

Praise for the writing of Jules Jones

Promises to Keep

Promises to Keep is a delightful tease of a read. Perfect for the coming season, yet timeless as well.

-- Merzi Ross, author of *Mobile by Moonlight* (eXtasy Books)

Promises to Keep is a quick, sexy, and totally delicious read with a surprising twist to keep you turning the pages. Jules Jones is on my to buy list from now on!

-- Melissa Schroeder, author of *A Little Harmless Sex* (Loose Id)

Remarkably involving and layered for such a short piece, with new twists on vampire mythos, characters that will linger in the memory, and deliciously crafted sex scenes. I'll be looking enthusiastically for more from Jules Jones.

-- Elizabeth Jewell, author of *Dark Callings* (Changeling Press)

Jules Jones has done it again! *Promises to Keep* is not only inferno hot, but the sly intelligence and wit engages the brain as well as the body. More, I say, more! After reading *Promises to Keep*, it will be miles to go before I sleep.

-- Lena Austin, author of After the Flood 1: Blood and Magic (coming soon from Loose Id)

Just when you think you know everything there is to know about vampires, Jules Jones comes along. *Promises to Keep* succeeds with new twists to everyone's favorite genre in this brief but beautiful story that will leave you yearning for more.

-- Stephanie Vaughan, author of *Cruel to be Kind* (Loose Id)

PROMISES TO KEEP

Jules Jones

LooSe Id

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Promises to Keep

Jules Jones

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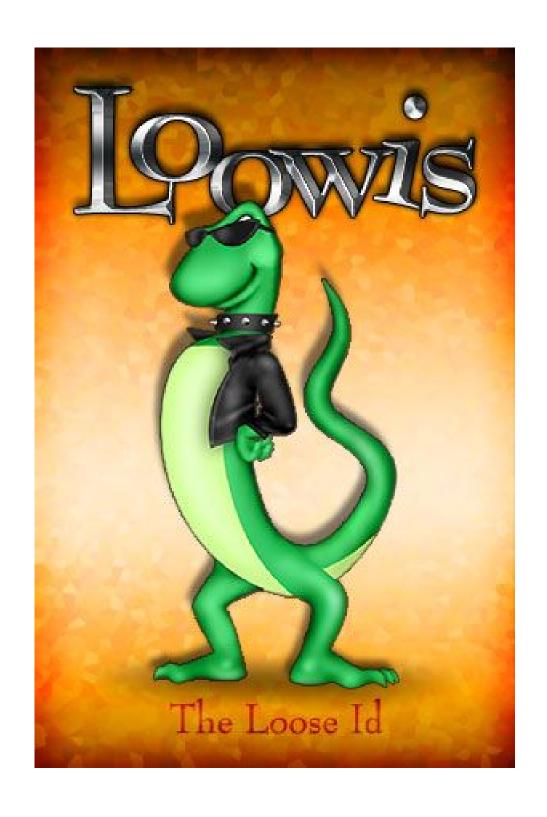
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Promises to Keep

He'll come for me. He promised me, and he always keeps his promises. He can't visit me during the day, and sometimes not even at night, but he always checks for messages as soon as he can. So I've sent him the email telling him that the hospital has done all it can for me, that it's time for me to go home and die. Or not, as the case may be.

He couldn't promise me that, because he keeps his promises. He didn't lie to me, didn't offer me false hope. Just a chance I could take, if I wanted to. He sought me out to offer me that chance, but he never forced it on me.

* * * * *

It's a nice place to read, the university library. Well lit, warm, peaceful, but you're not alone. Other readers for company, but nobody forcing themselves on your attention. At least, not usually. And to give the boy credit, he waited until I'd finished the chapter before talking to me.

"He shouldn't have let them do that to him."

2 Jules Jones

I set down the Turing biography, looked up at the interruption. One of the students, presumably; he looked the right age. Maybe even one of mine. I didn't recognise him, but it wasn't that far into the academic year, and I hadn't learnt all the new faces yet.

"Unless you're a lot older than you look, you don't know what you're talking about. You don't even look old enough for it to have been of more than academic interest back when they dropped the age of consent to eighteen, never mind having any idea what it was like before 1967. In fact, did it matter to you when they dropped it to sixteen?"

He flopped down into the chair across the table from me. A controlled, elegant flop, designed to show off his lithe, young body. "I'm older than I look. And you're not old enough to know what it was like before being queer was legalised."

"Almost. And old enough to remember when this conversation could get me into trouble for being a predatory old don." I looked the boy -- no, young man -- over. Not quite the sort of pretty young thing that might have been sent to tempt a predatory old don into indiscretion; and anyway, I'd been out of the closet for years. But tempting, all the same. Dark hair and eyes, although I'd wager pale skin under the light gold tan of the summer just ended. Slim build, not so long outgrown the gangliness of a teenager. Long, loose sleeves and trousers, so I couldn't see much of his body, but the hands neatly folded on the table looked strong and well cared for. He wasn't startlingly handsome, or pretty, but nice enough looking. And there was something about him that commanded attention, once you'd noticed him. As he was obviously well aware.

And, yes, he had a truly delightful smile.

"Like what you see?" he asked.

I looked more carefully. I'd misjudged him; there was more personality to his face than I'd have expected in an undergraduate. Intelligence, too. Yes, I did like what I saw. I just didn't trust his motives. "What are you after, boy?"

"You."

He really was propositioning me. At least he was up front about it. "Go and find someone your own age. Or try the undergraduates, if you don't fancy the post-grads and post-docs."

Slight smirk. "I happen to prefer men old enough for intelligent post-coital conversation. Or even pre-coital conversation."

"I don't screw students; and even if I did, I wouldn't let it affect exam results."

"I'm not one of your students. It's you I want, not preferential treatment." He leaned a little further forward, earnest now. "A groupie, if you like. Bodies get boring after a while; minds don't. I want your mind." He settled back again, and grinned. "Although I won't deny that a good mind in a good body is particularly interesting. I just don't define 'good body' as 'must be under thirty'."

I wanted him. He had a pretty enough body, and my cock would have stirred for that alone, but he also understood that sex was more than just rubbing body parts together. I'd never been tempted by the students once I'd got old enough to be a dirty old man, because too many of them hadn't learnt that. And he looked old enough to be legal.

"All right." I slipped the bookmark in to mark my place, and tucked the book into my bag.

He raised an eyebrow at me. "Just like that? No checking to see who I am, what I like to do? You do like to live dangerously."

"It doesn't really matter any more." See if he had the wit to pick up on the warning. I stood up, and headed for the stairs without bothering to check if he was following.

Footsteps on the stairs behind me, voice pitched low so that it wouldn't carry outside the stairwell. "You're ill, even if it's not obvious yet. But it's not what people would assume, is it?"

No. There are other auto-immune disorders that have been around far longer than AIDS and have nothing to do with sex or needles. They just don't get the publicity

4 Jules Jones

nowadays. Think of it as a pre-cancerous condition, the doctor had said. Could live for years yet. And the treatments are very good nowadays.

And there was a chance I'd be dead in a year. So I was willing to live dangerously, because I might not be doing it for much longer anyway. Only how did he know that it wasn't the obvious?

He was discreet; he didn't grope me, didn't even touch me, until we were walking along the path outside. Even then, it was just a brief touch to begin with, his hand tracing down my spine. I shivered, and not just from the cold.

He chuckled softly. "Like that?"

"If it wasn't so damn cold, I'd throw you into those bushes and drag your clothes off."

"But you're a decrepit dirty old man and can't take the cold of a Halloween night."

Oh, hell. "This had better not be some student nonsense for Halloween." It was a proper Halloween night, thin tendrils of mist creeping around the old buildings, above them a half-full moon riding a clear sky. Bitterly cold now, even though it had been a fine autumn day, and I regretted having forgotten my coat.

"No," he said, putting an arm around me, "not a prank." Then his tone changed. "You are cold, aren't you?"

"Feel it more, now." It was only a short walk to my flat, but I'd be frozen by the time we got there.

Both arms around me now, holding me close against him. Not just his arms; he was wearing an academic gown rather than a coat to keep off the chill, as some of the students did, and he'd wrapped the billowing cloth around me, giving me an extra layer of protection. He was taller than me; good, solid body to shield me from the cold, even if he was of slim proportions. I could feel the heat of him even through my jumper. And feel his cock hard against me. No, it wasn't just a prank. He wanted me.

Then he kissed me. Hesitantly for a few seconds, giving me a chance to break away if I didn't want it, and I appreciated the good manners. Then harder, tongue invading my mouth, invading my senses. One hand moving down to my arse, letting the gown slip away from me, and I shivered as the cold hit me again.

He let go of my mouth, pulled the gown around me again. "Sorry, didn't think."

Did my eyes deceive me, or was the silly bugger wearing vampire teeth? I kissed him in turn, exploring his mouth. He tasted good, almost good enough to distract me. Not one of those silly slip-in plastic fang sets from when I was a lad; must be the high-tech porcelain-and-glue jobs the kids used now. They could be damn convincing, although I'd never had the chance to inspect them close-up before.

He shivered as I ran my tongue down one, checking. Then I broke away. "Let me guess -- you dressed up for the early *Rocky Horror* showing at the student union, and it's too damn cold tonight for fishnets and a basque, so you did Dracula, instead."

He grinned ruefully, exposing the fangs. "Not quite. I hadn't intended to show you until we were somewhere a little more private, but..."

He took hold of my hand, pulled it up to rest on his throat.

No pulse.

And I hadn't seen the fangs when he'd grinned at me before, in the library. They weren't slip-ins; I hadn't even felt any seam. They had to be the type that were custom-fitted and glued in place. But he hadn't had time to do that...

He said nothing, simply watching me, letting me work it out for myself as I stared at him.

"Just how old *are* you?" I asked. Somewhere in the back of my mind, I was amazed that I was standing here, calmly asking, not running for my life.

"Older than I look. Old enough to remember before 1967, when you could go to jail for being queer. Although not old enough to remember when you could be hanged for it." He sighed. "Old enough that by the time I was turned, I already knew about the need to be discreet." Then he grinned again. "And old enough that I've had my fill of brainless bimbos."

No, it had to be a student prank. Not to humiliate me, maybe, but a young man wanting an older man, wise enough to understand that being young might not be enough, and trying to make himself stand out from the crowd of beautiful young bodies. And I'd fallen for it.

He looked away from me, and then I felt the fear surging through me, hair rising on the back of my neck, instincts urging me to run for the light. But fear had paralysed me. My heart hammered, and all I could think was that it would be a lovely irony if I died now of a heart attack, before he could take my blood.

Then he looked back at me, and the fear was gone. And that was what convinced me beyond all doubt. Not the fangs, and not the fear I'd felt, but his control over me.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I didn't mean to scare you."

"Scare me? You're a fucking vampire, and you didn't mean to scare me?"

"Well, that's the problem. At the moment, I'm not a fucking vampire." He caressed my hand where it still lay along his throat. "And I was rather hoping to be one shortly. Do you still want to fuck?"

"Do I get a choice?"

He nodded. "I've only calmed you. You still have free will. I'll walk you to your door and then leave, if that's what you want."

It wasn't. A mature mind in a young body was a tempting combination. As for what he was -- well, I was willing to take the chance. A chance to walk on the wild side, the danger a thrill rather than a threat. And even if my cock could turn him away, my curiosity couldn't. "Are you going to eat me?"

"Only with your permission. Whichever way you meant that."

I was still shivering -- with cold, with a little fear, with the thrill of thinking of those fangs next to my cock. But mostly with cold. "I think we'd better go."

He let go of me, stepped away. Then he took off the gown and draped it over my shoulders. I wrapped it around me, glad of the warmth. He put an arm around me, saying, "Better get you inside."

"Don't you feel the cold?"

"Not until it gets a lot colder than this. I could walk naked in this weather, if I didn't care about getting arrested."

What would he look like naked? No need to imagine it; I'd soon find out.

We walked in silence, me bundled up, him with one arm around me. Almost protectively, I thought. He kept holding me as we walked into my flat.

"Don't you need my permission?" I asked.

He let go of me. "No. But I don't stay where I'm not welcome. It's bad manners." He drew the academic gown off me, draped it over his arm. "I'll go, if you want."

Here in the light and warmth of my flat, it seemed unreal again. No such thing as vampires. But the memory of that moment on the path stayed with me. The fear, and the desire. And his concern for me. "Stay with me."

His expression softened. "Thank you."

Then he was holding me, kissing me, hands rubbing at my back. I grabbed at him, wanting to feel the reality of him. Exploring his body with my hands, and his mouth with my tongue. The fangs were real; I hadn't imagined them. He gasped as I licked at them. Damn if they weren't an erogenous zone for him. I stopped kissing him, and brushed one tooth with a finger -- what would have been light, teasing pressure if it had been his cock.

"Bed," he said, grinding his cock against me.

Sod the pre-coital conversation. I'd take just the body and be happy. We made it to the bedroom somehow, tearing at each other's clothes on the way. He wasn't faking it; he really

was turned on by middle-aged computer science lecturers. I had a handful of hard cock by the time we tumbled onto the bed.

A handful of hard cock, and an armful of hard muscle. He really did have a splendid body, the muscles of regular exercise under unblemished skin. I ran my hand over that skin, feeling it. He certainly *felt* human. Warm and alive. I stared up at him.

He stared back down. "What's wrong?"

"I expected...well, I don't know what I expected, but not that it would be so *normal...*"

Wry grin. "Maybe I leaned on you too hard with the 'don't panic' message. But I fuck like anyone else."

I wasn't afraid of him any more, not even under the imposed blanket of calm. "You *feel* like anyone else."

"We can enumerate the differences between fact and legend later. Right now, I want to fuck you." He sat up and shifted down the bed, dragging my shoes off with no thought for the laces. Then he scrambled off me and shed the last of his clothes. I was slower to strip, feeling mildly embarrassed about my middle-aged body, but he didn't seem to mind. He pounced on me, kissing me, then licking and sucking his way down my neck.

I braced myself, but he kept on going. No bite to my throat, not even a playful nip as any lover might do. He explored my chest, taking things slowly, for all his forcefulness. I lay back and let it happen, contenting myself with running my hands over his sleek cap of dark hair. He might look young, but he'd learnt patience, the skill of foreplay, and I was happy to enjoy it.

Then he'd worked his way down to my groin. Still slow, patient, he kissed and fondled my thighs, one hand cupping my balls. Now I was the one showing impatience, grabbing at his head, wanting his mouth on my cock.

He obliged, taking half of me in without bothering to tease first. Just good, hard sucking, one hand still on my balls, the other squeezing whatever part of my cock he didn't

have in his mouth. And then I did feel the difference it makes with a vampire, as he pulled off a little, running the side of a fang along my cock.

Back on, and then off again, this time the other fang and the other side of my cock. I remembered how he'd reacted as I'd touched his fangs, and stopped worrying about this being one-sided. He was enjoying this as much as I was. It was frottage and fellatio, all in one.

In fact... I slid my hand 'round, feeling the soft skin of his cheek, then working a fingertip to touch his fang. He jumped, growling, and I wondered if I'd gone too far. Then he pulled off my cock, and flung himself headlong against me. Fingers digging into me, thrusting against me, fucking my mouth with his tongue. I grabbed at his arse, pulling him hard against me.

He pulled away from my mouth, looked down at me, his expression desperate. And something changed -- he'd stopped doing whatever he'd been doing to keep me from being frightened. But I didn't need it any more.

"May I?" he asked.

I knew what he was asking, and that he'd given me a free choice. I nodded.

It hurt, just for a second, as his fangs sank into my neck. And then...well, the nearest I'd ever had was when I'd been given an intravenous painkiller, years ago, after an accident. Pleasure spread from my neck, soothing all the small hurts and aches I hadn't consciously noticed. I was high on more than just good sex, but the sex was still good. He was still moving against me. And then he froze for a moment, before reaching between us to take both our cocks in one hand, squeezing them together; and with that, I came.

Better than I could remember it ever being before, the drug stretching things out, making it last. I didn't care whether it was real or subjective, just hung on for the ride. And then it was over, him carefully disentangling himself from me, then kissing the spot on my neck where he'd bitten me.

He pressed his fingers against the wounds, watching carefully. Then he looked satisfied, and let go. "They'll seal quickly, but you might want to put something on them."

"Was it good for you, too?"

He smiled in reminiscence. "Oh, it was very good. Thank you." He looked straight at me. "You were very...accepting of my differences."

The fangs had retracted now, looking like slightly pointed but normal canines. I reached up a hand, brushed one finger lightly over his lip. "Such as you having erectile tissue in rather unusual places."

Slight smile. "So you did do that on purpose?"

"Yes. I do pay attention to detail, remember. It's my job."

He sighed. "I want to talk to you about that." He patted my neck, very gently. "But first, I'd better take care of you. Do you have a first aid kit?"

"Bathroom cupboard." So this wasn't just a chance encounter. Mind, he'd implied right from the start that he'd been looking for me specifically. I watched as he got up from the bed and went to the bathroom. The rear view was superb -- I'd only just come, and I still wanted his arse.

He came back to me, and carefully dressed the wound with a little gauze and tape. "I didn't take much. Didn't want to risk it, when you're ill."

"Not that ill, not yet. How did you know?"

He seemed to be gathering his thoughts. Perhaps trying to decide what to tell me, or maybe how to tell me. "I just do. I can see it."

And yet he'd propositioned me. "So why me?"

"How old do you think I am?"

I didn't think he was changing the subject. "You look mid-twenties. I'd believe anywhere from twenty to forty."

"I was born nearly a hundred years ago. And reborn thirty years after that. It didn't matter then; records were good, but not difficult to evade. But now..."

No wonder he had slightly old-fashioned manners. "But now the net's tightening."

He nodded. "I've watched a hundred years of technology, and been glad of it. I remember when starvation and disease didn't just happen in faraway places, when you only had to go as far as the slums of London to find them. I remember other things, too," his hand closed over my cock, "and I'm glad to be alive -- or at least undead -- now. But now I don't exist unless I'm in a computer, can provide a paper trail to prove who I am."

"You want a fake identity."

"Not because I'm a criminal. Because I don't want to have to be a criminal. I have investments to live on. I can take an honest job if I have to. But not if I officially don't exist!"

His obvious exasperation was all too believable. I'd had my own struggles with bureaucracy. "Nobody would believe your original birth certificate. And if they did, you'd have a whole new set of problems."

"I don't want to be experimented on. I saw enough of that fifty years ago." His mouth turned down. "I won't let them do it to me. I won't let them do it to anyone else, if I can help it."

What he'd said by way of introducing himself to me. Turing shouldn't have let them experiment on him, using hormone 'treatment' in an attempt to change his sexual orientation.

Outsider. Different. Abnormal.

He'd seen it in one context; he wasn't going to sit still for it in another. I couldn't really blame him.

"I know what sort of consultancy work you do," he said. "You can help me."

Something he shouldn't have known, since that consultancy work didn't officially exist. Nor did the government department it was done for. "How long have you been watching me?"

"Not that long."

"Why tonight?"

He grinned. "If anyone saw anything odd -- well, it's Halloween, and students *will* lark about." Then he sobered. "Besides, you'll need time to put things in place for yourself. If you want to."

"What do you mean?" I whispered.

"If you want to," he emphasised, "I can give you a chance. Just in case you're one of the five percent the chemotherapy doesn't help."

It can be years, even decades, after first diagnosis before it turns aggressive, but the time bomb in my body *could* go off tomorrow. The treatments are good, but they're not perfect.

"How?"

"We exchange blood." He took my hand in his. "I can't make you any promises. It doesn't always happen. Only a few ever turn, and there's no way to tell if you're one of them until you die. It's not much of a hope. But it's better than nothing, if medicine fails you."

I couldn't think clearly. Not when I'd been offered a two-edged bribe like that. "I'll need to think about it."

"Do you want me to go?"

And face this on my own? "No." Besides, I had questions that would need answers.

"Do you want to sleep?"

It wasn't that late, but it didn't take much to tire me. A shock, sex, and another shock was more than enough for one evening. And if he could see, in whatever fashion, that I was ill, he could probably see that the evening had taken its toll. "I'm tired."

So he helped me get ready for bed, without making me feel like an invalid. Then he got into bed and held me. He felt warm and very much alive, and I was glad he was there.

* * * * *

He was still there the next morning, holding onto me as if he was afraid I'd escape. Fast asleep, though, and he didn't stir as I slipped out from under his arm. I felt fine this morning, invigorated.

So fine that I walked to the window, ready to throw the curtains open and enjoy the sunshine. I remembered just in time who -- or what -- I'd picked up last night. It was a south-facing window; the sunlight might hit him. I left the curtains as they were, and went to put the kettle on.

He was awake when I got back, but wrinkled his nose at the mug I offered him. "There's only one thing on my menu now, I'm afraid."

"Then I suppose you'd better get it now, before *my* drink gets cold." I set both mugs down, and slid into bed with him.

He reached for me, smiling. "No questions?"

"Afterwards." Only one question I wanted to ask him now. I'd dreamed of that arse last night, watched once more the muscles flex as he'd walked out of the room. "You happy to go underneath?"

He rolled onto his belly without saying anything -- a silent invitation. The heating had kicked in, so I pulled down the bedclothes; it was warm enough for me now, and no need to worry about him getting cold. I wanted to look at him, see him, see that perfect arse. He looked the age he claimed to have been when he'd been turned, or even younger.

"If I become like you -- how old will I look?"

"You'll look a little younger than you are. But you'll be healthy."

"Dead, but healthy."

14 Jules Jones

He laughed. "I suppose when you put it like that... No aches, no pains, none of the little ways your body reminds you that you're not a teenager any more." Then he grinned. "Well, you can get it up as if you were a teenager."

"Middle-aged forever." I smoothed my hands over his mid-twenties skin, marveling at it.

"Distinguished. And you'll only look it, not feel it. And you can change even that, if you want, although it takes time and effort." He paused, then went on, "And if the chemotherapy works, or you never need it, and you're reborn after your full three score years and ten -- well, you'll just have to put a bit more time and effort into it."

I bent to kiss the small of his back. My own back ached, a little, and I thought of how it would be to make love once again without worrying about creaking joints. The positions I couldn't reach any more. "But what's the price? What do I let loose on the world, if I help you?"

For he was a vampire, for all his courtesy and concern for me.

He rolled over, stared at me. "Not what you're thinking. Yes, some kill for pleasure. But some would have killed for pleasure, or gain, or survival, before they died and were reborn. Have I harmed you?"

"You want something from me."

"I could have made you do as I wanted."

Whether he could have kept it up for as long as he would need, I didn't know, but I knew he could have made a damned good go of it.

I reached for the tube of gel in the bedside cabinet. "I don't know."

"You don't have to decide now. I have time. I can wait." He reached for my wrist, held me so that I would look at him. "But you might not. Don't leave it too long. I don't want to lose you." Then he turned back on his belly, dragging a pillow underneath him.

Not just bribing me. He could probably have made me help him; he didn't need to use sex. And he'd said he was tired of bimbos. We hadn't talked much, but we'd been busy. We'd have time to talk later.

I slathered on the gel, then thrust into him. No finesse, no patience, no foreplay. "Sorry. Want you."

"S all right. Do it properly another time."

He was hot and tight and felt just like any other man. He squeezed down hard around me, encouraging me. He was tempting me simply by reminding me of how much I still had to lose, if my body failed me early.

And how much did I have to lose if I took him up on his offer?

"But you're damned," I whispered. "I'll be damned with you."

"Says who?" he asked. "The same people who've already condemned you for what you're doing right now?"

And with that, the decision was simple.

No qualms now, I fucked him thoroughly. No finesse, no foreplay, but one of the advantages of experience over youth is staying power. As I shoved into him with my cock, I stroked him with my hands. First his body, then his fangs, as he lay gasping and twisting beneath me.

"Now," he commanded, and somehow I pulled out of him, rolled off him. He grabbed me and drew me to him, pulled off the gauze covering the small wounds. And then he bit me again, clutching me to him as I rolled on top of him, facing him now. We came together, feeling it twice-over, spilling semen and blood.

And when it was over, as we lay holding one another, I said, "Yes."

* * * * *

There's a commotion at the ward door. He's here, and he's brought help he can trust, and the nurse doesn't like this many visitors for one patient. But I'm signing myself out; I'm not a patient any more.

"It's all right, Sister. They've come to take me home."

She fusses over me, not happy. "All these young men and women. Who are they, anyway? And why didn't they come at the normal time for discharging patients?"

"My students," I say, looking around at them. I don't know all of them yet, but I will.

He supports me, gently, helping me into the wheelchair. The nurse is still fussing. "We really shouldn't release you, not when you haven't any family to look after you."

"We'll look after him," he says. "I promise. Whatever happens. We'll let you know if he needs anything more."

But I won't. I have all I need now. If the treatment has worked, I won't need anything more from the hospital. And if it hasn't, I'd rather die at home, with my friends who'll know how to look after me. Who'll wait until they're quite sure I'm really dead before calling the doctor.

And he'll be waiting, if I'm not.



Jules Jones

Jules Jones is a materials scientist, whose publishing credentials include such gems as European Union research reports. Thrilling though these might be to at least three readers, Jules believes that variety is the spice of life. Writing erotic sf provides an adequate amount of variety. Recent publications include *The Syndicate* series (with writing partner Alex Woolgrave), published by Loose Id, and short stories in Fishnet Magazine and the 2005 Ultimate Gay Erotica anthology. Jules can be found on the Web http://www.julesjones.com.

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Read on for a tantalizing glimpse of

The Syndicate: Volume 2
by Jules Jones & Alex Woolgrave

Coming Soon from Loose Id

The Syndicate: Volume 2

There was something about the sight of a very pretty woman fondling huge weapons that got Allard excited. Judging by Vaughan's expression, he wasn't the only one. No matter how often Karen touched and patted and stroked suggestively along those rounded barrels, it still affected him. *It's just weapons technology*, he told himself, as usual. *So?* retorted his cock.

He managed to keep a grip on his reactions (or *not* keep a grip on them) for just long enough to perform the necessary computer checks Karen had asked him to carry out on the cargo before it was delivered.

Then he stood there and fidgeted, but she was so involved in trying to give the equipment a hand-job she didn't seem to notice.

Ten unendurable minutes, during which Vaughan finished the last engineering checks. "Can we go now, Karen?" asked Vaughan.

Karen flapped her hand at them, dismissing them without even looking at them. "I can finish the rest of the pre-delivery checks."

Vaughan's bedroom was nearest.

"It's a bit lowering," said Allard, "to think that I don't register on her scale of 'important things' because mine isn't two foot long." He groaned. "Even if it feels like it, at the moment."

"I think it's a good size," said Vaughan, assessing the dimensions.

Allard moaned. "Give me a wank. I need something *now* after watching that!"

He moaned again, this time with relief, as Vaughan started to stroke him through the trousers. He loved that, and Vaughan seemed to have some idea that he liked to be touched through cloth.

Vaughan stopped.

"Bastard!" said Allard, without opening his eyes.

"In the interests of getting a proper grip on it," explained Vaughan, undoing him efficiently and showing him what he meant by a proper grip. Allard moaned, and collapsed against Vaughan's shoulder.

Vaughan put one arm round him to hold him up while the other hand went to work on his cock. A lovely firm grip. Good firm strokes along the whole length. Just what Karen had been doing to her beloved guns. He spared just a moment to wish his cock *was* two feet long, just so that he could enjoy being stroked for…longer. If it was longer.

His brain wasn't coming up with the usual good-quality thoughts; he must be busy with something else. He was.

"Messy little bugger," Vaughan said affectionately.

Allard managed one last spurt, just to convince Vaughan that he never paid any attention to Vaughan's comments.

He sagged happily in Vaughan's arms. "Give me a minute, and I'll do you."

He was still dozing when Vaughan dragged him to the bed and let him fall.

"Mm?" he said, rather woozily.

"Didn't want to let you collapse on the floor, and you're a hell of a weight if I have to prop you up for more than two minutes."

"I feel *much* better now!" said Allard, and stretched. "All right, what would you like? Within reason," he clarified.

"Well, you could just sprawl there while I stick my cock into the melted heap of what's left," said Vaughan.

Allard moaned agreeably and rolled over.

"On the other hand, if you're feeling energetic enough, you could actually pay some attention to my cock. I may not be as fond of women as you are, but I still quite enjoyed the show as well." He paused. "Not Karen as much as the show going on in your trousers."

"You mean you were looking at my trousers instead of what Karen was doing?"

"At least half the time. Yes, she's pretty, but I love it when I can watch you squirming where you stand, gritting your teeth and obviously thinking 'I must not have sex now! I must wait! I can't stand it!"

Allard sighed. He wasn't entirely comfortable with the fact that his body-language was that readable.

"If I wasn't having an affair with you, or if I didn't know you this well, I don't think I'd have noticed," Vaughan said, "but I don't think Karen realised."

Allard sighed harder.

"Now what's the matter?" demanded Vaughan.

"It's embarrassing making a show of myself. It's more embarrassing when you behave as if you can read my mind."

"It's easier to read your mind when you're thinking with your *cock*-head rather than your *real* head," said Vaughan, gently touching both organs.

Allard relaxed a bit, and reached out for Vaughan. "You mentioned a hand-job."

"I wasn't that specific," said Vaughan. "I said 'paying attention to my cock', but I think your mouth would be rather nice as well. You decide."

Allard slid down off the bed to kneel (in a rather relaxed way) at Vaughan's feet.

"I'll suck you, if you can be quick about it." He undid Vaughan's trousers and got his cock out. "Mm?" he asked, around the head.

What people are saying about

The Syndicate: Volume 1

Tech lovers everywhere will devour Jules Jones and Alex Woolgrave's witty new series *The Syndicate*. Like Evanovich in space, Allard and Vaughan banter and wisecrack their way through this sexy, clever futuristic.

-- Stephanie Vaughan, author of *Cruel to be Kind* (Loose Id)

First and foremost, I LOVE THIS! (Ahem!) A warning to all readers: Do not eat or drink anything while actually reading. Stop. Ingest. Return to reading. Have the toys handy. I laughed, squirmed, and gave it my ultimate accolade: I ran to tell my friends. Alex and Jules deserve applause (and pots of money) for a well-written tale with sly humor and believeable characters. Allard is a loveable, arrogant jerk with a heart of gold. Vaughn is all heart. Mark is a perfect foil I'd love to see more of. This story is a geek's paradise. More, I say! More!

-- Lena Austin, author of *Black Widow* (Loose Id)

Deliciously sexy, sarcastically funny and surprisingly sweet... A wonderful futuristic romp!

-- Morgan Hawke, *DarkErotica.net*

The Syndicate combines wicked humor with...well, more wicked humor, then adds some wicked sex and throws in a little futuristic fun to top things off. Did I say top? The Syndicate talks about that, too. I snickered throughout the book and enjoyed each page.

-- Treva Harte, author of Every Good Boy Deserves Favor (Loose Id)

The Syndicate: Volume 1 is a rather humorous and erotic story about two men. The story is fast-paced and the characters interesting to say the least. Jules Jones and Alex Woodgrave write a hot story in The Syndicate: Volume 1. Amusing characters, humor, and delicious sex are all present.

-- Sinclair Reid, Romance Reviews Today