wanted that sweater off, and somehow he managed it.

Conor's chest was hairless and hard and the ridges of his abs stood out enough for Max to trace. He leaned down to circle one tight nipple with his tongue and realized that his own shirt was gone.

"God, you're hot," Conor whispered as he reached for Max's belt. Max stood up straight and popped open Conor's button. They kissed and fondled and rubbed but still their pants stayed on. Conor tugged. "Off. Now."

"Wait." Max couldn't believe that was his voice talking. "Wait. We should...shouldn't we?" Even if he couldn't form complete sentences he wasn't a complete animal, now was he?

Conor groaned. "I know there's something odd and amazing going on here. I get that. I trust that you're going to explain it to me. But if you make me wait any longer, when I've been half-hard since this morning, I might kill you before you ever have a chance to tell me the details." He surprised Max by stepping back and kicking off his shoes. "Get naked. It's hot in here." Conor proceeded to remove the rest of his clothing.

Max had thought that a human would find the mate attraction frightening, but Conor was eager and in the end Max wasn't going to argue. Now, with every inch of pale skin that Conor revealed, Max's excitement climbed. He started to yank off his own pants, then remembered he had to untie his boots to get them off. "Damn it."

Conor chuckled at Max as he pulled his feet out of the boots and socks and the rest followed, but the laughter fled when Max growled, picked Conor up and sat him on the long wooden counter. God, the man was built, but he was just a bit smaller than Max, and Max liked that. He liked being the larger partner but hated feeling like he was overpowering the other man. He stood between Conor's legs and circled his arms around him. Conor's skin was almost cool in comparison to the heat of his lips as Max covered them with his own.

Not that there had been any doubt in Max's mind, but the way they fit together, the mutual excitement, the taste he couldn't get enough of, the connection that seemed to hum between them - all confirmed that this man was his true mate.

Max gasped as Conor's hard cock touched his belly and left a wet drop. Max reached between them and took both cocks in hand, rubbing them together, their pre-cum easing the way. Conor moaned into Max's mouth, the kisses not stopping, and pushed up into his hold.

"Not gonna last very long," Conor murmured.

"Me neither." Max felt Conor's hand join his on their pricks, sliding along, squeezing.

Their bodies rubbed together in all the right places as their hips rolled. Max buried his face in the crook of Conor's neck. He wanted so much to bite, to claim, to possess, but he settled for immersing himself in Conor's scent. Conor pressed his cheek against Max's head. Their breathing came in stutters and their muscles clenched with the final throes of orgasm overtaking them. Cum spurted between them, coating Conor's bare torso and sticking to Max's coarse hair.

"God," Max said as a few shudders made his back twitch. "That was amazing."

Conor nodded. "I've never been that out of control, ever."

"I liked it." Max kissed him before pulling away to look at the mess between them. "But, ugh."

Conor laughed. "There's a sink in here." He hopped down off the counter and padded to a corner of the room. Max heard water running and Conor reappeared with both wet and dry paper towels. He rubbed the wet ones over Max's stomach. "You are so gorgeous," he told Max as he caressed the indentations of his abs, and ran his hands up over his pecs. Max had never been one to preen, but right now he wanted to strut like a peacock.

He took the towels out of Conor's hands and returned the favor. They both dried off and got dressed.

"So now you can tell me what's happening," Conor said.

"Okay. Is it all right with you if we go somewhere else? It's like a hothouse in here."

Conor rolled his eyes, but he smiled - a good sign. "You're a funny guy." He walked toward the door that led back to the store. "Let's get our coats. Where do you want to go?"

Max followed him. "How about Bode & Son?"

"The little bar on East Street?"

"That's the one."

\*\*\*\*\*

Bode & Son Tavern was friendly and dark, with plenty of tables in quiet nooks. Max led the way to a spot near the back, tucked along a side wall. The wooden table had hosted many years of customers leaving etched names or initials on its surface. It was small enough that Max and Conor could sit across from each other yet knock heads if they leaned in.

They relaxed until their waitress delivered two winter ales and a bowl of peanuts. Conor unshelled a nut and popped it in his mouth. "Okay. Spill," he said, resting his elbows on the table.

Max fiddled with his mug. He was not the smoothest of talkers on his best day. Now, with something this important, he felt like he wouldn't be able to talk without sounding like an idiot. He took a sip of his drink. "Well. Um. How much do you know about Pishmuck? I mean, you've only lived here a month or so, right?"

"Yes. How did you know that?"

"I've been out of town for the last eight weeks. If you'd been here before that, I would have known."

Conor studied him, squinting his eyes. "I know a lot about Pishmuck. You're right that I haven't been here very long, but I did my research before I moved. And besides that, Thandi has been my best friend since the first week of college. I probably know more than a lot of people do about this place."

Max had forgotten that Thandi went out west to school. Like most of their kind, she'd come back and put roots down near the pack's settlement. It was rare for one of them to leave permanently. On the flip side, Pishmuck had lots of visitors, but seldom did anyone decide to stay. "Why did you move here?" It wasn't what Max intended to say, but he wasn't always good with detouring his thoughts from his mouth.

Conor took a drink of his ale. "After college, I got a decent job in interior design, and after that I got into set design. Then I sort of hopped around, relocating, thinking the next gig would be the one I'd be happy with, but instead everything just fell short. I couldn't get comfortable, you know?"

Max nodded. "Yeah, I'm familiar with that feeling." Boy, was he ever. Except he'd never had the urge to leave home to deal with it.

"One night when Thandi and I were talking on the phone, she mentioned that she was buying yet another storefront, and that she wanted to do the whole place up big time for the Christmas season." Conor picked a few peanuts out of the dish and started prying the shells off. "We started hashing out ideas - we do that a lot and usually get pretty enthused about it - then she got real quiet. I asked if I'd said something that bothered her. She asked me if I wanted to move out here and work with her. And just like that, it felt right. I hardly gave it a minute's thought; I just said 'yes' and here I am."

"Just like that?" Max asked.

Conor snapped his fingers. "Just like that." He brushed aside the mess of shells and leaned close to Max. "And I know where this is going. So let's not drag it out, okay?"

Max wasn't sure they were on the same page, but he was hopeful. "Okay." He pulled in closer to Conor. "If you know Pishmuck, and you know Thandi as well as you say, then you know there's a wolf pack here..."

Conor interrupted. "Wolf shifters. I know, Max. And you're one of them. And we're mates. True mates, right?"

Max blinked a few times. "Well, shit, just take the wind out of my sails."

“If I waited for your wind, we’d be here all night.” Conor looked at Max from under his long lashes and smiled just enough to make the dimple in his right cheek appear. “I can think of better things to do.”

“I can’t believe you’re so calm about this.” Max’s own heart was beating wildly, and he fought the urge to drag Conor from the bar and do him in the alley.

“Thandi and I talked a lot about it after I got here. She knows things.” He tapped his head. “She has a sense about people and relationships. She’d told me about the shifters a long time ago. When she asked me to move here, it wasn’t just because we’re friends. She saw us - you and me - together.” Conor reached out to lace his fingers through Max’s.

“She saw us?” He looked at their joined hands. This whole day had been made up of all sorts of surprises.

“Yes, she did. But that little bugger didn’t give me the whole scoop until I was moved in and designing displays for her store. And even then she didn’t tell me your name.”

“And when you saw me, when you were standing on the ladder...?”

“I knew. I’d never seen you until that moment and as soon as you came into the room I felt like angel wings were caressing me. And when we touched,” he squeezed Max’s hands, “the last pieces of the puzzle fell into place.”

Max freed one hand to grab his mug and took a gulp of his ale. “So why didn’t you say anything earlier?”

“Even though Thandi and I talked about it, and I sort of knew what might happen, that still wasn’t enough to make the reality any less surprising. That and I didn’t want to scare you.” He smirked, but looked like he was trying not to.

“Scare me?”

“Yeah. You looked a little freaked out.”

Max wanted to argue the point. He was a wolf, for crying out loud. But... “Finding your true mate is a big deal. It’s legendary and there aren’t a lot of wolves who get to have that. When we’re young, we dream about it, like humans dream about meeting their handsome prince and riding off on a white horse. When we get older, we come to terms with it being just a fantasy. So maybe I did freak. A little. But I’m over it.”

“Good.” Conor swallowed the rest of his drink. “Take me home.”

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Max was glad he’d managed to put up a few of his decorations and his tree, even if it was still bare. It made the place seem more homey and welcoming. It was more a cabin than a house, really, but it



provided all the creature comforts. After he tossed his coat on a hook and his boots on the mat, he threw a couple of logs in the fireplace, along with some kindling.

Conor looked around as he peeled off his coat and kicked off his boots. "This is nice. Very comfy." He turned to Max. "I feel right at home."

Max lit the fire and made sure it got a good start. "You look like you belong here." He stalked toward Conor, stopping when they stood chest to chest. He rested his hands on the other man's shoulders. "This is your home now too. We'll move your stuff tomorrow." Having Conor here in his territory made Max all kinds of possessive.

"Is it odd that hearing that doesn't bother me in the least?" Conor gripped Max's waist. He tilted his head up a bit to place little kisses on Max's jaw. In between kisses he said, "That I'm ready to follow you anywhere?"

"No," Max said. "It's perfect." He sniffed Conor's neck, taking in the scent he would never tire of. "You're perfect." He nipped lightly, and licked at Conor's skin, making his way under his chin to the other side of his neck. "I want to mark you."

Conor canted his head, opening himself to Max's ministrations. "Do it." His grip on Max tightened. "Make sure anyone who sees me will know I'm yours."

That was the absolutely best thing Conor could have said, and Max almost came in his pants right there. He looked into Conor's eyes, knew the truth of his words and felt a growl start deep in his chest. "Get naked. I'll be right back." He started to turn away, but stopped and said, "You know we don't need condoms, right?"

"Because of the wolfy thing?" Conor asked. Max nodded. "Good. I don't want anything between us."

Max kissed him, then ran to his bedroom and grabbed a blanket and the bottle of lube.

When he returned, Conor was just dropping his pants and underwear. Max spread the blanket over the rug in front of the fireplace. The tinsel strung across the mantle glittered in the firelight, and in front of that backdrop, Conor looked like an angel. When he dropped to his knees and opened Max's jeans, a feeling of rightness settled on Max, a sense that he and Conor were two halves that together made one whole. It both humbled and excited him.

Conor drew Max's jeans and underwear down, with long caresses to his thighs and calves, pulling socks and all off one leg and then the other. Max yanked his own shirt off and tossed it over his back. Conor ran his hands up Max's legs, from the tops of his feet, over his shins and knees, around the backs of his legs, and then grasped his leaking cock. He looked at Max with a hooded gaze, and slid his lips just over the tip.

Max's hands went to Conor's head, but his hair wasn't long enough to grab onto. Max let loose another growl. "I want you to grow your hair." With every minute, every motion, every touch, Max felt his dominance assert itself. "I want to be able to yank on it, pull you away or hold you still while I fuck your mouth."

Conor nodded and shuddered, reached for his own cock.

"Don't touch that. It's mine. Put your hands on my hips."

A moan from Conor vibrated around him, telling Max how much Conor liked that idea, as did the increased sucking and licking. Conor's tongue circled and stroked as he moved up and down. Max had to pull away; he had other plans for his cock. Even though he let out a frustrated sound, Conor stayed on his knees. Max looked down at him, and felt the wolf rising, pleased with their mate. They so very much wanted to throw him down, to brutally claim him.

Max fought against the animal instinct. Conor was his mate, but he was human and while Max wanted to be rough, he didn't want to truly hurt him. A few deep breaths brought his control back and he was able to drop to his knees in front of Conor, so they were face to face. He loved the other man's puffy lips, the red in his cheeks, and the way his blue eyes were mostly black.

"You like submitting." Max grasped Conor's prick and rubbed his thumb over the slit, spreading the pre-cum on the head. With his other hand he tweaked a nipple, squeezing it then tracing gentle circles around it.

Conor arched into his touch. "Yes." It came out on a breath. "To you. I haven't been...Ah!" He bucked when Max bent down and bit the other nipple. "Haven't been inclined before."

Max let go of Conor's cock and reached lower to play with his balls. He bit at Conor's ear. "I want to fuck you."

"God, yes."

"And mark you."

"Please. I want you to."

Max leaned away. "Turn around." He slapped Conor's ass to help him along, then pushed down between his shoulder blades so he ended up ass high, head low. He ran his hands over Conor's smooth butt, squeezed his cheeks and pressed his thumbs in toward the little hole. "I could eat you up." He licked up and down, over the pucker and the crease, wanting all those little nerve endings to be alive and jumping when he went in.

Conor trembled. "I, fuck, no one's..." He finished with a guttural noise that made perfect sense to Max. He grasped the blanket in his fists, as if to keep from reaching back, like he didn't know if he wanted to push away or push into Max's sweet torture.

“Then I’ll make sure you get that a lot. My lips on your ass, my tongue opening you.” He forced the tip of his tongue into the little pucker, making Conor gasp and try to twist away. He tightened his grip. “Maybe I’ll tie you down and do it until you scream and beg me to fuck you.” He dragged his tongue in a circle around the hole.

“Jesus,” Conor whispered.

Reaching out, Max found the lube, popped the top and squirted a good amount over Conor’s hole. He smiled as Conor shook when the cool gel hit him. Max inserted two fingers, twisting them back and forth as he pushed into Conor’s channel. “You’re so hot, so tight for me.” Twisting, crooking his fingers, moving them in and almost out. He knew he was hitting the little hot button enough to drive Conor crazy. “I can’t wait much longer.”

Conor made noises that were a cross between whimpering and groaning but were definitely affirmative, with his ass pressing back towards Max.

Max withdrew his fingers, spread lube on his cock, and set the tip at Conor’s entrance. He held tight to Conor’s hips to keep him from impaling himself and ignored Conor’s frustrated moans. Seeing that ass ready and willing to accept him, being in that moment of almost-there, savoring the feel of the hard body under his hands, knowing that this man belonged to him...Max experienced a joy he’d never felt before. With his wolf rising, infusing his power and magic into Max’s spirit, Max lifted his head and howled at the same time as he sank his cock all the way into Conor.

Somewhere in the distance, other joyful howls joined in, the pack already celebrating, urging on the mating pair.

Max pulled out and plunged in again, and Conor thrust back to meet him, shouting. “Yes! So good!” Conor lifted his upper body, braced his hands on the floor and turned his head as far as he could to look at Max with wild eyes. His breathing was ragged. “Harder. Fuck me harder.” He panted. “Need to feel every bit of you.”

Hearing his mate sound so feral aroused Max’s wolf even more; he pounded savagely into Conor, their bond a living thing swirling around and between and in them. Max’s climax built, it burned like fire through him. He pulled Conor up and wrapped a hand around his cock. Conor roared, his hot cum flowing over Max’s fingers. Max pushed up into Conor as he came, letting his own release flood into his mate. Sure and swift, he bit Conor, at the base of his neck where it met his shoulder. The taste of blood, hot and sweet on his tongue, brought a second orgasm to Max, and with that he heard his wolf howling, claiming, calling to Conor’s spirit. The heady aroma of their mating filled the air and they took breaths deep enough to slow their raging heartbeats.

Max nuzzled in and licked the wound he'd left, and when Conor turned toward him they shared a kiss full of magic and power and grace. Max held him until exhaustion settled in. They pulled apart long enough to lie down on the blanket.

"That was incredible," Conor said. "Totally beyond anything I could have imagined." He curled himself against Max. "Is it always going to be like that?"

"I don't think so. The first time is important and intense. I'm not sure we'd survive if it was like that every time." Max stroked his fingers along Conor's arm. "Let's take a nap and then we can go to bed and try again. See what happens."

He felt Conor smile against his chest. "I like how you think."

In time, Max would coax Conor's wolf from his deep and dormant state. Their bond would only grow stronger. It was written in the wind.

**THE END**

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*Back to Normal*

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## THE GUTTERSDIPE'S GIFT by Selah March

*Dear Santa,*

*This pretty little, vampy, goth boy has been haunting me for over a year and I'd really like to hear his story. He looks like he's just been rode hard or maybe is waiting to be rode hard or perhaps, just finished his last human meal and is enjoying a nice glass of his dead mate's blood. Oh Santa-baby, I know he doesn't look too Christmasy but can you help me put the poor baby to rest (at least in my head)?*

\*\*\*\*\*

*24 December 1843*


*London, England*

Boredom had always brought out the devil in Tristan.

In his defense, Gabriel had promised him a Christmas present, which made patience a special challenge. Gabriel always came up with the *best* presents. For example, on the anniversary of their first meeting, Gabriel had blindfolded Tristan and carried him like a sack over his shoulder to the cellar. There he'd bound Tristan hand and foot to an empty wine rack and toyed with him for hours, bringing him to the depths of agony and the heights of ecstasy, often in the space of a few scant moments.

Tristan remembered the dozens and dozens of candles burning on the floor around him and how they'd made him sweat, and how the salt had made the welts from Gabriel's riding crop burn and tingle. He remembered how Gabriel's mouth had felt on each little wound, sucking up the droplets of blood as if they were the finest claret.

Then, when he was spent and hanging limp from the rack, he'd felt the cool touch of Gabriel's fingers at the back of his neck, and the slither of something metallic against his skin. When Gabriel removed the blindfold, Tristan saw the pendant dangling from his own throat. Wrought in finest silver, its intricate design was easily the most beautiful thing Tristan had ever seen. When he'd said as much to Gabriel, his lover had kissed him on the mouth for the very first time. Tristan recalled Gabriel's sudden, fierce passion – the unholy blue glow of his eyes, the candlelight glinting off his canines as they descended in all their deadly glory. Now he shivered with remembered pleasure, and stretched his naked body in its cocoon of silken sheets.



A pale naked man with long black hair and thick kohl eyeliner lays sprawled across a bed with white sheets. There is a silver goblet turned on its side by his hand and a bit of red liquid drips from the corner of his mouth.

Tristan had an idea that tonight's gift would be even better. Christmas seemed to mean a great deal to Gabriel. As far as Tristan was concerned, it was just another excellent occasion to beg stray coins from the occasional drunkard stumbling home from making merry...and perhaps, if he were lucky, to roll that same drunkard in the nearest alley for every farthing in his purse. But Gabriel – who'd been alive when unchurched peasants had spent the winter solstice huddled in their huts, burning the Yule log to frighten away evil spirits – insisted Christmas was the highlight of each and every year.

Yes, Gabriel's gift to Tristan was sure to be spectacular. But now Tristan was alone. Gabriel had promised to return by midnight, but the clock in the foyer had already struck eleven. The big, elegant house on Regent Street was dark, and though the roaring blaze in the fireplace kept off the chill, Tristan had lost patience with waiting.

The dregs of crimson at the bottom of his wine goblet had long since clotted and gone cold. Now Tristan used them as finger-paints to decorate the blank stretch of wall above the carved mahogany headboard. If he'd known how to write, he would've created for his lover and master a message of holiday cheer. As it was, he could only sketch a rough likeness of a holly bush, its sharp leaves and bright berries fairly bursting with poisonous glee.

When he'd finished, he licked at his fingertips and settled back into his nest of silk, not at all careful of where he smeared the evidence of his artistry. After all, if Gabriel hadn't wanted him to make a mess, he shouldn't have left him alone so long.

He awoke to the sound of the clock chiming twelve, his every instinct aroused and on edge. Gabriel was near. On the street, by the stair, in the corridor?

Tristan slipped naked from the bed, padded across the icy floor to the window, and parted the draperies. Snow swirled past the glass, obscuring the view. The back of his neck and the tips of his fingers tingled with presentiment. A moment later, the front door slammed.

He turned to find that Gabriel had dispensed with the stairs entirely and simply materialized in the bedroom doorway. "Merry Christmas, guttersnipe."

Tristan knew the name was meant to be affectionate, and wished he had some term of endearment for his lover, as well. But Gabriel was only Gabriel – blue-eyed, fair-haired, tall and strong as the archangel for which he'd been named more than a millennium ago. He'd always be just Gabriel. No other name would ever suit.

The smile of greeting on Gabriel's face brightened, then dissolved into a frown as he caught sight of Tristan's crude artwork on the wall above the bed.

"Don't look like that," Tristan whined, attempting to be adorable and fetching in his nakedness. "It's meant to be jolly, you know."

"Yes, I'm sure Mrs. Gimble will think it a great jest."

"So I'll help her scrub it off."

"And if it stains?"

Tristan shrugged. "A bucket of whitewash and a stiff brush. The old girl's used to such work by now, ain't she?"

He knew he'd overstepped his bounds when Gabriel stalked toward him. The air parted around his master's bulk like water, every reverberation sinking into Tristan's bones to wake a thudding pulse of need beneath his skin. He didn't hesitate, but fell to his knees on the cold, hard floor like a marionette with clipped strings. When Gabriel stopped inches before him, Tristan wrapped his arms about his master's hips and buried his face in the wool-clad vee of his tree-like thighs. The musky, purely masculine scent filled his senses, setting his body alight with simmering lust.

When he felt the moment for apology had passed, he lifted his face and slurred, "You promised presents."

"Indeed."

Gabriel disengaged himself from Tristan's embrace and shed his greatcoat. From one of its many deep pockets he produced a bottle made of opaque brown glass. This, Tristan knew, contained their breakfast. He didn't bother to ask where Gabriel had procured it, knowing full well his master would not deign to answer, and might withhold the sustenance in punishment for the rudeness of the question. Still, he couldn't help but wonder...stable boy? Parlor maid? Common streetwalker, or virgin daughter of a duke? Gabriel was always far too picky in his choice of prey.

After placing the bottle on the mantel to warm, Gabriel reached into his pocket again. Tristan trembled with a combination of anticipation and chill, gooseflesh crawling over his exposed skin. When Gabriel tossed him a package wound in a length of brown paper and tied with a bit of twine, he caught it easily and made quick work of the wrappings.

"A book?" Outrage and disappointment made him incautious in his tone. "You brought me a bleedin' *book*?"

Gabriel seemed more amused than surprised at his reaction. "Not just any book."

Tristan tried to control his sneer. "And what do you expect me to do with it? Burn it for fuel?"

"I expect you to read it, eventually." Gabriel stripped down to his trousers and linens as he spoke. "For now, I shall read, and you shall listen. Attentively." His tone took an unmistakable note of command. "*Very* attentively."

"Fat lot of good *that* does me," Tristan muttered. He rose and made a show of dusting off his knees.

Gabriel smiled, and for all his angelic looks, that smile was as dark and wicked a thing as Tristan had ever seen—and in his nineteen years growing up on the streets of Whitechapel, Tristan had seen many a dark and wicked thing. "Eternity is a long time to remain pig-ignorant. Assuming you wish to remain here as my companion, of course."

Gabriel had made this kind of veiled threat before, and though Tristan was fairly certain he didn't mean it, the idea of being shunted aside for someone more educated and worldly never failed to raise a desperate kind of panic. Instinctively, he sidled up to Gabriel and batted his eyes.

"I was merely 'opin' for somethin' a bit less edifyin'," he said, "and a bit more shiny, if you know what I mean." To underline his meaning, he reached down to trace the outline of the pendant on his own chest with the tip of his finger.

Gabriel stared at him with a gaze so intent Tristan was sure his master could see to the very marrow of his bones. "What a greedy little whore you are."

"So you keep tellin' me."

With a disapproving grunt, Gabriel turned away, finished disrobing, and went to stand before the fire. The play of muscles in his back and along the amazing breadth of his shoulders was so transfixing that Tristan nearly missed his next words.

"Would you like to hear something about the individual who provided your Christmas morning repast?"

Tristan's mood – which had begun to go sour and sulky – improved instantly. Gabriel rarely spoke of his hunts. He tossed the book on the bedside table without a second glance. "Oh, do tell."

Turning his head, Gabriel gifted him with a sardonic look. "A wealthy young gentlemen. I've been stalking him for some days," he began. "He led me a merry chase, but he was mine in the end."

"How'd you choose 'im?"

Gabriel shrugged. "I first saw him in his tailor's shop, dickering over the price of a suit of clothes. He spoke with such arrogance, such overweening and undeserved pride in himself that I couldn't help but despise him on sight. So I made inquiries and continued to watch him."

"And what did you find out?"

"That he was a shallow, selfish young man who used those around him to his own ends. A man whose family and friends will no doubt mourn his loss for the span of two minutes – certainly no more, and quite possibly less."



Tristan winced. A blind man could see where the conversation was headed. "Gabriel—" "What did I tell you when I brought you into my household, Tristan?"

Tristan sighed. "You told me I could stay if I labored to *improve* myself. And I 'ave, you know. I 'aven't picked a pocket in weeks."

Gabriel turned at last from his contemplation of the flames. "My expectations for you are somewhat loftier than simply avoiding petty theft."

"I know. You want me to be a bleedin' gentleman, but I keep tellin' you that I ain't got it in me." Tristan spread his hands before him, well aware of the picture he made in the golden light from the fire, with his skin as white as the falling snow and his hair streaming black as midnight over his shoulders. "Why won't you take me as I am?"

"Because you could be so much more."

"Says you."

"Yes," Gabriel said, his face and tone grown hard and unforgiving. "I do say it. And now I say turn 'round and grasp the bedpost, Tristan. 'Tis time for making merry."

Before he could obey, Tristan found himself whirled about and shoved against the foot of the bed. An instant later, he felt the hot prod of an erect cock at the back of his thigh. The pressure was a promise that made Tristan's inner muscles twinge with the memory of invasion.

Though Tristan had been working the streets of London for years before Gabriel found him, and had taken many a gentleman's cock down his throat and up his arse, Gabriel had only fucked him once during the long months of their acquaintance. Until recently, Tristan had believed that this was because Gabriel was hung like a royal stallion and feared harming his newest conquest. But recently, he'd come to understand that Gabriel took fucking seriously – much like the took the celebration of Christmas – and didn't indulge in it as sport.

But now he was angry, and Tristan couldn't help feeling more than a little trepidation at the prospect of a dry bugging.

"Frightened, guttersnipe?"

The smarmy note of challenge in Gabriel's voice transformed his words into a taunt that made Tristan's contrary cock twitch with growing interest. Ever defiant, even in abject submission, he put on a practiced simper like a virgin miss from a badly executed street performance. "Do your worst, blackguard."

Gabriel's answering chuckle was nearly as dark and wicked as his smile. He pressed forward. Tristan did his best not to clench against the intrusion. Then the scent of almond oil, sweet and pungent, rose in the air around him. He sighed with relief.

Small mercies were undoubtedly all he could expect at this point, and probably more than he deserved.

He relaxed by fractions as the smooth glide of Gabriel's cock filled him. He canted his hips backward, his nerves lit by delicious friction that countered the aching burn of his inner muscles. Squeezing the bedpost as if he meant to throttle the life from it, he widened his stance and dropped his head forward in surrender. Of all the many things he didn't understand about Gabriel, this – this unerring ability to take him apart from the inside out – was the greatest mystery. There had been so many men before Gabriel, yet only Gabriel could undo him and leave him pleading for more.

Gabriel gave no quarter. Within a few moments, he was pounding Tristan's arse as if it had insulted the queen, his hands grasping Tristan's hips and lifting him to his toes in search of the perfect angle of entry. When he found it – evidenced by Tristan's hoarse cry of pleasure – he slowed to a more reasonable, rocking gait.

Tristan dug his blunt fingernails into the wood of the bedpost. The rising tension in his belly and balls coupled with the quivery weakness in his legs told him he wouldn't last long under the onslaught of sensation. He strained toward the approaching climax, knowing its intensity would leave him spent and exhausted in the happiest, most satisfying way.

"No," Gabriel whispered, little more than a puff of hot air against Tristan's cheek. "Deny yourself."

Tristan keened, his hips bucking forward in search of release.

"Not because you fear I'll throw you out on the street if you disobey," Gabriel continued, "but because you want to. For me."

Tristan's breath hitched in his chest. Sparks of pure delight snapped outward from his center, tightening and twisting his muscles as he sought to stave off the inevitable. The edge of the precipice rushed toward him...closer...closer...

He yanked himself back with a choking cry. As he writhed in delirious, frustrated agony, his vision blurred and faded to an opaque gray shot through with threads of crimson. A endless moment later, he heard Gabriel speak in a tone that lapped at his skin like the tongue of a tabby-cat.

"Well done. Now beg for me."

Tristan heard a voice raised in a babbling, incoherent stream of nonsense and realized it was his own. Too far gone for shame, his body a perfect knot of throbbing need, he howled his pleas to the faraway sky.

Then Gabriel reached forward and closed his hand around Tristan's cock, and it could be nothing but finished. Tristan's body closed down tightly as he came, and he lost himself in the raw, flaying pleasure that bordered so closely on pain as it be indistinguishable. With a wordless grunt of completion, Gabriel thrust into him once more, spearing him hard. Tristan sobbed as a final, violent burst of sensation tore through him. His knees buckled and he fell forward over the foot of the bed.

Waves of sleepy satisfaction broke over him. Even when Gabriel landed a sharp smack on his arse and left him slumped there like a used rag, he couldn't bring himself to respond with anything more defiant than a whimper.

"Interesting," Gabriel purred from somewhere behind him. "Clearly, I've been taking the wrong tack. From now on I shall simply fuck you into docility."

Tristan bestirred himself with a half-hearted sneer. "Never claimed to be good for much else."

"You're mistaken." Gabriel loomed over him, backlit by the blaze on the hearth. "As I've said repeatedly, I sincerely believe you could become more than you are, Tristan."

"Right. A proper gentleman, with a proper gentleman's accent, and a proper gentleman's education."

Gabriel shrugged. "Accent and education are merely surface considerations that would allow you to accompany me on my travels. If forced to choose, I'd rather see you cultivate your soul."

In the short, brutal course of his existence, no one had ever so much as suggested Tristan even possessed such a thing, much less that he might be able to improve it. With some effort, he struggled to a sitting position, his legs hanging over the footboard, his bare feet dangling above the floor. "My soul, eh? You're so sure I 'ave one?"

Gabriel snorted – a vulgar sound not in keeping with his customary manner. "Do you truly suppose a creature could live so long as I have and not develop the ability to read another's worth?" He sighed and shook his head. "Never mind. Come to bed, Tristan."

"I thought you was gonna read the book?"

Gabriel hesitated, his surprise obvious. "You're sure?"

"It's my Christmas gift, ain't it?" Tristan wriggled and scooted his way to the head of the bed, wincing at the leftover traces of discomfort in his arse, but happy enough to have caught Gabriel at a slight disadvantage.

“What if I told you I did have another gift for you – something shiny and expensive – but I gave it to a little beggar on a street in Whitechapel because his great, dark eyes reminded me of yours?”

Tristan tried to sulk, but found he was too contented for disappointment. “I’d say good on ’im for knowin’ ’ow to use ’is looks to ’is advantage.”

Gabriel stared him. He shook his great head slowly, back and forth. “You never cease to astound me.”

Tristan reached for the book. It didn’t appear to be very long. Bound in red cloth, with gilt-edged pages, its title was embossed on the cover: *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens.

“Where’d you buy it?”

Gabriel laughed, low and rumbling. “As it happens, the shops were sold out, so I obtained it from the author himself. He was reluctant to part with one of his few personal copies, but I was...persuasive.”

“Gabriel, you didn’t—”

“Oh, certainly not. Someday, Mr. Dickens will be counted as one of England’s great literary treasures, and that book will be worth its weight in gold.”

“Yeah?” The thought of handful of gold made Tristan happy. “What’s it about, then?”

“I understand it’s about another selfish man, spoiled and greedy and cold, who does not keep Christmas in his heart.”

Tristan offered a grin, which he did his best to render in as cheeky a manner as possible.

“Blighter sounds a right bastard. I *do* ’ope he gets his comeuppance.”

“Fear not, guttersnipe. I suspect he does.”

They settled into the nest of silk sheets, and as the wind roared, and the snow swirled, and the fire crackled and spat on the other side of the room, Gabriel began to read.

“Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it: and Scrooge’s name was good upon ’Change, for anything he chose to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail...”

## **THE END**

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## A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE by Sarah Madison

*Dear Santa,*

*In case you missed it, this year was the year of the cat. Ooh Tiger Woods got lots of tail. It can't really be all his fault, who could turn down a rough and tumble play with a Tiger? For Christmas this year, tell your elves to give their wood creations to others, for I just want a Tiger with Wood of his own. My tiger is looking for his mate. Can you please help me Santa?*

\*\*\*\*\*

The tiger padded slowly through the snow-shrouded forest. There was no need for stealth, not yet anyway. A small flock of crows flew upward into the trees with a squawking, angry protest, and the tiger paused, testing the air. His nostrils flared as he took in the scents around him: the rich, loamy smell of dead leaves and earth beneath the light covering of snow, the crisp promise of more snow to come on the wind from the west. When the wind shifted, he could smell wood smoke and the scent of a small group of deer moving along the top of the ridge.

He lifted his head in that direction, tracking the slight movement of brown bodies against brown foliage along the hillside. The deer tracked single file in a stately manner—they hadn't scented him yet. He eyed the distance, knowing it was too far. Tigers were built for stealth, not speed.

Besides, he had different prey in mind.

He turned back to the track he was following, placing each massive paw carefully along the trail as he moved. When he reached the clearing, he paused again.

Below him was a small pond, frozen over now and dusted with snow. The air was still with that hushed expectation that precedes more snowfall, and the skies were leaden and gray. Behind him, large paw prints clearly marked the course of his passage, showing up as dark patches of mud where the weight of his body churned up the thin layer of snow. That was all right, too. It would snow again soon and obliterate any signs that he'd been there.

He was patient. He could wait.

He made his way down the small slope to the pond and chose his hiding place with care.

\*\*\*

Alex was angry. Angry with Tate, but more angry with himself. He seldom got angry, so it pissed him off even further. Which lead him back to thinking this was all Tate's fault.



After stewing in the hours since Tate stormed out, saying he needed 'some air', Alex decided that he, too, needed to clear his head. He slipped on the navy wool coat he'd been using since the weather turned colder and wrapped his dark muffler around his neck. Even though he could hear Tate's voice in his head, telling him he'd stay warmer if he wore a hat, Alex chose to remain bareheaded. Unless it was a fedora, hats made him crazy and, unfortunately, fedoras were no longer in style.

That was a shame, he thought. Everyone looked good in a fedora.

Alex stepped out onto the back porch and paused to retrieve leather gloves from his pockets and put them on. It had been snowing for the last several hours now; this, on top of last night's snow, left everything looking deceptively clean and pristine. He debated for a moment as to which direction to take and then decided to head into the woods toward the pond.

The image of Tate, his bright, auburn hair covered with a sexy, Indiana Jones style fedora, flashed into his mind. It would so work on Tate, who was the outdoors type anyway. While Alex enjoyed the occasional casual walk in the woods, Tate was always trying to get him to go rock-climbing, spelunking, or some equally athletic pursuit. Thank goodness, Tate also liked hanging around the fireplace in the evenings, reading a book or listening to music. Otherwise, Alex might start to wonder what the two of them had in common.

Case in point: the disagreement this morning.

"What do you mean, you don't do Christmas?" Tate had been adorably incredulous. Alex had been both irritated and charmed at the same time. The very fact that Tate treated him as just another person was part of his attraction, Alex was sure.

"I'm a vampire, remember? According to most religions, that makes me the bad guy. Sort of the antithesis of Christmas, don't you think?"

"I'm guessing this means you don't celebrate Hanukkah instead?" Tate, as usual, had been quick to turn things into a joke.

Alex hadn't been in the mood. Sometimes, Tate's relentless cheerfulness got on his nerves.

Tate had been persistent, however. "You mean to tell me there's some kind of vampire ban on celebrating holidays?"

He hadn't been willing to accept Alex's "it's just not us" as an answer.

"Come on," he'd wheedled. "Holidays aren't just about religious observances, you know. Or giving gifts, or stuffing yourself silly with food. It's about getting together with your family and

friends and showing them how much you care about them. Let's throw a party. We can invite Nick and his pack. Hell, we can even invite Julie."

Alex had blinked at that. Peter's sister had made herself somewhat scarce, ever since the big showdown with Alex's ex-lover Victor a few months ago. Alex had assumed that Julie had gone back to the suburbs to pretend that her brother wasn't really a werewolf and that he didn't associate with vampires either.

"Why don't I dress up as Santa as well? That makes about as much sense."

"Wrong holiday special." Tate's comeback, as always, had been swift. "You're Scrooge through and through."

That had stung a bit, he had to admit as he walked deeper into the woods.

With his hands shoved into his pockets and his shoulders hunched against the wind, Alex crossed the border of the yard into the woods. A small deer path was distinguishable through the trees and he followed it, knowing it would eventually lead him to the pond. The air around him seemed muted with the falling snow. He felt the cold dampness on his face and thought it unfair that he, among all his friends, was the only one who felt the cold.

His words to Tate came back to him. The conversation had ended abruptly with Tate leaving the house—not so much as in a huff, but definitely not pleased with Alex. He'd been left wondering if they'd had their first fight.

The thought depressed him. Though they hadn't known each other all that long, it was amazing how important Tate had become to Alex. He couldn't imagine a day in which Tate didn't drop by at some point, and he'd gone from being relieved that Tate wanted to maintain separate living arrangements to being bored and lonely whenever Tate was off doing his own thing.

How had Tate managed to worm his way under Alex's skin when no one else had done so in centuries of living?

He'd reached the pond almost without being aware of it, so deep was he in his own thoughts. He looked down the slope toward the water. It had a little dock and a bench for fishing. He and Tate had talked about restocking it in the spring. He couldn't see the appeal of fishing himself, but when Tate spoke of it, something about it made him want to share that experience with Tate. It certainly seemed to entail less effort than rock climbing, that was for sure.

He paused for a moment to look up at the dull, pewter-colored sky. Snowflakes continued to drift down lazily, but no further accumulation had been predicted. Below him, the surface of the



pond had been blown clean of most of the snow. His breath plumed in a vapor before him and an unaccustomed sense of peace came over him.

What difference did it make if Tate wanted to celebrate the holidays anyway? It was no skin off his nose either way. Maybe he *<I>was</I>* just being a Scrooge.

Having achieved what he'd come out for in the first place, he debated returning to the house, but decided that since he'd come this far, he might as well go down to the pond. He carefully made his way down the slope, conscious that his shoes weren't really the best for this sort of activity; if he wanted to keep up with Tate, he might need to invest in some hiking boots. *<i>One thing at a time</i>*, he thought to himself with a smile.

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The tiger lifted his head at the sound of the approach of his prey. He shifted his weight slightly, so as to bunch his feet up underneath him, his muscles ready at long last to hurl himself forward at his target. His tail flicked at the tip as his prey came into sight.

*<I>Wait for it. Wait for it</I>*.

\*\*\*

Alex's superior sense of hearing alerted him at the last second to the sibilant sound of movement off to his left. He turned his head in time to see the unbelievable: a full-grown Siberian tiger suddenly lifted itself up from the snow-covered foliage surrounding it. Its dense fur, coated with a light layer of snow, spoke of how long it had lain in wait. The large cat exploded out of the underbrush with frightening speed; Alex had just a second in which to turn and throw one arm in front of his face before the big cat ploughed into him, pinning him to the ground.

Eight hundred pounds of jungle cat flattened him into the snow-covered earth. Had he been human and not vampire, ribs would have broken. As it was, the tiger settled on top of him and he was having trouble breathing.

He lifted his head from where it rested on his forearm and glanced to the side at the enormous paw that had his shoulder pinned to the ground. Long claws extended, sinking into the thick wool of his coat and all the way through to his skin. At the back of his neck, he could feel the warm breath of the tiger as it nosed under his muffler, seeking his flesh. He could hear the soft chuffing sound as he felt the test bite of the tiger on his shoulder. The massive hindquarters thrust up against him suddenly, and he felt the claws dig in reflexively at his shoulders.

There weren't many things that could kill a vampire, but Alex hadn't been living the Life and was more vulnerable than most. The knowledge that he could die here, under the tiger's paws, caused

the adrenaline to pump through his body. Unbelievably, he felt both excited and in fear of his life—he was even starting to get hard. He couldn't remember the last time he felt so alive.

Just when breathing was becoming a bit of an issue, the tiger got to its feet and moved off him. Cautiously, Alex lifted his head and looked around for the big cat. Seeing that it stood a few feet away from him, Alex rolled over onto his back and let out his breath with a rush.

The tiger watched him, tail flicking slowly.

Alex got to his feet slowly, brushing off leaf litter and snow, inspecting his coat before speaking to the tiger.

"If you've ruined another coat," he warned, "I will turn you into a hearth-rug."

The tiger yawned widely, showing its long fangs.

"Oh, very impressed, I'm sure." Alex straightened his coat and ran a gloved hand through his hair. "Can we go home now?"

For an answer, the tiger began to trot off toward the house. Grumbling under his breath, Alex followed.

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There was no sign of the tiger when Alex mounted the back porch stairs. There were giant paw prints on the porch where the snow had blown in, but all was silent when he opened the screen door and entered the house.

Alex removed his muffler and gloves, and hung his coat up in the hall closet. In the living room, a fire glowed in the hearth, the bright orange flames just starting to lick at the edges of the logs. An open bottle of merlot sat on the side table, along with two wine glasses.

Amused, Alex crossed over to the wine, lifting a glass and taking a sip. "I'm willing to hear what you have to say," he said aloud to the empty room. "You don't have to butter me up."

"Pity." Tate's voice came from behind him. "I like buttering you up."

Alex turned with a smile on his face, only to let his mouth fall open at the sight of Tate standing there.

Tate had made good use of his time in getting back to the house first. Not only had he lit the fire and decanted the wine, but he'd also removed his wet clothing. He was still wearing the blue and black flannel shirt from that morning, but that was *all* he was wearing.

The soft flannel shirt hung open to reveal Tate's toned chest and abdomen, lightly dusted with reddish hair, and the rolled up sleeves showed off Tate's muscular forearms. Alex was immediately captivated by the sight of Tate's strong thighs, pale skin, and the way his cock jutted forward from a thatch of rusty-brown hair.

"Butter," Alex said decisively, "goes with everything."

Tate laughed. "I just can't carry off seductive, can I?"

"No, no!" Alex took a hasty swallow of the wine and set it down. "Seduce me, I beg you."

Tate got a speculative look in his eye and took a step closer. "Really?" he asked.

Alex nodded. "You know that moment in the woods? When you had me pinned and you could have killed me at any moment? That was... hot."

Tate moved forward another stealthy step. The gaze he fixed on Alex was that of a predator. Alex could feel the tension simmering in the air between them, and his cock shifted and thrummed in his jeans.

"Yeah," Alex breathed, never taking his eyes off Tate. "The whole time you had me pinned down, I knew you could kill me if you wanted. At the same time, I was incredibly turned on. I could feel your breath on my neck. I wanted to feel your teeth on my skin."

Tate closed the remaining distance between them with purpose, his cock bouncing a little with every step. He took Alex by either side of his face and kissed him hard, the coarse hairs of his weekend beard rasping against Alex's skin. "Suck me," he demanded with a smile against Alex's lips.

"I've got a better idea." Alex quickly unzipped his jeans and freed his cock, grateful for the decision not to wear any briefs this morning. Weekends with Tate seemed to make him think in these terms.

He began working his cock, bringing it to full hardness, as Tate dropped his head to watch. They were standing so close now that the heads of their cocks could brush each other, and Alex deliberately brought them into contact.

Taking hold of Tate's cock in his left hand, he rubbed their heads together, mingling precome until the two cockheads were slick with it. Then he began pushing his foreskin forward until he had covered the head of Tate's cock as well.

Docking was one of his favorite things to do with Tate. He'd fantasized about before they'd ever started sleeping together. Tate's cock slide alongside his own, up under his foreskin, and he clasped the two together and began to jack them off simultaneously.

Tate's hands gripped his shoulders. Alex could make out the sheen of sweat that had appeared on his chest, and he marveled with inner smugness at the way Tate half-closed his eyes and let his mouth drop open. It was too good an invitation to resist.

Alex leaned in, claiming Tate's mouth and his generous, full lips, even as he continued to maintain the rhythm between them. The slip of tongues against each other was no different from

the slide of their cocks together. Alex swallowed Tate's moan as he kept working the connection between them. He began to thrust with his pelvis, adding a heartfelt groan as he felt the mounting arc of pleasure.

Tate broke the kiss first, fingers digging into Alex's sweater as though he were still the tiger, his head tipping back and the muscles on his neck cording as he came. Warm fluid surrounded Alex's cock and he felt the pulsing tremors as Tate emptied himself into his foreskin. It was all he could do to keep standing, to keep from sinking his teeth into Tate's neck. His own orgasm was close and yet seemed just out of reach.

Tate gave him a sleepy-lidded smile and leaned into his shoulder, turning his nose into Alex's neck. Without warning, he bit down hard.

The flash of pleasure-pain arched through Alex and straight to his cock. His spine went rigid as he tensed, his ass muscles clenching as he shuddered and came.

They held each other up afterward.

"Damn," Tate breathed into his ear at last. "You always know how to get to me."

"What about you?" Alex gave a breathless laugh. "I thought biting was my line."

"Can't let you have all the fun." He made a noise of regret when Alex released his grip on the two of them and they slipped apart.

"You can bite me any time," Alex said, watching as Tate's pupils dilated at his words and feeling the corresponding twitch in his cock.

They continued to provide each other support. Tate rested his hand on Alex's hips while Alex rested his forearms on Tate's shoulders.

"So, when do you want to hold this party?" Alex asked.

Tate lifted his head in surprise. "Really? You want to go through with it? Alex, you won't regret it, I promise."

"Don't get your hopes up too high," Alex warned, as he nuzzled the side of Tate's neck and smelled the blood thrumming there, just underneath the skin. "This is just round one of negotiations. Give me an hour or two to recover and we can discuss the guest list."

Tate gave a soft laugh, not unlike his tiger's chuff. He pulled Alex in for a kiss. "Promises, promises," he said with a smile.

**FIN**

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## HOLIDAY BONUS by Stephani Hecht

*dear santa,*

*this year i'was a very good girl .Yesterday , i surprised this man in a study and i would like to know: what happened? It's an employee or the boss?  
plaese santa answer me.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Eli glanced up at the clock and silently counted off the minutes left until his shift ended. His hands balled up into fists, the move almost unconscious as he shifted in his plush office chair. The laptop in front of him let out a low hum as the fan kicked on, but he mostly ignored it. Who could think of something as mundane as numbers and stock reports on a day like today?


The distraction wasn't due to the fact that it was Christmas Eve. Nor did it have anything to do with the threat of a heavy snowstorm that was due to blow in at any moment. While those two things had the potential to be annoying at best, they didn't account for his nerves and near panic. No, it had everything to do with the man in the next office. The hottest, sexiest son of a bitch in Ohio, if not the entire United States.

On its own accord, Eli's gaze drifted to the closed door that separated their desks. Since his boss was well...the boss, he had one of those plaques on his door that had his name engraved on it. He swallowed hard as his lips silently formed said name, Blake Weatherston.

Even with the wood barrier separating them, Eli could almost see the image Mr. Weatherston presented. With dark hair, cut into a short business cut and a steely gray-eyed gaze, he was the last type Eli ever thought he'd fall for. Yet, he had fallen, very hard. Eli knew he'd get hurt in the crash and burn that would no doubt be the end result of his child-like crush.

That still didn't prevent Eli from indulging in numerous fantasies, however. All of them had the same theme, too--of him on his knees in front of Mr. Weatherston, head bowed, ready to follow any order given.

A groan slipped past Eli's lips as another scenario sprang into his lust-filled head--this one playing out with him nude, tied face down on a bed and waiting in eager anticipation for Mr.



A very handsome man stands in front of a closet wearing an expensive tailored suit. The dress shirt is open to reveal a leather S&M harness underneath and a pair of silver handcuffs hanging from his belt.

Weatherston to do something...anything that would either result in pleasure or the most exquisite pain.

Eli let out a low curse as he rubbed the heel of his hand against his hard cock. Great, just what he needed, to spring another woody while on the clock. His only silver lining was that he'd been the only employee who'd come in on the holiday.

The rest of the staff couldn't understand why he'd willingly come in on Christmas Eve. He just shrugged it off before mumbling something about needing the overtime. No way in hell would he admit that he couldn't stand being away from their aloof, stern employer. While everyone else looked forward to the weekend, Eli cursed them.

He dropped his head to the desk, a sigh of self-disgust brushing against his lips. How much more of a loser he could be? Here his crush had developed to near stalker status when Mr. Weatherston never bothered to glance twice at him unless it was to issue an order. Not the good kind of orders either, but ones that had to do with paperwork or clients.

The computer pinged, letting him know he had a new email message. Since he didn't want to deal with the mounting pile of forms and paperwork that awaited him, he decided to check out the message. In truth, the email both confused and intrigued him since nobody else was at work. It could be a client, but he doubted that even they would be out and working when they had celebrations to attend. Not everyone had just an empty apartment and microwave dinner to keep them company. Normal people had families and friends.

He clicked on his inbox and frowned when he saw it came from Mr. Weatherston. Opening it, he frowned even further as he scanned the note, *Come to my office, now*. The message was curt and cold, just like Mr. Weatherston's personality. In the three months he'd worked there, Eli didn't think he'd seen his boss smile once, not even when one of the receptionists, Renee, brought in her new baby. Who couldn't break out a smile for an infant? It brought hardass to a whole new level.

That still didn't stop Eli from fantasizing about the man though. If anything it made him want him more. He wasted countless hours thinking of unique and imaginative ways he could finally earn a smile of approval from Mr. Weatherston. Just one, that's all Eli would need. Hell, there didn't have to be any teeth behind it. He'd be willing to take a tight-lipped Mona Lisa number, just so long as he knew that he'd pleased the guy.

Eli's computer *pinged* again. Somehow the noise carried a sharp edge of annoyance. Even before he clicked the refresh button, he knew it would be from Mr. Weatherston. He swallowed against a dry throat as his gaze drifted over the new message, this one even shorter than its predecessor. *I said, now!*

He rubbed the palms of his hands over his coal-colored dress slacks as he darted a look at the door. Heart pounding in fear and just maybe a bit of arousal, Eli forced himself to stand and move to the door.

With every step he took closer, his chest grew tighter and more anxiety churned in his gut. He chided himself for having such a stupid reaction. The boss probably just needed help with the new computer program again. Ever since corporate switched to a new system, Mr. Weatherston had been yelling out questions to his personal assistant at a nearly hourly base. He must have turned to Eli out of desperation since they were the only ones present.

He swallowed hard once more as he raised his hand and gave a short, hard knock. As he waited for a response, he clenched his hands into fists, silently cursing himself as he realized they were empty. He should have brought along a pad of paper in case he had to take notes or something. *Stupid! How many times do you think you'll be able to fuck up before they kick your sorry ass to the street?*

Before he could berate himself any longer, Mr. Weatherston called, "It's about time. Get in here."

Eeep...not exactly how he'd hoped the conversation would start, but it wasn't like Eli could turn tail and bolt now. Not unless he wanted to start off the new year collecting unemployment. He took in a deep breath before he turned the handle.

Mr. Weatherston barely looked up from his computer as Eli entered. That was okay though, since it gave Eli a chance to really study his boss. Even seated behind his massive, oak desk, Mr. Weatherston still managed to look dominating and like a fuck-me-please dream come true. His normally carefully groomed, dark hair had a small cowlick in the front, like one would get tugging at in frustration or something. He'd taken off his suit coat and loosened his red tie, plus the top few buttons of his black dress shirt were undone, but that didn't make him any more approachable.

More uneasy than ever, Eli shuffled forward another couple steps. He deliberately left the door slightly open. While the idea of being trapped by Mr. Weatherston may send a thrill through Eli that went straight to his cock, he didn't have any aspirations to their conversation would last more than a few seconds.

When several tense beats passed and the boss didn't say anything, Eli nervously cleared his throat. "You wanted to see me, sir?"

That got Mr. Weatherston's attention, but not in the way Eli wanted. He glared up from his work, his full sensual lips pressed into a disapproving line. "Don't speak unless I give you permission."

Eli blinked a few times, the words hitting him like a slap to the nose. He felt as if he'd just been a puppy reprimanded for barking at the mailman or something. A rush of anger went over him.



Unfortunately so did a wave of desire. Great, just what he needed to finish off this craptastic day, to spring an erection in front of his boss. He could almost hear how he'd have to explain that one away to the unemployment office.

*"How did you lose your last job?"*

*"Well, you see my penis couldn't control itself and decided to stand up and be noticed while I was in my employer's office. Oops, my bad."*

The silence continued to stretch and Eli fought the urge to shift nervously on the balls of his feet. Why in the hell didn't Mr. Weatherston just tell him what he wanted? Surely he didn't call Eli in here just so he could watch his boss working on the computer. If so, it seemed like a damn waste of his time and since Mr. Weatherston was the one who signed Eli's paychecks, he should care about that more than anyone.

Just when Eli felt ready to crawl out of his skin, Mr. Weatherston turned and gave Eli a smile. An actual frigging smile! Eli's lips parted slightly in shock and he had to hold back a gasp of surprise.

"I'm glad to see you can follow direction. It lets me see that you have potential," Mr. Weatherston said as he slowly rose to his feet.

Warmth pooled in Eli's stomach at the praise. If he had been that reprimanded puppy, his tail would have been wagging in anticipation. He opened his mouth to shoot off a thank you, but quickly clamped it shut again when he realized he didn't have permission to speak.

Mr. Weatherston walked past Eli, their bodies so close together that Eli could smell the expensive cologne the man wore. A mix of sandalwood and musk, it never failed to set Eli's libido off. While he wanted to turn his head in order to drink in more of the scent, something told him that any movement on his part wouldn't be welcomed. Not unless it was under Mr. Weatherston's orders.

\* \* \* \*

Blake bit back a moan as he watched the younger man struggle to obey his commands. The short, hesitant way he moved screamed his inexperience. Yet, Eli still seemed so eager to please...to submit. Blake forced back another smile as he relished the thought of finally being able to have some alone time with his newest employee.

Eli lowered his blue-eyed gaze to the ground, his plump lips slightly parted as he took in sharp breaths. While Blake knew the man styled his short, dark hair into a faux hawk off hours, while at the office, he kept in a more conservative style, only spiking the very front slightly. He wore a suit

that didn't appear expensive, but still managed to fit his thin build to perfection. The tie was tight and perfectly knotted, just as Blake had come to expect from his employee. Eli always strived to be the best worker, the neatest dressed, the most efficient at office procedure, in other words, a damn perfectionist. It was trait that both impressed and annoyed Blake.

Truthfully, Eli should be off limits. Blake was his boss and the other man was ten years, two months and thirteen days younger. Ever since Blake first laid eyes on the too-hot-for-his-own-good brat, he'd been fighting the attraction that he knew went both ways. Blake had been doing a good job of keeping his distance, too, until two things happened.

Number one may not have been enough to have pushed Blake over the edge. Eli had gone on a few dates with one of the guys from the next office over. While it had created tinge of jealousy, Blake only had to take one glance at the pathetic loser to know he'd never last with Eli. Even from across the parking garage, Blake could tell the man would be too soft and easy for Eli to manipulate. Even in the short time Blake had known Eli, he realized the younger man yearned for someone stronger and in control.

Still, if that had been the only issue, then Blake would have been okay. He could deal with a little bit of jealousy--not that he felt proud of his moment of weakness, but he would have gotten over it. Then, just as he thought he had a handle on the situation, he got slapped with problem number two—he had to work all day with Eli, the two of them alone.

Blake realized immediately there would be no way in hell he could be around that sweet temptation all day and not give into his urge to sample just a little bite. Now that he actually had Eli in his office and at his mercy, Blake also knew that neither of them would be leaving any time soon, nor would there be any more work getting done.

He pushed the door the office closed, biting back another smile as he noticed Eli tracking the movement. Eli even licked his lips a few times in a nervous gesture. He didn't break and speak, however, and for that, Blake was willing to give a small reward.

"Did you enjoy your holiday bonus?" Blake asked as he moved in behind Eli.

Eli nodded, but didn't turn around. "Yes, Mr. Weatherston. I especially liked how you gave us a magazine subscription in addition to a check. So every month now, I'll get a new magazine. It's like a gift that keeps on giving. I've always been fond of that kind of present."

Blake smiled at Eli's babbling answer. "Why don't you call me Blake?"

"Sir?" Eli turned his head slightly in Blake's direction. The way Eli's brow furrowed in confusion could only be called cute.

"You can call me that, too. In fact, sir would work much better in certain circumstances. Just not Mr. Weatherston. It's too formal."

"I don't understand," Eli replied in a small voice.

"I'm not going to be coy. I want you and by the fuck-me looks you've been shooting my way, I would say that you want me, too." He ran the back of his fingers along Eli's cheek, relishing the shiver he earned in response. "Unless I'm mistaken. If I am, then just tell me. I won't force you to do anything you don't want to and if you say no, it won't mean you'll lose your job either."

Eli closed his eyes as he took in a shuddering breath. When his lids opened again, Blake's cock jerked in response when he saw the arousal darkening the man's gaze.

"I want it very much, Mr. Wea...sir."

"Good boy," Blake praised as he caressed Eli's cheek once more. "There's one more thing you should know though. If we do this, I'm in charge. While I'll never do anything that you don't want, I still call the shots."

A tiny smile passed over Eli's lips. "In other words, you're still the boss."

Blake cupped Eli's chin and forced him to lock gazes. "More than that, I'll also be there to protect you and to guide you. Do you understand what that means?"

"I think so," Eli hedged. "You want to be my dominant?"

"Yes, does that make you uncomfortable?" Blake ran the pad of his thumb over Eli's bottom lip.

"No, I've just never been in that kind of relationship before. I've always wondered what it would be like though. Mostly, I've been curious as how it would be with *you*."

Blake knew then for sure that there'd be no turning back. Now that Eli had agreed to his rules, Blake was powerless to stop things from progressing. Fuck, who was he kidding? He'd been powerless from the day Eli had come in for an interview. All Blake had to do was take one look at those sweet, innocent baby blue eyes and he'd been a goner. "If you ever want to discontinue what we're doing or if you need a break, just say *stop*. Nod, if you understand."

Eli nodded, a small whimper coming from him.

Blake allowed his gaze to fall to the man's fly. Even through the material of his dress pants, the bulge of his erection stood quite evident. Oh yeah, Eli would be perfect at this.

Blake moved around so he could lean across his desk. Crossing his arms over his chest, he issued his next order, "Strip off your clothes, then come over and kneel at my feet."

Another whimper escaped past Eli's tightly pressed lips before he began to obey, his movements slightly jerky. Each article that dropped away to reveal a new piece of naked flesh amped Blake's arousal more.

Once he had all his clothes off and every inch of Eli's tight body was displayed, the sexual tension felt nearly palpable. A slight blush covered Eli's skin as he ducked his head in a self-conscious gesture.

"You're fucking gorgeous," Blake said, knowing the man needed some praise.

Eli lifted his head, his eyes rounded in shock. "No, I'm not. I know that I'm too skinny."

"Are you calling me a liar?" Blake demanded sternly.

"I wouldn't do that, sir," Eli rushed as he shook his head so vehemently he was in danger of getting whiplash.

"Then we're both in agreement. Your body is perfect."

For a moment, it looked as if Eli would argue, but in the end, he pressed his mouth together and nodded. Blake crooked a finger and Eli obeyed, moving slowly forward until they were inches apart. He gave Blake one more glance, his eyes filled with both passion and a bit of uncertainty before dropping to his knees.

It wasn't the most graceful movement Blake had seen by any stretch, but the fact that it was Eli doing it more than sufficed. Then when he stared up, his face so innocent and filled with longing, Blake couldn't hold back the soft moan that slipped from his mouth.

Eli stared at Blake's fly before looking back up, his expression clearly begging for permission. Blake made him wait for several seconds, to let him know who truly was in charge of the encounter, before finally nodding his permission. Eli lifted trembling fingers and undid Blake's pants. He lowered the trousers and briefs just enough for Blake's cock to spring free.

"Now *this* is gorgeous," Eli whispered as he ran his thumb over the tip. Gathering up a few drops of pre-cum, he lifted his digit to his mouth and licked it clean.

Blake tracked the way Eli's sweet tongue darted and finally had enough. With a low growl, he cupped the back of the man's head and urged him forward. Eli took the hint, his lips parting to take in Blake's cock.

At first, Eli gagged a bit, but he soon adjusted and got into the game. He even took the initiative to splay his fingers over Blake's thighs. Hungry noises emitted from Eli as he licked and sucked. Blake kept his hand in place, threading his fingers through Eli's soft hair.

Damn, Eli sure knew his way around a cock. Aside from the first gag, he sucked Blake off with impressive skill. He somehow managed to keep up the pressure so the waves of pleasure rolled over Blake in slow, easy passes. Through it all, Eli would occasionally glance up from under his lashes, as if seeking reassurance.

"It's fantastic," Blake praised. As soon as he saw the glow pass over Eli's face from being complimented, Blake knew for sure he'd made the right choice. Yes, Eli and he would work perfectly together. He trailed his fingers down Eli's temple and added, "More than fantastic, it's the best I've ever received."

Eli smiled around Blake's cock and began to suck in earnest, his cheeks hollowing out. Blake allowed it to continue a few moments, just until he was on the verge of coming before he curled his fingers into Eli's hair and pulled him back. "Enough."

A frustrated whimper came from Eli before he asked, "Why?"

"Because when I come, it's going to be in that tight ass that's been tempting me for so long. Stand up."

After running a hand over his swollen lips, Eli obeyed, his legs trembling slightly. Blake left him standing there. Never taking his gaze off the naked man, Blake went around to the back of his desk and pulled out a condom and small tube of lube from the top drawer. Slamming them down, so there could be no way Eli would miss them, Blake went back around and stood behind Eli.

"Bend over my desk and hang on," Blake whispered in Eli's ears.

The speed at which Eli moved to obey would have been laughable in another situation. Blake took a moment to admire the way Eli looked, all stretched out over the oak, his ass exposed and almost begging to be taken. Blake stroked a finger down Eli's spine, one of his favorite fantasies springing to his mind.

"You know what I'd like to see most?" he asked, as he decided to share it with Eli. At the same moment, he grabbed the lube and squeezed a liberal amount into his hand.

"No," Eli's voice hitched when Blake used a finger to circle his hole.

"Leather covering this beautiful skin." Blake used his free hand to trace an X along Eli's back to signify where he wanted it to be.

"Wouldn't the others in the office be a bit put off if I run around in fetish gear?" Eli's last words came out as a moan as his ass became penetrated by one of Blake's fingers.

"You can wear in under your shirt and only allow me to see it. Just like you can start keeping a pair of handcuffs in your pocket, so they're always available for me to use on you." Blake added a second finger, marveling at the visceral reaction the added pressure earned from Eli. The man held nothing back.

"Okay, it that's what you want, sir, I'll go out and buy it first thing in the morning."

Blake curled his fingers so he could peg Eli's sweet spot. "I don't think the store will be open tomorrow since its Christmas."

Eli cried out in pleasure as Blake hit his prostate again. "Fine, then the day after tomorrow. I promise."

Blake moved his hand, slicked on the condom, then lined the tip of his cock up to Eli's entrance. "Who says I'll be willing to let you out of my bedroom that soon?"

He slowly pressed in, a moan ripping from his throat at the tight, warm grip. Damn, this was so much better than he'd dreamed.

Eli curled his fingers against the wood as he hissed in pleasure. "*Your bedroom?*"

"Yes, I'm taking you home with me tonight and I don't plan on you leaving my presence any time soon." Blake didn't have a holiday celebration to attend the next day and he knew Eli didn't either, so what better way to spend the twenty-fifth than with his dick buried deep inside Eli's ass.

"Oh, God," Eli breathed, although Blake didn't know if it were from his declaration or the fact that he'd started to really give the man a hard fucking.

Eli let out keening sounds, his fingers clawing at the desktop. With the way his lips parted slightly, a deep flush covering his cheeks, he couldn't have been sexier. Blake felt a heady sense of power, knowing that could do anything to Eli and the younger man would allow it. Hell, Eli would probably get down on his knees and beg if asked. Along with that power came the overwhelming urge to also make sure Eli was protected and cared for.

Blake could sense his orgasm peaking, but he didn't want to give himself pleasure until his sub found it first. Running a hand down Eli's sweat covered back, Blake said, "Come for me."

Those must have been the words Eli had been waiting for because after a couple more thrusts, he cried out Blake's name, then shot off, his spunk covering the desk and carpet. The walls of his ass squeezed Blake's cock and that forced him over the edge, too. Digging his fingers into Eli's skin, Blake threw his head back as he filled the condom.

For a few breaths, Blake didn't move, too content to ride out the high. Then he let out a sigh and rested his forehead on the nape of Eli's neck. If Eli felt squashed by the added weight, he didn't complain, quite the opposite, he let out a happy sigh.

"That was amazing, sir," Eli offered in a hesitant voice.

"I'm glad you liked it. Consider it an added holiday bonus," Blake teased.

Eli paused, before venturing, "Is this bonus the same as the magazine one?"

Blake smiled against Eli's flesh. "Is that your backhanded way of asking if this thing between us is going to last more than a few days?"

"Perhaps."

"Would it make you happy if I said yes?"

“More than anything, sir,” the heartfelt tone in Eli’s voice made Blake smile wider.

He pressed a kiss to Eli’s neck. “Yes, this gift will also keep on giving. Now that I’ve had you, I know I’d be a damn fool to let you go.”

Blake gave Eli another kiss and for the first time, allowed himself to believe that maybe this could be the first of many happy Christmases.

**THE END**

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## COCKLEBUR'S CHRISTMAS by Amy Lane

*Dear Santa!*

*I've been really good this year. I think I was, anyway, since even my children started calling me Mammarella (mommy x cinderella).*

*I would really appreciate a stocking stuffer - a cute and sweet little creature - an elf, perhaps, all sunshine and smiles :)*

*I promise to love him, to spoil him but if he gets unruly, to discipline him accordingly ;)*

*Thank you, Santa!*

*\*\*loves and hugs\*\**

\*\*\*\*\*

(This story set in the *Green's Hill* series universe)

Cocklebur's Christmas—A short story of Green's Hill


Green, Lord of Green's Hill in the Sierra Foothills of Auburn loved Corinne Carol-Anne Kirkpatrick op Crocken Green very much—but that didn't mean he was looking forward to spending the evening with her when she'd been left behind from a potentially dangerous mission.

"Don't mope, beloved," he said mildly, watching her trying to make her slightly widening bottom comfortable on the opposite end of the couch. Her body was changing, and the twin hearts in her belly were growing day by day.

The glare she shot him was hardly a 'mope'. "Don't patronize me, Green," she snapped. "I'm..." Her eyes bulged, and he fought back a laugh. She was tired, her boobs hurt, her feet hurt, her back hurt, her 'cooter' hurt (interesting term—he loathed it, but it did make him laugh), her stomach hurt, she had heartburn, hemorrhoids, varicose veins and a headache. Yes—she had all the symptoms of pregnancy, but she didn't want to whine. Not his beloved. So, she felt like shit, didn't want to whine, and was even more pissed off because all of the things she didn't want to whine about were the reasons she didn't get to go on the mission. For his beloved, who was usually more vocal than discreet, this was a conundrum.

Her eyes were still bulging and her hands were flailing as she fought for words, and Green was about to put her out of her misery and soothe her, when her body betrayed her.

Her stomach growled, and true to the many conflicting emotions in her heart, her body sent her to the one she'd hate the most.



A young man with long black hair sits on a tree trunk in a golden field facing away from the camera; his hands are cuffed behind his back.



Her lower lip quivered and she sent him a look so full of misery it almost broke her heart.

"Aw," she muttered, "goddammit, Green!"

He laughed gently, and put his arm out to her. She rushed to him and lay her head on his chest and allowed him to run his hands through her wildly curly reddish hair.

"It's nothing to be ashamed of, you know," he said softly.

"I couldn't go with them," she muttered. "I couldn't go with them. I always go with them. I always... dammit, Green. I take care of them. And Bracken was so angry!"

Green grimaced. Yes, Bracken was angry. Thanks to an impromptu blood transfusion that summer, and some magical consequences, Cory could feel his anger, literally in her blood.

"Of course he was angry," he said softly. "You two have been working as a team for nearly two years, beloved. How easy do you think it was for him to leave you here?"

"Well then he shouldn't have... fuck. Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck..." The litany continued. Her next line would have been, "He shouldn't have knocked me up!" but the worst part of her dilemma was that she'd accidentally counteracted both Bracken and Green's birth control. It was how she came to be pregnant with sidhe twins, when her tiny mortal body would have been hard-pressed to carry one child to full term.

"Jesus, Green!" she finally burst out with. "Isn't there one goddamned blessed thing I can bitch about that I didn't bring on my own goddamned head?"

Green was forced to laugh. "Yes, beloved. You can bitch about being hungry. It's my fault—I should have fed you sooner. Here, let me get you something."

"I'll get it," a voice said over Green's shoulder, and Green turned slightly and smiled. "Thank you, Cocklebur. That's very kind of you."

"Pie, guvnor?"

Green grimaced—first, because although Cocklebur had come over the pond around the same time Green did, he insisted on referring to Green like a superior, and second, because Cory was nodding enthusiastically for pie.

"There's some chicken and vegetables in the refrigerator, if you don't mind putting it on some bread and heating it up," Green said, looking sternly at Cory as he said it. Her face fell, but he could tell by the way she rolled her eyes for form that she agreed. Pie would probably make her feel worse, and something healthy would make her feel better. The simplest logic wasn't always the easiest to live with.

Cocklebur brought the food, and a bottle of water for Green, with a little flourish and a bow. "Hereyago, Little Goddess," he said to Cory. "You just sit back and be the queen of the manor, right?"

Cory gave a passable impression of a smile. "Thanks, Cocklebur. That was nice of you. I could have gotten it myself, you know."

The elf's expression twisted, and for a moment, he looked almost ugly, an impossibility for a people known for their inhumanly perfect beauty. "You go ahead and be a lazy stropping cow, and see if I give a shit!" he snapped, and then flounced off, leaving Cory even more miserable than she had been before.

"Aw. Goddammit, Green—I didn't mean..."

"Yes, I know. Hush. Here. Eat your food. Sleep. That's just his way. He'll apologize in a minute..."

"I know, I know, and everything will be better." Cory tucked into her food and didn't harp on the obvious. With Cocklebur, that's pretty much what you had to hope for—that someday, things would be better.

"Would you like to know why that is?" Green asked, as she was eating. She looked at him with a full mouth and nodded. She hadn't wanted to admit it, but he could see she'd been starving. She did too much in her day, he thought worriedly, but he didn't say anything.

"I'll tell you... better yet, take a nap on me while I work, and I'll show you," he coaxed, thinking this could be the only way he would get her to rest for the rest of the pregnancy.

"Show me?" She swallowed, and then yawned. "I mean, you know, show me? Can you do that?"

"Absolutely," Green told her. "Here. All done?" She nodded and he took the plate from her. With a thought, he summoned tiny sprites to take the mess away and then pulled her head down on his lap so he could smooth the hair from her face. "Now I don't do this often, but if you'll let me, I'll let you dream it. It will be like watching a movie in your sleep, yes? Except, you'll get to feel it, too."

Cory giggled. "Uhm, how much am I going to feel?" she asked drowsily. "I mean, uhm... Green. You, uhm... you've slept with everyone at the hill. Is this dream going to be..."

"X rated?" Green grinned. "Damned straight, beloved. If you're going to be napping instead of shagging..."

"Sorry, Green..."

"No worries, luv. You just close your eyes and dream. It will be a little scary at first, but it will be a lovely dream at the end, and maybe you'll understand our bloke a little better at the end of it, okay?"

She managed a little moan of comfort, as she pillowed her head on his thigh and fell asleep.

Green started the dream where all things started for the two of them.

\*\*\*

Adrian. Adrian had just been turned vampire, and they were walking along the beach in the bay. His white-blond hair was shoulder length and curly, held back in a queue like Green's longer, butter-colored hair. His sky-spangled eyes were almost transparent in the thin moonlight, but his insouciant, love-it-or-lay-it grin was fully in place as he played a puppy-like game of kicking a rock through the surf.

It was back in 1850, and so much of what was industrialized and full of metal and oil now was simply beach. Yes, some of it was putrid with the lack of plumbing, but some more of it was... beach. Salt water. Salt water that broke all magic, good and bad. Oh, the purity of clean, abrasive, salt.

Green was barefoot, as all sidhe preferred to be, and he was enjoying the feeling of the sand between his long toes. It was long ago, and simple things were more easily acknowledged for giving the most joy.

They were far away from the busiest part of the harbor, and the ships were all sleeping in their berths. There was a stand of eucalyptus trees before them, as the bay widened to open sea, and as Adrian's booted feet and Green's bare ones splatted in the shallow layer of surf, there was a far away scream.

They looked at each other, apprehensively. Green was not a power at this point—he had no people, and no ambitions for them. But that scream had sounded desperate, and in pain, and the two of them had strengths that other people did not. Adrian was not adept at vampire's flight at this point, but that didn't stop him from giving a grunt and a leap into a shaky course through the air, even while Green began to move with that burst of Goddess speed that humans always thought of as magic.

By the time Green got there, it was all over but the blood-drinking.

Adrian was a blur, tearing men off of some poor creature, and doing it viciously. There were two bodies lying near Green, their blood seeping into the surf, their throats torn out and their eyes glazed. As Green drew closer, his gentle vampire had the third by the hair and was screaming, "What did you do to him?!!!"

"Nothin'! We clapped him in irons and he screamed!"

Green took another look at the poor thing, kneeling in the surf of the early morning dark, and caught his breath. The pointed ears, even covered in a snarled knot of dark hair, were unmistakable.

"He's sidhe," Green muttered, hoping to get Adrian's attention. He'd seen Adrian kill, since he'd been a vampire, but he'd never seen such vicious bloodshed from his once gentle beloved. A part of him mourned, sickened, but another part—the part who had rescued Adrian from his own

oppression—rejoiced. Oh, Adrian—by all means defend the weak and wreak vengeance on the abusers—it's who you were re-born to be.

The creature in the surf gave another pitiful scream and Green stood decisively.

"A'—do me a favor. Put your toy down and take those things off his wrists, yes? I can't touch them—they'll do the same to me. You can go feed on your bloke then, and then get your arse back to the darkling."

"Right, Green," Adrian told him obediently. Always—Adrian would obey Green always, except for that last, terrible disobedience many, many years in the future.

The young sidhe in the surf screamed when Adrian touched him, gibbering something about 'monster' and 'unclean'. To his credit, Adrian ignored the elf: he'd been prepared for such accusations when he turned. In a moment, the deadly iron was shattered and thrown out to sea to rot, and the elf plunged his blistered, burning wrists into the soothing healing of the surf.

Adrian picked up his dinner then, and disappeared. The dinner's frantic screams were mercifully cut short within a few heartbeats, and Green turned to the task at hand.

He was gentle, as he plodded more deeply into the chilly surf and fell to his knees in front of the elf-boy. He held out his hands with some command—the sidhe were raised to defer to their elders—and the boy put his hands into Green's with simple trust.

The bloody blisters started at mid-palm, became lesions at his wrists, and then faded to mere painful, postulating blisters again near his forearm.

"Oh, lad," Green tutted. "That's well and truly painful, boy-o. Here—can you hold them up? If I give them a kiss, maybe, they'll feel better, right?"

"I'm not a boy."

Green glanced at the young sidhe in surprise as he held the excruciating cold-iron burn to his lips and breathed lightly. The boy (or not) gave a sigh as some of the blisters receded, leaving only swelling. "No?" Green asked, before moving up to the more damaged part of his wrist.

Two furious green and brown eyes glared back at Green from that tangle of dark hair. "I'm grown, same as you," said the elf, his mouth compressed tightly, and Green breathed a little more healing to his skin.

"How many years?" Green asked. The Goddess' children tended to reach sexual maturity and then... stop. Frozen at their most beautiful. Age was often hard to discern. Green himself was nearly sixteen-hundred years old, but he tended to still believe the best of things, and many sidhe mistook him for much younger.

"A century, perhaps," the sidhe snapped. "Old enough to leave home!"

Green frowned at the wrists, which were still ulcerated and raw. "Indeed," he murmured. "Care to tell me how this all happened, then?"

"No," the other elf snapped. He looked away, irritated and disgruntled. "Humans don't... they don't understand sport, do they?"

"Sexual sport?" Green extended a careful pink tongue, and watched as the boy tilted back his head and sighed gustily. Yes—Green's touch was potent, even here by the salt water that canceled magic. He drew power from sex, he expended it in healing—sometimes, the act of healing became sex, and he drew power from that too. The young sidhe's body (for a century was still quite young) must be tingling by now, growing heavy and full. Good. Arousal was good—it made the heart sleepy and warm, and not bitter and angry, and that too was good for healing.

"No," Green answered, as the elf nodded reluctantly. "They don't understand it. And sport among males is... difficult. They'll do it, yes—but they won't acknowledge that it happens. And when they do acknowledge that it happens, they seem to think it requires some sort of effort on their part to show the world that they are the type of men who would do that."

"What type of man is that?"

Green shrugged. "I have no idea. I like them all."

The young elf sighed. "Me too," he said mournfully, and Green had to smile.

"Me too." He extended a pointed tongue then, and started lapping gently at the deeper wounds. The elf winced, and then gasped, and then sighed.

"That's very good," he conceded, as the surf lapped at their knees. "Uhm... do you... uhm..."

Green grinned. "Am I a healing elf to the base of my cock?" he asked boldly, and was rewarded by a wicked grin.

"Yes," the young elf breathed. "Yes."

"Then yes," Green murmured, taking his breath and the softness of his lips and the sweetness of his tongue to the inside of the elf's arm, where he teased the tender tender flesh there. "But I think we should exchange names first, right?"

"Cocklebur."

Green grinned. It suited him—prickly, wicked, and apparently used to getting himself into scrapes. "Green," he murmured, moving on his knees so his lips were on the elf's bicep, and then his shoulder. The cheeky little bastard went in for a kiss, but Green dodged it, and continued to tease with his lips and his tongue along the top of the elf's shoulders. He pushed aside the tangled dark hair and traced a path to the other shoulder, down the other arm. He stop and suckled on that tender, sensitive crook of inner arm, and then breathed down the forearm, to the wrist. The arm

was mostly healed, just from Green's genuinely given touch and free desire, but Green made sure all of the painful blisters and the bloody divots in Cocklebur's wrists were gone and healed before he put the boy's palm to his mouth. (Century or not, he was still a boy.)

Very carefully, using the scrape of teeth and the tickle of tongue, the press of lips and the suckling of all three, he planted a deliberate kiss in the center of the long-fingered sidhe palm.

Cocklebur let out a whine of arousal that cut through the crash of the surf, and Green grinned at him from there on his knees.

"Stand up," he commanded. The elf did, revealing a sidhe's long, rangy body, with narrow hips, shoulders, and long torso, clothed only in tattered cotton breeches. His erection (fully sized, although the elf seemed a little short for most sidhe) fell heavily forward, pushing the fabric outward, and Green played with it for a moment, making it bob and jump.

Cocklebur whined again, pushing against that teasing, one-fingered touch until Green's throaty chuckles were close enough to warm the fabric, and the elf threw his hips forward in desperation.

"Thought you weren't a boy," Green chided. "Men have more control."

"Just wanted some sport..." Cocklebur admitted painfully, and Green remembered himself. Sometimes touch was as important as air to a sidhe, and sometimes more so. It had apparently been that way for this elf on this night, to lead him to the dire straits that Green and Adrian had discovered on this lonely beach in the moonlight.

With no further teasing, he pulled the trousers down from the young man's white-pale flesh, opened his mouth, and engulfed that taut, burgeoning cock all the way to the root.

"Goddess... oh Goddess..." Cocklebur all-but sobbed above him. Fingers clenched in Green's queued hair, the bite of pain making Green's own arousal sweet. Green pulled back, and then engulfed that sweet flesh again, and again, and again, until Cocklebur forgot himself, pumping satisfyingly into Green's mouth without regard for Green's own pleasure.

Green liked it when those he healed could do that. Sometimes the surest way of knowing if someone's heart was healed was knowing that they felt safe to be selfish. Cocklebur was certainly that, clenching Green's hair, seeking his own pleasure with grunts and wordless cries. Green cupped his hairless balls and squeezed gently, and Cocklebur gave a shout that Adrian could probably hear, back at their windowless flat, and then, as Green moved two spit-slickened fingers to his tender entrance, he all but screamed into the pre-dawn fog.

His come, when it came was hot and thin, and Green swallowed most of it. He waited until Cocklebur was bent double, clutching Green's head to his groin and sobbing, before rising to his

feet, dripping with cold surf, and claiming a thin, only slightly pouty mouth in a kiss and letting the elf taste what he had spent inside Green.

The kiss deepened, and lingered, and Cocklebur pulled back and took a lap at the corner of Green's mouth.

"It's clean," he breathed. "No cold-iron bitterness. No pain."

A healing elf of body and spirit—it was Green's best gift. The only person he couldn't seem to heal completely, he thought sadly, was Adrian. He did not know that the only person who could do that had yet to be born.

"All healed," Green said at this moment. "All better."

The young elf smiled slyly. "Would you like some recompense, guvnor?"

Green frowned. Goddess, he hated the old-country ways. But Cocklebur was showing appreciation, and affection, and it was something he probably wouldn't have done just minutes before, when only his flesh was healed.

Green took the offer for what it was: gratitude and kindness. He put Cocklebur's hand against his own trousers and pushed. Cocklebur's eyes got big and round, and Green bent his head and whispered, "You want this? You want me inside you, pounding you until you scream come?"

Green caught the younger elf when his knees went weak. He had a knack for knowing, sometimes, what a partner would want, what would fill the empty spaces inside a young man or woman's soul.

"Oh Goddess," Cocklebur groaned. "Yes...please yes...please..."

They were wet, and they were cold, but that little plea had two pleases and two yeses, and Green searched the coastline for a stand of trees, a hidden patch of damp grass, because Green would not deny that begging for the world.

\*\*\*

Cory's sleeping, burgeoning body squirmed against Green as the dream 'came' to its logical and truthful conclusion. He smiled a little as he finished the work he'd been doing on his laptop as she'd slept and dreamed his memories. He'd been scenting her arousal for a good fifteen minutes. When she woke up from her nap, she would be... well, in a better mood, and wasn't that the truth.

"Mmmm..." she groaned against him, the unbridled decadence of the sound making him hard. He shut his laptop and turned as she was sitting up and wiping her eyes. She grinned at him sleepily, and, as usual, the first thing she said caught her off guard.

"Awesome dream, beloved—but I don't think I'm going to get into Cocklebur's good graces that way. Don't you think I have enough on my plate?"

Green grinned back. "You'll think of some way to do it besides that, I'll grant you. In the meantime..." His hands, long and skillful, swept down under her arms and to her waist. Yes, it was bigger, but one of the children she was carrying was his, and that was about the sexiest flesh he'd ever felt.

"In the meantime, what?" she batted her eyes at him, and he obliged her.

Leaning in, he whispered into her ear, "You want me inside you, pounding until you scream come?"

"Oh, Goddess yes," she breathed, and he swept her up into his arms and took her to his warm, dry room, to oblige.

## **THE END**

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## THE GIFT by Angela Benedetti

*Dear Santa,*

*I know I haven't been as good as I could be, but I'm really trying my best. ^\_^ There's just one (or two) things I really want this year and I hope you can find it in your bag of goodies.*

*I would love to have my very own life-size...um..."action figure" with fully articulated parts. Please see attached photo for an example.*

*I would take very good care of it and love it so much that one day it might become a real boy - a la Pinocchio or something. :P*

*Thank you Santa and Merry Christmas! I'll leave you lots of yummy cookies for when you come.*

*P.S. I would prefer a darker haired/green eyed model (or two).  
Thanks again!*

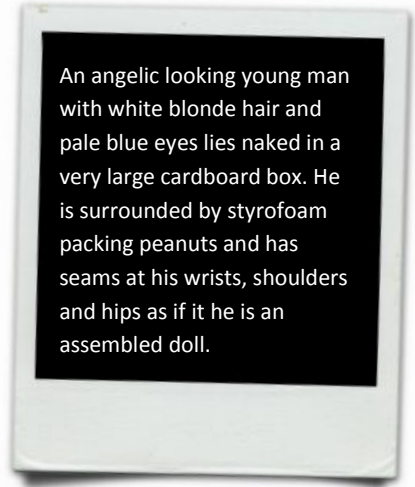
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Austin stepped off the sidewalk, palmed open the door to his unit and stepped inside, out of the community space and into his own private space where he didn't have to pretend to be perfectly happy and well-adjusted anymore. He'd just spent the prescribed two hours at yet another horribly embarrassing Mixer Social, trying to avoid one man in a small group of twenty-three. The Fountain Four Neighborhood Social Center was spacious, but the Fiveday Mixer Social was for unattached men in the neighborhood who tended toward other men, and there just weren't that many of them.

He'd hardly had time to sigh out his relief at having *that* over with, and start dreading the next week's Social, when his door buzzed. A box appeared through the delivery panel and slid to a stop on the smooth tile floor.

A really big box. Fairly huge, actually, like the size of a piece of furniture, taking up most of the width in his tiny entry hall. Austin was sure he hadn't ordered anything anywhere near that size recently -- not in a year or more, at least.

He checked the delivery stamp, sure it must be a mistake, but that was his name and his unit code. It wasn't a mistake, or if it was it'd been made somewhere deeper in the system than a delivery glitch.



An angelic looking young man with white blonde hair and pale blue eyes lies naked in a very large cardboard box. He is surrounded by styrofoam packing peanuts and has seams at his wrists, shoulders and hips as if it he is an assembled doll.

Austin scooted around to the other side of the box -- the crate, because it was *really* big -- and layed his palm on the access patch. He heard a rrrrrip-click and the lid separated from the sides, then swung upward.

The inside cavity was filled with fluff-foam packing bits. Austin pushed his hands in and dug down, hunting blindly for whatever might be buried deeper in. More bits, more bits...

...he jerked back with a yelp and smacked into the wall, his eyes wide with shock.

He'd touched something that felt like an arm -- a *dead* arm, a chunk of a cadaver. Smooth skin with some give to it, what felt like perfectly relaxed muscle underneath, a scattering of soft hairs, and it'd been cool, the same late-evening temperature he'd just walked through on his way home.

That couldn't be right. If someone was dead, whether of sickness or accident or murder, Austin couldn't imagine why anyone would send him the corpse in a crate.

He stared into the box at the packing bits for a minute, then very slowly reached out with one hand and started brushing them away, a few at a time, so he wouldn't touch anything he didn't want to touch, at least not accidentally.

Strands of wispy blond hair appeared, then a smooth forehead, and Austin swallowed hard.

All right, he thought, straighten up. It can't possibly be a dead body. Even assuming anyone *would* send you a cadaver, they don't look like that. Dead bodies look all blotchy and shiny. This one looks more like it's asleep. He. It's male -- it looks like *he's* asleep.

Which was another impossible idea. Why would some strange man have himself packed into a box and sent to Austin, asleep or not?

"This is stupid," he muttered to himself. "Just do it."

Austin leaned over and jammed his hands down into the box, grabbed the guy under the arms and heaved.

A limp -- and naked, don't forget the naked part -- body came surging up into Austin's arms, and if the crate hadn't been pretty sturdy, the whole thing, box and guy and Austin himself, would've overturned and crashed to the floor. As it was, Austin ended up with both arms wrapped around the man's naked chest.

It was still cool. There was no movement, neither the slow rhythm of breathing or the faster tempo of a heartbeat.

It almost seemed....

Austin propped the guy's shoulders against his own chest to free up one hand, and sent it searching down first one arm, then the other. There, the left hand had a smooth, twisted cord around it, with an info tag dangling. He squeezed the tag, and a mellow, androgynous voice said,

"Congratulations on your acquisition of a first quality BioServ Synthetic Companion, model 218C-S. Please view the introduction before attempting activation."

Synthetic Companion. Austin nearly fainted in relief; it was a sex doll. A really *good* sex doll -- it'd probably cost more than Austin earned in several years -- but it wasn't an actual dead body and that was the important thing.

Of course it wasn't a dead body. Austin heaved out a sigh and gave a quick, reflexive glance around, as though there might be someone lurking in his unit waiting to laugh at how ridiculous he'd been.

Well, yes, once he knew the answer, his irrational imaginings did seem pretty stupid.

The doll was as heavy as a grown man would've been, and Austin's arms were getting tired. One more good heave and he had the thing out of the box and layed down on the floor...

...and for the second time that night, he yelped and jerked backward into the wall.

The doll, it's face -- it looked exactly like Shay. The same bright green eyes, with clear, light brown skin and honey-blond hair. Broad shoulders, nimble-looking hands, and it looked to be about the right height, although it was hard to tell with the doll lying down.

Five minutes of trying to work out exactly who would send Austin a Synthetic Companion with the face of the man he'd been making a fool of himself over for months got him nothing but a headache. He took the info tag, left the doll on the floor, and went over to the media unit.

The tag was just the usual bundle of files about operation and maintenance. He scanned until he found the vid about the on switch, then stashed the rest to watch later if he needed to. There was also a clicker for a continuously updated offering of upgrades and accessories. Just looking at some of them made Austin wince and imagine he could hear his credit balance howling in pain; he'd stick with the standard model.

That thought made him lean back against the lounge cushions and consider.

Should I keep it? he wondered. What if it's a joke? Someone trying to embarrass me? Not that I need much help, the way my brain turns inside-out whenever I'm at Social and Shay's in the room....

It was ridiculously expensive for a joke, though. He didn't know how much any of his friends or neighbors earned, of course; questions about employment or finances in a social context was horribly rude, and while Austin wasn't a stickler, he wasn't raised in a sewer, either. Fountain Four was a comfortable but not a wealthy neighborhood, and he couldn't imagine anyone he knew being able to afford a Synthetic Companion for themselves, or even as a serious gift, much less as a joke.

There was no name on the shipping stamp, but Austin tried querying the shipper anyway. As he'd expected, it came back as an anonymous send. The CS responder asked if he wanted to reject the shipment, or register a protest; Austin declined and closed the query.

Only one thing left. Austin still felt kind of shy about activating the thing, even knowing that was ridiculous. It wasn't a person -- it was a sophisticated thing, an appliance. It didn't make any sense to feel shy or embarrassed around it, any more than he'd feel ashamed to go naked in front of his cooker.

Fine. Just do it, then.

He knelt down next to the not-really-a-naked-man in his entry and lifted the head, gently, with one hand. With the other, he felt through the hair at the back of the skull until he came to a small, regular bump. He pressed it, and the thing's eyes blinked open.

Even having expected it, Austin still startled enough that he almost dropped its head onto the floor. It sat up and looked around; Austin scooted back a little and watched the thing working.

It looked human.

Well, of course it did; it was the most expensive human simulation current technology could product. Not an android -- they weren't quite up to creating a purely synthetic human being yet, but as close as anyone could get coming from a robotics-and-AI direction.

The doll took a quick glance around, then sat up and turned to face Austin with a friendly smile. "Hello. You're Austin Green?"

Austin just stared for a second, not used to having things that looked like people talking to him, before he finally said, "Yes, that's me."

"Great! I belong to you now, and I'm sure we'll have a lot of good times together. My name is Shay."

Austin felt his throat clench, and he had to cough a couple of times. Although once he thought about it, he wasn't sure why he was surprised; it *did* look exactly like the Shay he knew, after all. That couldn't be a coincidence, so why *wouldn't* they -- whoever "they" were -- give it Shay's name?

"Ahh, good. That's... that's fine."

The doll studied his face, then said, "You can change my name if you want to. Just say 'Shay, I rename you' and the new name. You can change it as many times as you want, until you find something you like."

"Umm, no, that's all right, it's fine." Austin shook his head and stood up, trying to figure out what to do next. The doll -- Shay, he needed to start thinking of it as Shay if he wasn't going to change the name, which wouldn't work because it'd still have Shay's face and calling something with Shay's

face something else would be weirder than Austin wanted to deal with. The situation was already weird and adding to it felt like a really bad idea.

Shay-the-doll stood up, and seeing it full-length, standing there in front of him, made Austin very much aware that it was naked. Completely naked.

Next thing to do was get some clothes for the-- for Shay. Austin slipped past the naked body standing in his entry and headed back toward his bedroom. "Come on," he said. "I'll find you something to wear. My clothes should fit you well enough, I think, at least for now."

He heard Shay following him. It walked as quietly as any barefoot human. He'd half expected it to clunk along. Machines were supposed to clunk. Or whirl or rumble, something like that.

Shay padded along quietly, his bare soles making a light, nearly inaudible scuffing sound against the smooth floor, so quiet that when he walked up behind Austin, who was digging in a wall bin for a pair of shorts, Austin had no idea he was that close until a pair of warm arms wrapped around him from behind, and a solid chest pressed up against his back.

"I appreciate the thought," said Shay, "but are you sure you want me to get dressed right now? I'll just have to take it all off soon anyway."

Austin closed his eyes and leaned back into the embrace. It felt wonderful -- strong and solid, the skin smooth but not plastic-smooth, just yielding enough with a firmness to suggest healthy muscle underneath. It even smelled right, warm and a little musky.

He let go of the garments he'd been sorting through and wrapped his arms over the arms crossed at his waist. He gave them a firm squeeze, then let go and rotated in Shay's arms--

--and found himself staring into bright green eyes that were unmistakably *Shay's*, in Shay's face, with his mouth and chin and that one quirky eyebrow, and a sudden rush of shy/awkward/shame flooded Austin. He looked away and pulled himself out of Shay's arms, taking five quick steps across the room.

"No. I mean, yes -- find yourself something, shorts and a top, whatever you want, just get dressed. Please. Something you wouldn't mind sleeping in is fine, but.... Please."

He stood there against the wall, his forehead pressing against the cool surface, wishing he weren't such an idiot. It was just a doll, a thing, a fancy robot. It was ridiculous to be embarrassed by it, or in front of it, but Austin couldn't help it. He knew it wasn't really Shay, but his gut didn't believe it, and didn't care what his brain said.

And now the thing was going to be living with him. Not living, but... whatever you wanted to call it. It was his and would be in his unit with him, for however long he had it.

The thought was horrifying in a way. Bad enough he had to struggle with his awkwardness at Fiveday Social every week; that was only for two hours. This thing that was an exact copy of Shay, that twisted his guts and his tongue in exactly the same way, was going to be in his home, all the time.

Austin stifled a groan and rubbed his forehead with his palm. What now? Sending it back would be more complicated now, and he'd have to justify the rejection after having specifically accepted the delivery and passed by the opportunity to protest. He could sell it, but for something as expensive as a Synthetic Companion, that'd take time. And since he didn't know who'd sent it to him or why, he had no idea how that person would react to his immediately getting rid of it. What if it was a friend? Someone who'd be hurt or angry if he sold their gift?

Well, it'd have to be a friend, wouldn't it? Someone who barely knew your name didn't spend that much on a gift. Maybe someone who knew he was stuck on Shay and thought he'd enjoy having a doll that looked like him? Austin was sure whoever'd sent the thing had meant well, and thought they were helping him out, doing him a favor. He didn't feel very grateful, though, right at that point.

"What's wrong?"

The voice was closer than it should've been; the doll had come closer while Austin's brain was spinning, trying to figure out what to do.

"Nothing. I mean, nothing you can help with." Austin glanced up at the concerned face -- Shay's concerned face, even if it wasn't the real Shay wearing it -- then looked away again and added, more quietly, "Your appearance is disturbing."

There was a silent moment. "You don't care for my appearance?"

Shay sounded almost hurt. Austin knew AIs could replicate emotions perfectly, but he wasn't sure whether they actually *felt* things. Some people said yes and others no, and he didn't know what to believe. The one in front of him sounded a little deflated, though.

"I don't... dislike your appearance," he said, still not looking at it. "You're very attractive."

"I'm a popular model. I realize you didn't choose me, but many people do."

That got Austin to look up. "There are more of you? I mean, not just your... your baseline system or something like that, but other dolls *look* like you? Your face and all?"

"Yes, there are many other Companions like me. Did you think I was a custom order? I understand how that could be disappointing."

"No! I mean...." Austin trailed off. He hadn't really thought about it, but it hadn't occurred to him that there might be a whole line of dolls that looked like Shay. He'd never seen any, but then, how many people took their Synthetic Companions out with them?

Although once he thought about it, another glance at not-Shay confirmed that any number of people might well take their Companions out and Austin would never have noticed.

"Austin?" The doll took a step closer, but only one. "I'm sorry about my appearance. I'd change it for you if I could." He sounded honestly distressed at being unable to help. "If you want, you can just have me sit or lie down somewhere out of the way, and turn me off. The kill switch is the same as the power switch -- push it four times within five seconds and I'll just be another thing in a corner you can ignore."

A corpse, thought Austin. That'd been what he'd originally thought, and if he powered Shay down -- used the kill switch -- he'd look like one again.

He shuddered and shook his head. "No, it's fine. You can stay... active."

Shay touched Austin's shoulder for just a second and said, "Thank you. I really don't like being turned off."

"No, I don't guess you would." It was probably like sleeping without dreams, but not knowing whether you'd wake up. Or maybe not? "Do you dream? When you're turned off?"

"No, I don't."

Austin nodded, then moved away, toward the laundry bin. He was tired, and the whole day had been stressful. Staying up talking to his new Companion didn't sound like a relaxing idea. It'd probably take him a while to get to sleep anyway, so he stripped off -- trying without success to prevent himself from blushing -- and stuffed his worn clothes into the bin for cleaning.

He sat down on the side of the bed and looked over at Shay, trying to think what to have him do all night, only to find that Shay had discarded the shorts he'd had on for only a few minutes and was sitting on the bed as well, on the opposite side.

Well, right, he *was* a fancy sex doll. Of course he'd assume his place was in bed with his owner. Austin sighed and said, "I don't want to... I mean, I just... I'm tired. I'm sorry, but I just want to sleep right now."

Shay nodded, slipped under the cover, and closed his eyes.

He wasn't taking up much of the bed, nor trying to be enticing or anything. Austin wasn't up to an argument, or even the ridiculously embarrassing command and explanation it would probably be, since the Companion wouldn't argue with him. He just got into bed, careful to stay on his own side, and touched the light control. The room went dark; time to try to sleep.

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Austin drifted out of a wonderful dream, moaning and sweating and tense in all the right ways. While sleeping, he'd imagined that his shyness had vanished, his shameful awkwardness had never existed, and he'd approached Shay at Social with confidence, making him laugh, showing him how much fun they could have together. They'd talked and danced and then gone home to Austin's unit where they'd fallen into bed in a tangle of arms and legs, touching and kissing and sharing pleasure and joy.

The pleasure surged and overflowed and Austin woke up with a loud, ecstatic cry, all helpless vowels, his hips thrusting up and his cock spilling into warm, tight suction. He recognized the angles of his bedroom while the walls were spinning down and the lights flashing in front of his eyes were fading back into the dark. His cock relaxed and a moment later his brain once more had enough blood to fully function.

Of course he remembered the sex doll that looked like Shay. He'd remembered it while climaxing, but at that time it hadn't seemed important. Or maybe that was just one of the things his brain hadn't had enough blood to deal with.

As soon as his heartbeat slowed to normal and he could breathe without gasping, though, he was well aware of what'd just happened. At first he wanted to be angry, but being angry with a sex doll was like getting angry with a dildo or a knife or a chair. It was just a way of displacing your anger at yourself, and it made you look like an idiot.

Austin shoved the cover aside and looked down at the messy, honey-gold hair still spread across his belly. The doll, the Companion -- Shay -- looked up at him with a smile that was both sweet and mischievous.

"Did you like that?" Shay crawled up Austin's body and settled down half on top of him, his head on Austin's outstretched arm and one hand on Austin's chest.

Austin managed a wry smile and said, "If you have to ask then your AI isn't as advanced as I thought it was."

Shay laughed, a warm, rich sound that faded into a muffled snicker. "I thought you probably did, but it seemed polite to ask."

"I'm glad to hear you're polite." Austin turned and pressed a kiss into Shay's hair without thinking about it, and at the same time noticed what was pressing against his thigh. He reached down and stroked the hard cock and said, "I should probably be polite in return."

Shay's smile got wider and he rolled a quarter-turn onto his back. "I'd like that. Being polite to one another is probably the best way to get along."



"Likely so." Austin stroked harder, adding a rub across the head at random intervals, and shifted over so he could kiss Shay while pleasuring him. With the first orgasm past, it seemed ridiculous to keep worrying about should he or shouldn't he. It was a sex toy. He had other sex toys and he didn't feel any embarrassment over using any of them whenever he felt the urge. He felt a strong urge to use the handsome, sexy toy in his bed; he'd worry about who'd sent it and why later.

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Over the next week, Austin was a little surprised at how easily he became accustomed to having Shay around. It was exactly like living with another human. He'd never shared a unit with anyone who wasn't family, but the blending of routines and sharing of tasks felt the same. Although he knew it wasn't necessary, he found himself on his best behavior, being a little neater than usual, more likely to stay in line with habits and routines. It was exactly like the impression he'd gotten from friends and co-workers who'd shared units with friends of their own or with lovers, and Austin expected he'd relax eventually. But no matter how often he told himself that Shay wouldn't care if Austin left his worn clothes on the floor over night, he still felt embarrassed at the thought of someone else -- even an artificial someone -- seeing him be sloppy.

The following Fiveday, Austin went to Social feeling a bit odd, but over all more relaxed than he had in a long time. He was able to smile at Shay -- the real one -- and even speak to him for a few moments without feeling the overwhelming shyness that usually turned him into an idiot in the man's presence. His brain knew that this wasn't the same Shay he'd lived with for the previous week, but to his gut it felt the same, and frequent exposure had burned out most of the embarrassed brain-static that'd been so crippling before.

Whatever the purpose had been, whoever'd given him Shay-the-Companion had done him a great favor.

When he got home later that evening, Shay was waiting. As soon as the door closed behind Austin, Shay was pressed up against him, kissing him hard.

"I missed you," Shay said, in low, breathy words that brushed past Austin's ear. "You're gone so long for work, and Social days are even longer."

"I miss you too," Austin said, kissing him back and running his hands up under Shay's shirt, and down to knead the firm curve of his butt.

It was true, he did miss his Shay while he was away from home. He wished sometimes that Shay wasn't *Shay*, that the Companion's appearance was something invented, something unique. Work would still be work, but if Shay didn't look like the real Shay, and wasn't likely to be recognized

walking around the neighborhood, then they could go out together -- to Social, to displays and performances, out for meals.

Austin understood why someone might want a custom Companion, despite the huge surcharge added to the already outrageous cost of even a basic model. He'd actually thought about moving to another neighborhood, or to another city even; if he didn't live near Shay, there'd be less of a chance of someone recognizing that he was socializing with a Synthetic Companion.

He broke off the kiss and rested his forehead against Shay's. "I wish I knew who sent you, and why."

Shay tensed just for a moment, betraying his discomfort at the question. "I'm sorry, Austin. I'd tell you if I could."

"I know, sorry. You haven't done anything wrong. No one's done anything *wrong*, at least that I can tell." He hugged Shay tighter and added, "I keep thinking that someone will come and take you back, say it was just a loan, or that there was... I don't know, *something* behind it. It might still be a joke or a prank. I can't think who might be playing a joke, or trying to embarrass me. I don't think I've offended anyone, or not enough to spend this kind of money on revenge. But I've asked a few people -- subtly, you know? just bringing up the subject from the side -- and no one knows anything, no one's given me a gift. Or no one's admitting it."

He ran a hand through Shay's silky hair, running his fingertips over the smooth surface of his skull; only the activation button, a regular bump under the scalp, reminded him that Shay had been created rather than born. "I was confused and upset at first, but I like having you. Having you here. I don't want to lose you. And if it's a prank or some kind of revenge, then after it's over even the memory will be poisoned."

Shay wrapped both arms around Austin and hugged him back. "Don't," he said, dotting kisses across Austin's face. "Don't worry, please. It's not a prank. I shouldn't say, but I can't let you think it's anything bad. It's not. It's someone who wants you to be happy. Please don't worry about it?"

Austin put on a small smile and said, "I'll try." All Shay knew was what he'd been told, though. Or what he'd been told to say.

Shay gave him one more kiss, then took his hand and pulled him over to the table. "I made some of those garlic-peanut chips you like -- I thought we could play Eon?"

"That'd be fun," Austin said. He sat down at the table and set it for the game, bringing up the holographic terrain and characters they'd saved from their last session.

He couldn't do anything about his worries that night. Actually, he couldn't think of anything he could do about them at all, since talking to friends hadn't brought him any answers, and the

delivery service wouldn't give him any information unless he made a formal protest. All he had were dead ends, and scraping his fingers raw clawing at the walls wouldn't gain him anything. All he could do was keep going and let whatever was going to come, come.

Playing for a while before taking Shay to bed would help keep his mind out of the spin cycle.

Next Freeday, Austin wanted to just stay at home with Shay, but he'd promised a couple of friends from the Fiveday gatherings that he'd go with them to a freedance performance. Austin had never been able to get used to zero gravity himself -- whenever he tried to move in it, his stomach started churning and wouldn't stop -- but he loved watching the dancers zoom and swirl through the spherical arena so long as he himself was safely stuck to a comfortable lounge inside the outer shell.

At the time he'd accepted the invitation, he'd been nervous that Shay -- the real one -- might end up with their group. That'd been a couple of weeks ago, though, and when he'd left to meet the others at the arena, he realized he wasn't nervous at all. It didn't matter whether Shay was there or not; if so, he'd say hello and they could watch the performance together, and if not then that was fine too.

And it turned out Shay wasn't there anyway. Austin actually missed him a bit, because the real Shay was a nice guy, aside from being gorgeous.

When Austin got back to his unit, he was humming a bit of the performance music and remembering the flashing holos and swirling bubbles and the dancers twisting through it all, so it took him a few moments to notice that Shay was quieter than usual.

Maybe he was depressed because he could never go out? Could Synthetic Companions even get depressed?

Austin pulled Shay into a hug and a deep kiss, then said, "I wish you could've gone! It was wonderful. There'll be a vid up soon -- we'll watch it together."

"Thanks, I'd enjoy that." Shay hugged him back, tentatively at first, then his grip tightened and he returned the kiss. "Are you hungry?"

"No, we ate at the arena. I need *you*. I feel like the music is still flowing in my veins and I need to move." Austin laughed and took Shay by the wrist, coaxing him to bed. It'd never taken any coaxing before, but Shay was probably just getting tired of the same thing over and over -- the same walls and the same company and the same activities.

Austin would have to come up with something they could do, somewhere they could go together -- maybe that trip to another city he'd thought about before, a visit rather than a move. Fujiwara

Under was famous for its musical presentations; it was a favorite place for on-planet travellers, and drew visitors from offworld to Shatterlee as well. Several Dome was near the sulfur forests, and they had day tours out to see the beautiful, poisonous landscape. That'd be fun and different, and from inside an egress suit, no one would recognize Shay even if anyone there knew him, or had another Companion in the same model.

That was for later, though -- maybe next month. Right then, Austin was bubbling with energy and was determined to share it with Shay.

He stripped down and stuffed his clothes into the bin, then helped Shay get naked. Austin kissed and licked each patch of skin as it was uncovered, teasing flank and navel and tightening balls with his lips and tongue. When Austin's tongue swirled behind Shay's balls and headed for his clenched opening, Shay gave a surprised yelp and grabbed for Austin's hair with both hands.

Austin laughed and sat back. "What's the matter? Too much?" He gave the top of Shay's thickening cock a playful swipe.

"No, no! It's fine, it's wonderful, keep going!" Shay managed a smile, but he looked a little dazed.

Dazed was good. Dazed was just fine. Austin had been feeling great -- happy and relaxed and just generally positive about life and the world -- over the previous week or so. It'd started shortly after Shay had arrived. It'd been confusing and disturbing at first, but once he'd gotten used to having him around, Austin realized that he'd missed the companionship. He hadn't had a regular lover in years, and had never shared a unit with one.

Austin could feel the changes in himself, and they were all good. He'd never been quite as energetic in bed before -- he'd usually let Shay take the lead. If that surprised Shay, well, that was probably normal. Austin ducked back down and sucked one of Shay's balls into his mouth, determined to surprise him even more.

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Much later, when they were both exhausted and sweaty and just catching their breaths, Austin was stretched out with Shay's head on his chest, enjoying the lassitude and the memory-images lingering in his mind.

Shay had been almost passive that night, willing to let Austin take the lead. Maybe that was part of their programming, to adapt to their partner and be the complement of whatever role he took?

There was probably something about it in the files he hadn't seen yet. After so long, he probably wouldn't; everything was going fine, and if he had any questions, he could ask Shay. Austin was sleepy and relaxed, and would rather just lie there cuddling. He ran one slow hand through Shay's

soft, slightly-sweaty hair, petting him just for the joy of touching, feeling the silky strands of hair over the smooth curve of his skull...

The realization nearly jolted Austin out of bed. He shoved Shay away and scrambled off the mattress and ended up with a thud against the wall; his eyes wide open in shock. A small chunk of his brain noted with a hysterical laugh that he was in exactly the same position he'd been in when he'd first found the "cadaver" in the box, but the rest of his brain didn't think it was funny at all.

"What happened? What are you? Who--?" But even as he shouted out the questions, the answer was obvious. Shay. The real Shay. It had to be him.

"Shay. How did you get in here?"

The real Shay was still in Austin's bed, half curled up as though ashamed -- and he should be! thought Austin -- with the cover pulled up to his chest. "I-- the Companion let me in. While you were gone."

"He let you--?" But that question spawned another one, a more important one. "Where is he? What did you do with him?" Austin took a step forward, clenched fists not quite threatening, not yet, but it occurred to him that he might not own Shay-the-Companion, legally. Real-Shay had sent the Companion to Austin without request; that made it a gift, didn't it? But if Real-Shay had already taken the Companion-Shay, Austin's Shay, away somewhere, then it could be difficult or impossible to get him back, to argue the legal microfonts while Austin's Shay was hidden away somewhere, maybe sent to be recycled already--

Austin squashed the panic swirling through his mind. Focus on one thing at a time, he thought. Right now.

The Shay huddled on Austin's bed was answering the question. Austin had missed the first few words, but he caught "storage," and that was enough. He left the room at a half-run, only noticing when he felt a draft in the main room that he was still naked.

It didn't matter. He went up to the storage room next to the bath, the only one large enough for something man-sized, and yanked open the door.

Shay -- *his* Shay -- was seated on the floor, surrounded by shelves and bins and loose items, in the dark and the dust. Austin grabbed him under the arms and yanked him to his feet, then smothered him in a hug.

"I thought you were gone," he whispered.

"I thought you wouldn't want me," his Shay whispered back. One hand rested on Austin's back, light and tentative, then the other came up next to it and clasped his shoulder. "Once you had the real one, I didn't think you'd want me anymore."

"I don't *have* the real one."

"You could," said another voice from the doorway. The human Shay, also still naked, stood there watching the two of them, looking upset and embarrassed. "That was the whole point of it. I'm sorry if it was a bad idea, but I've been wanting to get to know you for a long time and I could never manage it. You seemed to get rather... awkward, whenever I tried to talk to you." Shay looked away and raked a hand through his hair -- that same fine, honey-blond hair Austin had come to love the feel of.

"You seemed so uncomfortable, it made *me* uncomfortable, and I'm not usually shy. I was when I was near you, though, because I wanted to know you and it was important and I was afraid I'd do something wrong and ruin the whole thing. I thought if you could get used to being near me, get used to talking to me and having me around and lose all the awkwardness...."

He trailed off and grimaced. "I suppose it was a stupid idea. It was all I could think of, though. When I got my token for a free Companion -- if they choose you to model, you get one as part of your compensation -- the idea just came to me and it seemed perfect. The idea hit me and I did it. I suppose I should've stopped to think about it."

"That might've been a good idea." Austin was trying to figure out what he thought about Shay's confused confession. The thought that the man he'd been pining over for all that time had liked him back, enough to come up with *any* kind of plan to get close to him, was flattering. The way he'd done it, though -- Austin's reflexive reaction had been anger, was still anger. Deception on a grand scale didn't lay down a very solid foundation for a friendship, much less a closer relationship.

The fact that real-Shay had made such a huge mistake, though, made him seem more like a normal human who did stupid things occasionally, and less like an unapproachable ideal. After all that, Austin had no problem talking to him, yelling at him, being upset with him. If they had a chance of working things out, maybe it was *because* of Shay's ridiculous plan?

Austin looked at his Shay, trying to find an opinion, a preference, in his bright green eyes. His Companion's expression was neutral at first, but the longer Austin looked, the more he thought he could see signs of sadness and resignation. Austin kissed him, with no hurry, clasped an arm around his shoulders, then looked at the human Shay and said, "I'm still angry. I think if we try to talk it out right now, I'll end up throwing you out and that'll be the end of it. I'd like to have some time to cool down and think about it, about everything."

Shay nodded, but before he could reply, Austin went on with, "Come and have dinner here next Friday. We can meet like normal people and get to know one another. All three of us." He

squeezed his Shay's shoulder again. "If it does work out, it'll be the three of us. I'm keeping my Shay, no matter what else happens."

Human Shay blinked at him, then looked at the Companion in Austin's embrace, then back at Austin. "Umm. All right. I mean, that won't bother me, if that's what you want."

Austin nodded. "Good. So long as you understand."

Shay nodded back. They looked at one another in silence for a few moments, then Shay looked away and said, "I suppose I should get home, then."

Austin nodded again. All the nodding made him feel like a puka-bird in a flock, but he didn't know what else to say. There wasn't anything, really, not just then.

He and his Shay -- and he'd probably have to rename him after all; Austin would need to think about that soon -- went out to the couch. Shay sat, but Austin stayed standing, hovering, waiting for the human Shay to come out. When he emerged from the bedroom, dressed in clothes creased from being pulled off in a hurry and then stepped on, all Austin could think about was that he'd been tricked into making love with a man he'd never really spoken to.

That wasn't something he could forgive immediately. Maybe later. He thought probably later, if Shay turned out to be a nice guy despite one horribly stupid idea, but it'd take some time.

They touched hands at the door, but didn't say anything, and then the human Shay was gone.

Austin settled down on the couch as close to Shay -- *his* Shay -- as he could get, and pulled him into a tight embrace.

"I don't understand why you want me when you could have him." Shay's voice was quiet and sounded forcibly neutral, as though he were making a deliberate effort to strip all the emotion out of it.

"Right now I'd much rather have you. He set me up and deceived me, and I'm still upset."

"But I did that too. I was part of it."

"You didn't have a choice, though. I'm assuming you didn't -- he ordered you to go along?"

Shay nodded, an up-down rub of his cheek against Austin's still-naked shoulder.

Something occurred to Austin and he asked, "Who owns you? Are you his, or are you mine?" He was suddenly afraid he didn't really own his Shay, that the human Shay could still come take him away, could sue to get him back if he was the legal owner.

"You own me. You have since he sent me. But he was my owner first. He told me what to do, and what I could and couldn't tell you. You could have countermanded his orders, or done a baseline restart, but--"

--but I didn't know I should have." Austin pressed a light kiss into Shay's hair. "Not your fault. I don't have anything to be angry with you about. Right now I like you better, and I probably will for a long time."

"But he's *real*," Shay insisted, as though that made all the difference.

Austin tipped his face up and gave him a long and thorough kiss. "You're real too. You're real, and I love you, and I'm keeping you. That's enough for now."

And it was.

## **THE END**

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