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Private Dances
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ISBN: 978-1-934166-437, 1-934166-43-X

Printed in the United States of America.

Torquere Press electronic edition / November 2006

Torquere Press eBooks are published by Torquere Press, PO Box 2545, Round Rock, TX 78680.
<http://www.torquerepress.com>

Private Dances

By BA Tortuga

"I Wanna Be a Cowboy" blared over the speakers, the lights bright and blinding in his eyes. It was always a little chilly up on stage for the first fifteen seconds or so, then the lights on his oiled skin and the dancing warmed him up. Made him sweat.

Dale moved, one hand on the pole, one hand up in the air like he was riding eight seconds. He couldn't see the eyes watching him, couldn't hear the hoots or hollers from the crowd, but still, he knew they were there, were watching him, trying to see his face under the shadow of the wide brim of his cowboy hat.

Watching his prick, his ass framed by the leather chaps.

Shit. No thinking, Dale-man. No thinking. Just listen to the music and dance. That's it. Five minutes more and then the shift was over.

Five hundred bucks in his back pocket, baybee. One semester's worth of books for a night's work.

Hoo-boy.

He was just leaving the stage, ready to get his shit and go tip out with the DJ when the stage manager stopped him. "Hey, man, I know you're about off, but there's an offer from one of the boxes. You up for it?"

"How good an offer?" He really needed to study. He had a test tomorrow in anatomy, but rent was coming due....

"Two hundred and you don't have to tip it out." Which meant no ten percent off the top before he ever left the club.

Two hundred. Groceries, man. For a *month*. "Okay. Which one?"

"The far north box. They've been apprised of the rules." Manny clapped him on the back. "Thanks, man."

"No sweat." He slipped on a g-string, then headed up the stairs, whistling along with Rick's music, the Latin beat catchy, fun, bouncy. There were two guys in the shadowy box, both suits. One was the sort he was used to, Hell, he thought maybe he'd seen the guy before. A little on the hefty side, thick graying hair, thick lips. Not hideous, but nothing he wanted too close to certain parts of him.

The other guy was more in the shadows, sitting back in the lounge chair, a lowball dangling from his hand. Dale was pretty sure he'd never seen that guy before. Not at all. Cheeks like razorblades and eyes that sparkled in the low light; the guy watched him with predatory ease, none of the blustering and pretending he wasn't interested coming from him like it did the other guy.

"I'm Dee. Y'all asked for a private dance?" He tipped the hat low, let his body move to Rick's music. He wasn't so good at this part -- the talking part.

"We did." Oh, that voice was like the look. Dark and sharp, with just a hint of an accent. "Don't talk, Dee. Just dance."

"Yes, sir." Okay, buddy. Close your eyes and listen to the damn music. No thinking.

None.

Except about the money.

And pizza.

Oh... that sounded good.

Maybe mushroom and sausage. Extra cheese.

There was no touching. No inappropriate groping. Just the music and the sound of the big guy breathing hard and the... unnerving silence from the other one. He could feel those eyes on him. He really could.

It made him nervous, made his heart race a touch.

Sorta started to make him hard, which was weird as all Hell.

The song ended and another started up, not really Rick's sort of thing, more his own, which was okay, just a little freaky. But it was a little easier to ride the bronc to. It made him smile, thinking about bronc riding, about the way horses felt when they were moving and how he had managed to use that to make money in the big city.

Go him.

There. Now somewhere there at the end of that song he heard a sound, and it wasn't the big guy whimpering, though that was there too now that he was listening. It sounded like a growl. That was his last bar on that one, and he had one song to go. That was how it went. Private dance was three in a row.

The next song was slow, sultry, the house lights going low as George and Hank did their damn near fucking on stage act. It was surprisingly hot, the guys' relationship new enough that the emotions weren't faked, weren't fucked up.

Well, that and that black light body paint shit they used in their act was fucking cool.

"Dance, not watch, Dee."

His cheeks just burned and he ducked his head, hiding behind his hat. Great, asshole, blow your tip. Think sexy, sultry. Think about the shit Ollie taught you about dancing. One more song.

He could still see the guys writhing on stage out of the corner of his eye, though, and it helped with the rhythm, helped him concentrate on the music so he could get this over with.

The song picked up tempo and his hips followed it, hand sliding up to work the hat, let it dip low.

He thought it was all gonna go south when the big guy reached for him, because that wasn't allowed up here and if they got kicked out he'd never get his money, but one of the other guy's hands shot out, grabbing the big guy's wrist, a rough, foreign sounding word snapping out.

He backed away, stayed closer to the wall, well out of reach until the song ended, the applause from the main floor loud. Okay. Three songs up. Three songs down. Good money. "Hope you enjoyed your dance, fellas."

"We did." He could see the glint of a gold ring as the guy, the one with the hot eyes, held out some bills, waiting for him to come take them.

"Thanks." He moved over, teeth chewing his bottom lip a little. Come on, Dale-man. Get your pizza money and go. His fingers touched the money. "Y'all have a good one."

"Do you dance again tomorrow?" The man's fingers never touched his, but he didn't quite let go of the cash.

"No, sir. Friday through Monday. Every week." He had classes tomorrow and Thursday. Wednesday was all his.

"I see. Thank you, Dee." The money slipped into his palm, just the barest touch of warm, dry fingers closing his hand around it. "You were most entertaining."

"Thanks." He tipped his hat to both of them, backing out of the door with a smile. "Come back and see us."

He heard the dark one laugh as he left, would swear he heard an, "Oh, yes. I will."

The club was so not his usual thing. Hell, doing *business* in a club wasn't his thing. Gen had only gone because Dimitri had insisted, and he'd sort of taken it as an insult, as Dimitri's way of making a statement about Gen's... oh, what was the best word? Proclivities?

That was before the kid with the chaps came out and made it all better, as far as he was concerned. Maybe Dimitri wasn't such an idiot after all, and had known there was a bit more quality to this place than he'd thought. Possibly a lot more.

The private dance was an indulgence, one he usually didn't bother with, but damn. And it wasn't just him. Dimitri had tried to touch the kid, probably without even thinking about it. Gen had wanted to himself. He was just a little better at self-control.

He snorted. Sure. That was why he was back at that shitty little club a week later, Friday night in a private box and two scotches later, waiting for the cowboy kid to hit the stage.

Self-control, his ass.

The cowboy music started up, and the lights went down, the DJ announcing Cowboy Dee. The kid was built, tan and waxed smooth, black cowboy hat shadowing the chiseled face.

The dance started and Dee turned, showed off that tight ass exposed by the leather chaps.

Damn. The kid was good. Oh, he wasn't the polished, plastic Ken doll that you might find in an all male-revue, but that was what made him so fucking attractive. Gen wanted. Badly. He held up a hand, summoning a waiter. This time he could enjoy the private dance all by himself, without worrying about Dimitri's reactions.

"Can I help you?" The waiter popped in as Dee turned around, hand wrapped around the pole, thighs parting as he slithered down.

Gen flashed the waiter his best smile, knowing just how well he could calculate it to work. "I hope so. I'd like to put in for a private dance from him when he's done."

"Dee? I'll tell the manager right away." Too-pretty-to-be-real blue eyes sized him up. "He's real picky, though, and doesn't put out. You sure you want him?"

"I'm sure." Looked like there was backstabbing in every profession. "I want Dee."

"Whatever you want. I'll tell Max." The guy faded off, giving him a chance to watch Dee's little bump and grind. The kid was well-endowed, full and pretty without being aroused, tight little blond curls trimmed above the heavy cock.

He had no idea what it was about the kid that made his hands itch and made him sweat, but he really wasn't one to question his pleasures, so Gen just ordered another scotch on the rocks and watched, waiting.

Dee danced for three songs and then circled for his tips. Being out of the harsh lights made him look less in control, younger, less polished.

Yeah. Gen liked that. Maybe that was what grabbed him. All of that oiled, automatic bumping and grinding went away when the kid had to do something out of routine, something spontaneous. Gen felt his body tighten, felt sweat on his upper lip. Yeah.

He watched the manager come up, talk to Dee a minute. At first Dee shook his head, then his box got a long look and the manager got a nod.

Score.

Excellent. He smiled, sipping his scotch. He shifted, crossing his legs, barely glancing at the stage to see who was up next.

The little door to the box was tapped, then Dee came in, eyes going a little wide when they saw him. "Evenin'."

"Good evening, Dee." Oh, that was a good look, that surprise. Made Dee much more human, made him even harder. He hid it well, he thought, his trousers draping just so. "Thank you for agreeing to dance for me."

"You're welcome." Dee nodded, the little g-string pocket holding Dee high and tight. He was close enough to see each little ripple on that six-pack, the way those pale pink nipples were tight from the sweat evaporating off them.

Fuck, that was something. Gen breathed deep, smelling sweat and leather, the scent making that breath catch in his chest. He wondered if Dee could hear it.

The music started and damn if it wasn't something urban and bass-heavy, Dee's nose wrinkling a little. Still, those hips started moving, Dee making the best of it.

Gen made the best of it, too, though he would rather see Dee move to music he was more comfortable with. He would rather see Dee move like he had the last time, when he saw whatever it was he'd seen behind his closed eyelids and had danced like he was riding a bucking bull. Gen had been able to imagine Dee riding him the very same way.

Dee didn't try to keep up with the driving beat. Oh, no. The boy just closed those dark brown eyes and moved half-time. Doing what he did best, riding that bull.

Gen started pulling in air in time to the swirl of those hips, his breath coming in and out with Dee's beat, not the music's. The kid was just stunning, even though he couldn't put his finger on why. Gen chuckled, low and dark. No, he wasn't *allowed* to put his fingers on it.

His laugh got him a quick look, cheeks heating. Mmm... that got him the sweet little hat trick, one hand rising to dip that black hat; the other sliding down that flat belly.

Nice. Better than nice. Little show-off. Gen almost groaned, but he bit it back, sipping on his nearly dry scotch. He was going to need more if his mouth stayed this dry.

The next song was pure sex, slow and sensual and he could see Dee relax, see him get into it. See that heavy cock start to fill that little black satin pouch. The scent intensified, dark and male and fucking mesmerizing. Gen cursed under his breath, shifted again to give himself some more room. He was hard. So hard.

He could just see that hard body, rippling and rocking, muscles tight as that ass worked his cock.

That was what he wanted after all, wasn't it? The appeal of 'look don't touch' only went so far. He wanted to see if the kid would be as hot on the inside as he was onstage.

Dee turned, teasing, hand dipping down, that ass just rocking.

Gen's hands clenched. No. He wasn't some sleazy old man like Dimitri. He wasn't going to touch until the kid asked for it, or until the dance was over and they could negotiate something else.

The song came to a close, Dee's skin sheened with sweat, the water beading over the oil.

"You're good at that, Dee." Was that his voice? Gen didn't bother to clear his throat, but damn. He prided himself on a bit more control than that.

"Thank you, sir." Those eyes met his, that drawl thick. "I'm glad you enjoy it."

"I do. Am I allowed to buy you a drink?" That would be a start, at least, and get him something wet of his own as well.

"Sure, if you're willing." Dee was breathing a little hard and the square, big hand reached out to open the privacy door, signal for a waiter.

"I am." The waiter came in and Gen signaled for another scotch. "And whatever Dee would like as well."

"I'll take a Bud Light, please." Dee smiled, nodded at him. "Thanks. You mind if I sit a second?"

"Not at all." Gen watched Dee intently as he moved, enjoying every slide and pull of muscle.

Dee took one of the chairs, turned it and straddled, leaning against the back. The action was smooth as silk, not practiced, just... Dee.

The little glimpse of what was real under the illusion of lights and music was more intriguing than anything he'd seen all night. "The waiter says you're picky."

"Picky?" The hat got tipped back and Dee tilted his head. "Why?"

"I'm not sure. He didn't seem to think you would want to drink with me." That wasn't exactly what the little flirt had been about, but it would do.

"He's just jonesing for a drink of his own, is all. He wants to dance on stage."

"Does he? Maybe he needs a better look." He looked Dee over. "I like yours."

"Well, lots of people make something up. I just went with what I knew." That hat was tipped again, Dee giving him a genuine smile.

He smiled back, this one not calculated at all, just a reward for the bright grin he'd gotten. "You like what you do, Dee?"

"Sometimes, yeah. It's better than McDonalds; gets my tuition paid."

"So you are a student?" Why that surprised him he didn't know. Gen supposed he tended to think of dancers as not existing outside the club.

"Yeah." Dee chuckled. "I know, I know. Not romantic and I'm supposed to do that illusion thing."

"Would it shock you to know I am not looking for romance or illusion? I only came back for you." There. See what the cowboy would make of that.

"Me? Why?" The look was surprised for a moment, then Dee relaxed into a grin. "I'm nowhere near the best-hung cowboy around here."

"Probably not. But you are the one who caught my eye." Gen simply stared at Dee, letting him feel the weight of it, letting him feel how much Gen meant it. It took something special to make him cancel a flight to Toronto and stay right where he was for an extra week.

Those cheeks went a deep, sweet red and the brim of that hat went down. "Thank you, sir. That's plumb nice to hear."

"You're welcome." They sat silently for a few moments, because he was reluctant to ask the predictable question of when Dee got off work. It sounded trite.

Their drinks came and broke the silence, Dee drinking deep, throat working. A single line of liquid escaped, slipped down Dee's chin.

Without even thinking, Gen reached out and caught the tiny droplet, bringing it to his own mouth to taste.

Dee's eyes met his, the kid licking his lips. "Thanks. I was thirsty."

"No trouble at all. When can you leave?" So much for trite. Gen smiled, shaking his head a tiny bit.

"Leave? I just did my last set. I'm not a headliner; Friday and Saturday I just warm the crowd up."

"Leave. With me." There could be no mistaking his intent, he thought, not stated that way, and not with the look he gave Dee.

"Where... where do you want to go?" That glimpse of Dee's youth showed again, tempting him.

Gen pressed the advantage, leaning into Dee's personal space, sharing air and body heat. "I have a hotel room, if it makes you feel better."

"I don't. I mean, I never stay and talk after a dance. Ever."

"And with the sort of man who is usually here, I can see why not. I am not that sort. If you wish to go now I will not stop you, of course." Gen leaned back, took the money he had promised out of his pocket and held it out.

"I... I'd need to go get street clothes on so we could go and... talk." Dee stood, put the chair back, that hat dipped low as his money was taken. "I... it'll take a few minutes."

"I will wait for you, then." Smiling again, Gen sat back and watched that sweet ass move as Dee straightened. Lovely.

"Okay." Dee headed out, a little unsure, a little shaky, eyes hidden. Then that square chin lifted. "You got a name?"

"Adriano Genovese. Gen, since that's a bit of a mouthful." He would have offered a hand to shake, but that might have invaded Dee's confidence too much.

"Adriano." His name sounded... interesting, drawled into seventeen syllables. "Nice to meet you."

"It's very good to meet you too, Dee. Now go get dressed so we can get better acquainted." Gen laughed, the sound low and intimate. "I believe that is the first time I have ever said *that* to someone."

"There's a first time for everything, I figure." He got another real, honest grin, a nod, then Dee was gone.

Now all he had to do was wait and see if Dee would come back. Gen paid the tab and watched the sweet young thing on stage for a moment, wondering at himself. Ah, well. The only way to see what it was about Dee that so consumed him was to have the boy. Then maybe he could move on and get on with his business.

There were people waiting for him.

Chapter Two

Okay.

Okay.

Oh, fuck.

Not okay.

What was he thinking?

Worse, what was he doing?

He wasn't a whore. He wasn't, but damn, how did somebody say that when no one said nothing about paying?

Not only that, but \$300.

Twice.

Which was \$600. Which was way more than pizza. Which was cool.

Dale got himself cleaned up, makeup and oil all washed off, and got into a pair of jeans and a t-shirt, a simple leather jacket, his real hat and his boots.

Okay.

Okay.

He could do this.

Hell, the man was hot, mysterious. Sexy.

Foreign.

He managed not to talk to anybody, just sneak up the stairs and tap on the private box door again without freaking out or running.

Go him.

The door opened right away, Adriano stepping out, those laser-like blue-green eyes running over him. "Are you ready?"

"Yeah. Yeah, I am." Mostly. Of course, he felt less like a boy toy in the real clothes, more like Joe Blow.

"Would you like to have something to eat? I could take you out, or the hotel has room service." One hand cupped his elbow and Adriano steered him gently out, brushing past a few of the guys who might look like they wanted to ask for something.

"I... " His stomach growled, loud enough to hear, and Dale chuckled. "Oh, no. I'm not hungry. Not at all. Lord."

The guy didn't look upset. In fact he laughed, too, squeezing Dale's elbow. "What would you like?"

"I'm pretty simple, Gen. Meat, potatoes, bread. So long as I can recognize it, I'll probably eat it."

"Then you must try the filet at my hotel." They stepped outside and in a pretty darned short amount of time there was a car with a driver. Just like that.

"Sounds good to me. Thanks." He slid into the car when the door opened, looking all around, just so he could remember it all.

Gen sat next to him, just close enough to feel, just close enough to smell spicy-citrus cologne. He never touched or anything, didn't have grabby hands like the guys a lot of the dancers bitched about, but he made it pretty clear that he wanted to.

Dale leaned into the seat, trying to decide whether to make conversation or just keep his mouth shut. He went with quiet, but not stiff, giving Gen a good, long look before offering the man a stick of gum.

"Do I need it?" Gen looked a little surprised, but not pissed or anything.

"Need what?" He looked at the gum. How the Hell was he supposed to know if Gen was nervous and needed something to chew? Oh. Breath-freshening. Duh. "Oh, no. No, I just needed one and was sharing."

"Oh." Gen's eyes crinkled, and he took a piece, fingers surprisingly callused and rough against his. "Thank you."

"No problem." He took one for himself, the mint sharp and chewing giving his mouth something to do.

The car wasn't one of those huge limos, but it did have an extended back seat and a screen between them and the driver. It was quiet running, too. There was a stereo and a laptop computer and man... he'd never seen so many gadgets. When he was done taking it all in, Gen was still staring at him, chewing the gum slowly.

"This is something else. Puts my little pickup to shame." Still, he wouldn't give for Bessie. She was a honey.

"It allows me to do what I need to on the road, I suppose." Gen shrugged. "I have my own car at home. I like it better."

"Well, there's nothing like one that's set all like you like it. What kind do you have?" Cars he knew.

"It's an Aston Martin." Those blue-green eyes actually lit up, genuine pleasure in the smile. "It handles like a dream."

"No shit? They're fine beasts. I saw one once, grey as a dove's wing."

"Yes. I love it." They shared a grin, two men who knew their cars, and for a minute he could actually relax. Then they pulled up at the hotel and the driver popped the door open.

He stepped out, settled his hat. Damn. Ritzy and shit. Definitely not the Motel 6.

Gen just swept him right in, ignoring the doorman and everything, and took him right on in like the guy at the desk wasn't wrinkling his nose at his jeans and boots. There was nothing this guy did without confidence, it looked like.

He tried not to feel like a bumpkin and stare at shit, but damn, he wanted to. The place was fine - big-assed mirrors with gold frames, chandeliers, a huge staircase going up and up. Even a fountain. Inside.

The room or suite or whatever Gen took him to was just as huge and just as fancy. It had a front room with couches and fresh flowers and mirrors and shit, too. Man, the front room was bigger than his whole efficiency. He walked over to the window, looked out over the city and the lights and smiled. Damn, that was pretty.

"It does have a nice view, doesn't it?" He'd almost forgotten Gen was there, but the voice came from right behind him, reminding him. Gen's hand on his back stopped him from turning, resting just above his ass, warm through his shirt.

"It's right fine." He surprised himself by getting a little flushed, that hand on his back the focus of all his attention.

"It is." Oh, growly. Those fingers moved, tiny little motions that raised the hair on the back of his neck, made shivers go up his spine.

Oh. Oh, damn. He swallowed hard, trying to think of something to say and managing only to swallow his fucking gum.

"Do I make you nervous, Dee?" There was nothing mocking in the question, not that he could hear. There was just that relentless heat as Gen moved even closer.

"Yeah. Yeah, you do. I... well, it's no secret I'm out of my league."

"Are you?" That damned hand slid up his back, just between his shoulder blades, before sliding back down real slow, stopping just at his hip, curling around. "How do you like your steak?"

"Medium-rare." The words were harsh, husky, and he swallowed, cleared his throat.

"Oh, good. There's nothing worse than a well-done filet." The heat behind him faded away, and he could hear Gen ordering supper. Steaks, potatoes, salad, all of it so normal it gave him a bit of his balance back. Just a bit.

He took his hat off, set it on one of the fancy wood tables, and ran his fingers in his hair.

He almost flinched when someone else touched his hair, had to be Gen, but damn he hadn't heard the man move. Stroking, teasing, Gen pressed close behind him. "What a wonderful color."

"Straw, my momma used to say." He tried not to shiver. Everywhere the man touched him was hot, almost burning, making the not-touched bit goose-pimpled.

"Straw hardly does it justice." Gen combed through his hair, palm cupping his scalp. "But then mine has been compared to black wool. Mothers are hardly complimentary at times."

"Wool? It looks softer than that." His head followed those touches, resting in Gen's palm for a second before he thought about it.

"Does it? You're welcome to touch it." Gen turned him a bit, and they were so close, almost eye to eye. He could feel Gen's breath on his cheek.

Dale couldn't even imagine how he'd go about turning that offer down, so he didn't try. Gen's hair was soft, catching just a little on the calluses on his fingers. The curls clung to his fingers, springing back into place as he let go. Gen stared at him, eyes going dark, and they seemed to sway, coming closer, until those surprisingly soft lips settled at the corner of his mouth.

Oh.

He inhaled, the scent of mint making him smile. "Thank you."

"You're welcome." He got the barest kiss, Gen's lips moving so, so gently over his, and the knock came on the door announcing room service. Damn. He had no idea they'd been standing there that long.

Dale caught a glimpse of himself in the big mirror, cheeks flushed, lips parted. He looked... dazed.

Of course, he sorta felt dazed, so that made sense.

Sort of.

Lord, lord.

"Come and eat, Dee. I think you will like it very much." Shit, that man could move. Gen was across the room and holding out a chair for him, waiting patiently.

"It smells good." He managed to walk over and sit without making an ass out of himself. Go him.

"It does." Gen flashed him a smile, opening a snowy white napkin and putting it on his lap. "Tell me where you're from?"

He got himself settled and grinned. "Ranger -- it's, oh... seven, eight hours northwest of here. Little town in west Texas. Nice enough place. Dusty and dry."

The cover was whisked off his tray, and damn, that was a fine looking steak. Big fluffy potato. Texas toast. Yeah.

Gen cut into his own steak, nodding easily. "I come from a very small town myself."

"Yeah? You're not from Texas, though." He grinned over, winked. "I notice a distinct lack of 'y'all'."

"True." Gen chewed for a moment, closing his eyes and humming at the taste. It was sexy as Hell. "I am from Cetara, a town on the Amalfi coast, just south of Naples."

Naples? Come on, Dale. You know this. You do. Naples. Not the town by Texarkana, either. Right! The boot country. Italy. Fucking-a. "Oh, damn. You're a far ways from home."

"Yes. Though I suppose I live in Rome more than anywhere now. Still, Texas is very different." There was a glint there, that told him that Gen was teasing him. Texas wasn't like anywhere else, for sure.

"That's how I felt about Houston when I got here. It seemed very different." Hell, he'd never been anywhere but Abilene when he'd come here. Different didn't begin to tell it all.

"Yes." Gen indicated his meal. "Please. Eat."

He nodded, dug in to the steak, groaning low as the meat almost melted in his mouth. Damn. Just, damn.

They ate, both of them intent on the meal for a good long while. And just as he was thinking he couldn't eat another bite he found out there was cobbler for dessert. With cream.

He chuckled. stretched up to make room. "Oh, now, that's plumb unfair. Cobbler's one of those things on the 'better than sex' list."

"Dessert that is better than sex?" He got a look. "I don't believe it. Obviously you have been having sex with the wrong people."

"Either that or you've been eating the wrong desserts." He grinned over, almost feeling like he wasn't the biggest dork on earth.

"That could be. This, according to the menu, is a specialty. I have not had it before." Gen shared his grin.

"No? Honest? Oh, cobbler's good. I swear it." He couldn't dig in like he normally would, but he gave it a good go.

He could see Gen out of the corner of his eye, trying it gingerly, and had to laugh at the look of sheer bliss on the man's face. Yeah. That was cobbler.

"See? I told you no lie." He took another small bite, licking the cream off the spoon.

"It is very good. You will have to tell me, after, if it is better than sex, hmm?"

Oh. Right. Damn. Although, after the last hour, he wasn't feeling reluctant -- nervous, yeah, but not reluctant.

"You needn't look so worried." Reaching out, Gen covered one of his hands, the fingers closing around his. "We have shared a fine meal. If you wish to leave I will have Paolo take you home."

Dale gave Gen a smile. "Not worried, nervous. There's a difference." Not much of one, but there was.

"There is." Rough in texture, soft in touch, Gen's fingers stroked his hand, turned it so the touch found his palm, making his fingers curl. "Come and sit with me awhile. Such a meal needs time to digest."

Dale nodded, stood, fingers still twined with Gen's, strangely reluctant to let go.

They made their way to the largest of the sofas, Gen using his hand to pull him down and sit close beside the man. The muscles all along Gen's arm and thigh were firm and strong against him, the fabric of Gen's shirt soft, maybe silk.

"Thank you for supper, sir. It was good." He felt all lazy and excited at once -- like he could feel every inch of skin.

"I enjoyed it the more for the company. It has been a long time since anyone intrigued me so, Dee."

"Dale." He met Gen's eyes, shrugged. "Dee's my stage name." If he was gonna get personal with the man, he'd best do it for real.

"Dale." Gen smiled, and he was getting good at telling the real smiles, because they actually drew the skin up around Gen's eyes. "We progress, I think. How long have you been dancing?"

"Almost eight months." He hadn't intended on dancing. Hell, didn't know he could.

"You have a talent for it. You are quite something to watch." Gen... leaned, and suddenly their joined hands had slid down to the inside of his thigh.

His legs parted instinctively, muscles shifting in his jeans. "I just sort of do what feels right. It works better than a big choreographed deal."

"Yes. It works very well. I'm sure I am not the only one who thinks so. The man I was with the first night. He wanted you as well." The back of Gen's hand rubbed against the seam of his jeans, so lightly that it seemed accidental.

He wrinkled his nose without even thinking. "That part... that's just my job."

"So you like the dance, but not so much the customers, hmm?" Okay, that was no accident. Gen had very deliberately turned their hands so he was touching himself through the denim, pressing down against his cock.

Dale shifted, hips rolling a little. "I like some of the customers. The private dances are... challenging. Unnerving sometimes."

"I imagine." The warm weight at his side increased as Gen pressed against him, the weight of their joined hands sliding, pushing.

His chin dipped, lips parting on a low groan. Talk about unnerving. Oh, lord.

Gen finally gave up acting like they were just sitting, turning to catch his lips, kissing him just like the man had the first time. Gentle. Easy.

Oh, now. That was... just fine as all get out.

He returned the kiss, finding it easy to do, like falling off a log, one hand reaching up, touching those soft curls again. His mouth was opened, Gen pushing in with his tongue, slow and soft, just tasting. Oh, that felt good. Almost as good as Gen's free hand coming up to rest against his throat, thumb pressing where his pulse beat. Gen tasted like cream and peach and sugar and he moaned without meaning to, sliding a little closer. Damn.

"Mmm." The sound was low, happy, just like the one Gen had made biting into the steak or the cobbler. Just like Dale was a treat. Gen pulled him closer, hand sliding around to the back of his neck, fingers scraping across his nape. Oh. He shuddered, belly and balls going tight as a board.

Gen moved, turning him so he slid back along the back of the couch, off balance, kicking like an overturned turtle. Then Gen was sliding down on top of him, kissing him, tongue running along the inside of his lips. He opened up, his tongue touching Gen's, so careful, so slow. Sweet.

Gen hummed a little, sliding against him, lips moving on his, tongue tasting him. One of Gen's hands slid up his thigh to his hip, holding on, anchoring him. They were breathing together, slow and easy, his hand cupping the back of Gen's head, fingers fascinated by those curls. Gen's fingers curled in return around his hipbone, slipping under to cup his ass. There was nothing urgent in it, no frantic grabbing. Just feeling. His cock filled, nerves dissipating, melting under the slowly building heat.

Gen's cheek was rough against his, the late evening whiskers obvious this close up. Gen's eyelashes were dark and spiky, eyes just stunning blue-green. Those lips were soft, moving over

his chin, Gen's tongue dipping into the little hollow below his lower lip. It made him wonder what Gen was seeing, whether it seemed as much like a dream, like a fantasy he told himself after he'd jacked off and the bed got cold.

"What's going on behind those eyes of yours?" The question startled him, Gen smiling at him as it was asked, lips curving against his.

"I was thinking you were like a dream." Oh, God. Out loud that sounded ten types of heavy-duty stupid.

"A good one, I hope. You're much more solid than a dream." The hand on his ass squeezed, and Gen's mouth slid down his neck to bite lightly at his Adam's apple.

That surprised a sound out of him -- half gasp, half chuckle -- as he rolled, hips pushing against Gen's heat.

"Yes. Like that." He could hear the smile, could feel it against the base of his throat as Gen licked and nibbled, never hard enough to leave a mark, which was good, 'cause that could get him fired. Then he was left kinda cold and gasping as Gen sat up, fingers working the buttons of his shirt. "I want to see you, Dale."

Dale smiled, sitting up himself. "Again." He worked his cuffs open, fingers steady now. "You've seen all I have."

"Not like this. Not just you and I." His shirt slid right off down his arms, Gen staring intently at him as it went. "And now I can touch."

"Yeah. Yeah, you can. Can I?" He motioned toward Gen's shirt, Gen's buttons.

"Of course." Gen's thumbs slid over his nipples before Gen dropped his hands, offering to let Dale start undressing him.

He'd never undressed anyone before. Man, it was harder than he thought it would be. Buttons were backward. Gen's skin kept distracting him. The scent of the man made him dizzy -- probably some strange, drugging Italian perfume.

As soon as he got the buttons undone, Gen shrugged out of the shirt. Nice. Tanned and kinda fuzzy, but he had a nice wide chest and a six pack of his own, along with tight little brown nipples. Dale's fingers were curious, touching just lightly, like he was petting a critter he'd not made friends with yet.

Gen shivered, reaching out to him again now that the shirt was out of the way, cupping his shoulder in one hand, his ribs in the other. Those rough fingers traced his skin, learning his shape, mapping him.

Gen's body was so different than his, the skin and hair fascinating, the dark nipples hard, getting harder as his fingers circled them. Gen's breath caught, the wide chest rising and falling under his

touch. Then he got a wicked grin, and Gen echoed his touch, fingers coming to circle his own nipples, just the same way, letting him see what it felt like.

He shivered, the sensation sharp, tingling, nipples going hard, cock going even harder. "Oh. Damn."

"You can see why I like it." Lashes lowering, Gen bent and pressed his lips to one of Dale's nipples, tongue flicking hard against it.

His belly went tight, belt buckle digging into him as his hips rolled. Oh. Oh, shit. That was. Damn. Damn.

"Mmm. I can smell you. Hot." That stubbled cheek rubbed where the wet mouth had just been, and Gen worked over to his other nipple, sucking it in, teeth worrying it.

Shit, he didn't really think they were for anything but decorative purposes. Sweet Christ, that drew his balls up like a bit of raw leather left in the sun.

"Good?" Like the man didn't know what the heck he was doing. Gen just kept at him, teeth and tongue moving, driving him higher and higher.

"I... shit, Gen. I'm gonna..." He pulled away, eyes wild. "That's... Christ. Your mouth."

"You taste wonderful." He got a twinkling smile, Gen looking up at him. "Should I stop?"

"I... Hell, I don't know. That... that's damn near better than cobbler."

"That is good to hear." Oh, the man was a charmer, teasing him that way, touching him and kissing him.

Dale did his dead level best to touch back, to make this surprisingly generous man feel as good as he did. He figured it was working the way Gen moved against him, the way the man started breathing heavy. The skin under his hands and mouth was flushed, hot, sweat starting to bead up on it. He lapped at the sweat, moaning when the salt and musk made his cock throb, so he did it again.

"Dale." Gen lifted up, bracing one knee against the couch, the other foot against the floor, and reached for his jeans, working the buckle of his belt. "I need the rest."

"Let me get my boots off." His cock was pushing against his zipper like a bull at the gate, balls just aching.

Gen sat back, watching him, hand dropping to touch the bulge in those fine gray slacks. Oh, now. That was right pretty. Damn near addictive. He managed to get his boots off without a hassle, then his socks, settling back in just his jeans.

That was all the invitation Gen needed to attack his jeans again, working the button and zipper so fast his head spun. He lifted his butt up, jeans and briefs sliding down his hips easy, cock bobbing up to say howdy.

Gen touched the tip of his cock, fingers dragging across the slit, thumb dragging down the ridge underneath. "Oh. Perfect."

It was a low purr that dragged from him, all sandpaper-rough from wanting. He reached out, hand sliding down that flat belly. Gen sucked that belly in, let his hand just naturally drop inside the waistband of those fancy pants, Gen's hand working him all the while. His fingers brushed against damp heat and he moaned, attention split between the sensations in his belly and the need to touch, to see. Smiling like he knew, Gen reached down to cup his balls, fingers just barely tracing over them, pushing them up.

"Oh." His thighs parted like nothing going, breath catching in his chest. Nobody'd ever really touched there. It seemed damn near... perverse.

"You must tell me if I hurt. This can be... sensitive." Gen leaned, pushing up into his hand, rolling his balls up and forward against the base of his cock.

He managed to get Gen's pants open, get his fingers on their prize. Lord, he was randy as a penned goat. "Not hurtin'. Lord."

"Oh, good." Gen just kept on keeping on, touching and kneading. It was hot, damn it.

And the man was uncut. It was fascinating, the way the skin slid, how soft it was, how different from him.

Gen's eyes closed for a minute, the man moaning for him, hips arching. Yeah. That was the way. He could see the flush rise under Gen's skin, feel it under his hand. It felt good, felt like maybe he wasn't completely outclassed. Then, as he leaned down, licked Gen's shoulder, it just felt good for good's sake.

"You feel so good." Gen crowded him again, pushing him down, hand cupping his cock again, bringing their cocks together as Gen covered him.

"Yeah. Yeah." He forgot all about worrying and just felt and touched and tasted, nerves catching all afire.

Gen kissed him then, nothing at all like the soft, sweet kisses before. This one was deep, hard, burning his tongue like too hot coffee, making him gasp. They found their rhythm, tongues and hips and hands and, sweet Jesus, this was....

Damn.

Gen's cock was fiery against his, the sweat of their skin making them slick, drops of pre-come making it even wetter. It was so good.

He grunted, pushed up, riding it. "Soon. Lord, soon."

"Yes. Please." That strong hand pulled them both together, squeezed, Gen's hips rocking down against him as Gen bit into the flesh of his lower lip.

Heat sorta washed over him and he came, eyes rolling, Gen's name on his lips. He heard Gen's answering moan, felt it as Gen rocked and jerked and came against him, just like that. Hot and wet and fast.

Oh, that was. Damn. And also wow. With a touch of holy shit.

Gen panted, leaning against him there on the couch, sweaty and heavy. "Mmm. Dale. Bene."

He was gonna assume that was close to bueno and nodded. "Mighty fine."

A soft chuckle landed on his skin, the puff of air drying on his shoulder. "You should see what I can do with a bed."

"Lord, lord, my brains might melt." He grinned, chuckled a little, feeling fine.

"Well, I do not know that I would want that." Gen looked at him. "How do you feel about whirlpools and champagne?"

"Champagne makes me silly and I love the water."

"Then we must try it." Hoisting up off him, Gen held out a hand. "I have a whirlpool big enough for far too many people. You must promise to sit close."

He nodded, hand sliding right into Gen's. "I can manage that."

"Good." That smile flashed again as Gen tugged him toward the bathroom. "Champagne makes me... how would you say? Horny."

"Yeah?" Oh, now that he had to see. Up close and personal-like.

Chapter Three

Champagne did indeed make Dale silly. It was the most charming thing Gen had ever seen. It seemed to surprise Dale, too, which was funny, considering that he was the one who had said it would happen.

They sloshed in the hot tub for a good long while, sucking on the champagne, until finally he thought Dale might just float away, and he grabbed Dale up.

"I think we've had enough bubbles, caro."

"Caro... I like how that sounds." Dale stood, water sliding down those amazing muscles, beading in the dark gold curls.

"Do you?" He did, too, which was somewhat distressing. He decided not to think upon it too much, and wrapped an arm around Dale's waist instead, guiding him out of the tub. "You are quite lovely."

"I just clean up well." Dale winked over, eyes twinkling.

"You do. But I have seen many that clean up well, and you are..." He trailed off, shaking his head at himself. He stroked his hand down Dale's back, cupping his bottom. "Are you ready for that bed?"

Those strong muscles tensed under his touch, Dale's moan sweet as wine. "I think I am, Gen."

"So am I." He wanted to see and smell and taste every bit, and on the couch and under the water he had not been able to. He led Dale into the bedroom of the suite, his prick taking an interest already.

Dale's fingers ghosted over his cock, just teasing, just barely touching.

He jumped, his cock jerking under Dale's touch. So sweet, that touch. "Dale."

"Mmmhmm. That's so fine..." The touch was repeated, Dale's fingers feather-light.

His hand clenched on Dale's ass, digging into the muscle as Gen shook from the touches. Such a small thing, the brush of Dale's fingers, to make him so hot. "You feel amazing."

They settled on the bed, stretching out together, those tiny, teasing touches driving him mad. Gen arched against Dale, happy to be fully against him, touching that sweet skin all over. Dale's cheeks were covered in the barest stubble, the gold hairs making his nerves light and spark.

He rubbed, their cheeks touching, his hands sliding down Dale's back. "So pretty."

Sensitive, too, from the low groan he received, from the way Dale pushed against him. The man's skin was smooth, supple, delicious to his fingers. Gen kept on exploring, lips and tongue tracing the vein on the side of Dale's throat, fingers scraping over the backs of Dale's thighs. Dale

didn't just let him touch. No, those fingers traveled and stroked, scraped and petted. It was fascinating the way Dale's need answered his.

They rolled so they were side by side, where both of them could get to each other more easily. Gen stroked Dale's chest, pinching those nipples lightly, remembering how good they'd felt before, how they'd drawn up for him. That got him a shudder, Dale's fingers stroking through his hair, stuttering a little. The tiny bits of flesh went dark and hard, and he squeezed them again, watching Dale's face. It was amazing, how sensitive Dale was.

"Damn." Dale's teeth sank into the swollen bottom lip, warm eyes rolling. "That's... something."

"Yes. It is." He smiled, leaning to lick at Dale's mouth, right where teeth met lip. "Something wondrous."

"Wondrous. Yeah." Dale leaned in, tongue slip-sliding against his, teasing, playing.

They kissed deep, tongues tangling, hands clutching. Gen was amazed at himself. He was ever the cool-headed lover, but this man... Gen could not keep his hands and hips and mouth still.

The kisses grew sharper, Dale more and more confident, the motions of the strong body under his hands needy. Gen liked it. Liked that the nerves were fading, that Dale was no longer the paid dancer, was instead the eager lover. Moving closer, Gen nibbled Dale's lip, letting it sting a bit.

"Uhn." Dale pushed against him, hand on his ass, drawing them closer together.

His cock brushed Dale's, and Gen moaned. The hand on his ass burned, made him gasp and twitch, and he rocked back and forth happily.

"Yes...." Dale's muscles bunched, eyes open, watching him, watching every motion.

He was watching, too, cataloging the way that skin flushed, the way the muscles bunched as he touched arms and ribs and hips. The flat belly rippled, went tight, heavy cock releasing sweet, clear drops that scented the air.

He touched those drops, wanted to taste them, but he didn't. That would be unsafe, and he could exercise that much control at least.

"Oh." The fingers on his ass tightened, body jerking. "Gen. I. Oh."

"Mmm." He could not stop touching, tasting. He wrapped his hand around Dale's cock, pulling lightly.

Dale whimpered, humping his hand, just like that, hips moving smooth and quick. So young. Sweet and good. Gen kept stroking, leaning up on his opposite elbow so he could watch. He wanted it all.

Dale's lips were parted, tongue sliding out, eyes wild and wanton. "Don't stop. Please. Gen."

"Not going to, I promise." As if he could stop striving for those sounds, those looks. He kissed Dale hard, bruising his lips, hand squeezing tight.

Heat spread over his fingers, Dale opening for him, offering him that hot, sweet mouth, those throaty cries.

Oh. Oh, he had to surge against Dale, rubbing furiously against Dale's hip, panting for it. Dale's hand encouraged him, drove him harder and faster against the strong body. It took seemingly no time at all for him to shoot, his hips grinding, his cock throbbing.

"Oh. Shit. I can smell you. So good..." The words were whispered against his throat.

He just nodded, letting his chin and cheek rub Dale's soft hair, letting his lips trace one sharp cheekbone. A man could easily become addicted to such a lover. The touch of tongue to his throat was sweet, warm, Dale lapping his skin.

Stroking Dale's back, Gen moved as close as he could without sharing skin, and licked sweat from Dale's neck. "Can you stay?"

"Yes. I'd like that." Dale nuzzled, eyelashes tickling him.

He eased, his hold still tight but not squeezing as he realized he had been. He hadn't wanted Dale to go. Gen smiled ruefully against Dale's skin. He was probably the worst kind of fool.

But for now, he was a fool who had exactly what he wanted.

Man, the closer it got to Christmas? The less people tipped.

Dale guessed that was sorta cool from the ho-ho-ho standpoint because dollars in g-strings? Not Christmassy.

Still, he was going to have to sell blood if shit didn't pick up.

Either that or work at McD's....

Nah. He had lots of blood.

He danced through his three songs, just sort of going through the motions, daydreaming a little. Working it a little.

Not like anyone was really there, nobody who was going to give up the cash, at any rate. He barely had enough to tip out when he was done, just about enough to buy dinner at McD's instead of work there. Which was when Andy caught him.

"Hey, Dee. Your big tipper is here, man."

"My who?" Oh, man. Man, that would be. So fucking cool. He'd spent the hottest few days of his whole life in bed with Gen, making love and goofing off and just having a ball.

"That guy. The one who was here giving you hundreds. He's up in the box. Asking for you." Andy gave him a big-assed grin and a thumbs up.

"Oh. 'kay. Cool." He headed up, taking a second to wipe his forehead, his pits, grab a mint -- just in case.

Oh. Damn. It was Gen, sure enough, sitting there like he owned the whole place, charcoal gray suit and deep red tie setting just the right picture.

"Hello, Da... Dee. How are you?"

He smiled, nodded, cock filling a little. "Good to see you, sir. Real good."

Gen's eyes were dark, hooded, his hands sitting loose on his thighs. "Good to see you, too. I've been looking forward to it."

"You want a dance or..." He wasn't whoring. He'd lose the money to spend another night up close and personal. Touching. Getting touched.

Those pretty eyes twinkled. "I would, yes. And then I would like to discuss what you might be doing after work, caro."

He nodded, the husky voice a fucking turn-on. He started moving, finding the music's beat. He'd never cared about whether he was hot, whether he was sexy, but now he was working to make it good for Gen, to make it hot.

He was hoping it wasn't gonna come off as silly, but it didn't look like Gen thought it was, not the way the guy was rubbing his thigh just below his package. That stare was all about the gonna-eat-you-up.

He went from interested to hard, the second song dark and sultry, the lights going dim.

"Mmm." There was that hum he'd learned to love in the short time they'd been together, had learned to look for. Gen was interested, too. Shit, he could practically smell it.

He ducked behind his hat, fingers sliding down his belly, sliding along the waistband of the chaps.

The music cranked up a notch, the beat really driving, and Gen just watched him, just touched every bit of him with those eyes. Waiting.

His cock was hard enough to cut glass, thighs aching as he worked, pumping his hips, fucking the air.

"Oh, Dee. Want." A glance from under the brim of his hat showed him that Gen was trying hard not to touch himself, hands clenched now instead of loose, cock thick and obvious under the fine suit pants.

"Fuck, Gen. Me, too. Wanna go somewhere?" He fucking needed it, needed to touch.

"Yes. I have a condo..." Gen looked... well, like he was blushing. Made him stare.

A condo? Here? In Houston? "Okay. My truck's in the parking lot. Let me get my jeans?"

"Yes. Wait." Gen dug out some bills. "I do not wish you to get in trouble with your boss. Just remember that that is why I gave you money, caro. No other reason. I will meet you outside?"

"Yeah. I'll be two shakes." He wanted to kiss Gen, so fucking bad, so he backed away, heading to the dressing room. Okay. Jeans. Sweater. Jacket. Hat.

Down boy. You still gotta drive somewhere.

Gen's big car was there, just like before, and the door opened when he came out. "Would you like to follow me, or leave your truck here and ride with me?"

"I'll ride with you, if you don't mind." His truck was safe enough and he just wanted to be able to touch Gen.

"Come, then." Sliding over, Gen beckoned him, and as soon as the door closed behind him Gen's hands were on him, pulling him close. The fabric of Gen's fancy suit was soft under his hands, Gen's whiskers rough in contrast.

He reached up, drawing Gen's head down, fingers in those springy curls. The kiss was heated, wild, all the gentle explorations of their last meeting faded away. Hand flattening at the small of his back, Gen pulled him even closer, like the man was trying to just crawl right into him. Tongue pushing into his mouth, Gen groaned, licking and biting at him. His leg scooted up over Gen's, hooking around to tug them together, hips rocking and rubbing against Gen's thigh.

"Dale. Caro. How I have missed you." Gen hummed for him, reaching down to open his jeans for him, hot hand sliding in. Oh. Oh, damn.

"Gen. Oh, sweet fuck. Your hands." He took another kiss and another, making rough-ass noises that were all about needing this, needing Gen.

He got both of those hands, cradling him, pushing his jeans down to cup his balls. Gen bit down lightly on his neck, not hard enough to mark him, but hard enough to feel it. Dale groaned, hips pumping, so damned close. He gasped out a warning, but it was too late. His cock jerked, spunk pouring right out of him.

"Yes. Dale. Sweet." Gen kissed the corner of his mouth, his cheek, rubbing his come right into his skin. "Someday I will taste you."

"Yeah..." He turned just a little, tongue slipping in to taste Gen's mouth. "So good to see you."

So fucking good.

Sorta scary good, but he'd go with it.

"Good. I was hoping you would think so." Gen held him, hips rocking against him in short, sharp little motions.

"Let me..." He reached down, wanting a feel of his own, needing to get Gen off.

Gen opened right up for him, legs spreading to give him room to get in there and get those fancy pants open. Gen's cock pushed right into his hand, hard and damp, eager.

"Oh, hell yes." He looked down, watching. Fuck, there was something too hot about his hand working the foreskin on that heavy prick. Looked so good, his thumb rubbing, working.

That thigh he was riding like a bronc went rock hard under him, Gen's head falling back as the man moaned for him. Those lips were swollen, red, just begging for another kiss, and he could feel how close Gen was, could damned well feel it against his palm as Gen's pulse speeded right up like crazy. He gave that kiss, too, tongue fucking that hot mouth as his fingers tightened around Gen's cock.

"Mnnnh." Gen grunted into the kiss, hips snapping as he came, hands patting Dale's back clumsily.

"Mmm... hey." He licked and kissed, heart just starting to come back to normal.

Long lashes swept up and down as Gen blinked slow. "Hello, Dale."

Dale grinned, blinking back. Houston's lights made patterns in Gen's dark eyes.

"How are you?" Gen shifted them, fingers back to nimble, doing up their clothes and all. "How is school?"

"Finals are next week -- I'm ready. Work sucks. I'm looking forward to the break." He grinned, straightening Gen's tie for him. "How was Canada?"

"Dreadfully boring. I kept thinking of you..." They got their clothes straightened just as the car coasted to a stop. "What are you doing for the holiday?"

"Working, I guess." He opened the door, slid out. "You?"

Oh, the condo complex was real nice. One of those places with a pool and a security gate and all. Gen took his arm. "I plan on going home. I was hoping you would come with me."

"Home? Like Italy home?" He blinked, a little stunned. Oh, man. Italy. Too fucking sweet. They walked up a flight of stairs, Gen warm and solid beside him.

"Yes. I thought we could go to Naples for a bit, and then to my home on the coast. Perhaps spend a day or two in Rome on the way in." The place was like the hotel from last time. All tasteful and luxurious, with carpet that ate up sound. Low light sprung to life under Gen's hand. "Would you like a drink? Some food?"

"I'm cool." He shrugged off his jacket, looked for a place to put it. "That sounds like... well, like a dream, Gen, but I can't come up with a plane ticket in time, or a passport. Maybe by summer I could save up."

"You do not have a passport?" Gen sounded, and looked, downright shocked. "Well, that will be easy enough to remedy, so long as you can get to your birth certificate?"

"No. No, I don't know anybody that has one. Well, I mean, except you. That's all you need? A birth certificate?" He didn't think he'd ever even seen a passport.

"Usually it takes several weeks, but yes, all you need is a birth certificate and a few pictures. And it can be expedited. As for a plane ticket, well..." Gen grinned. "I have a private jet."

"You're shitting me." Real people didn't have jets. Hell, even the Cowboy's quarterback flew Delta. "What do you do, Gen? Drill for oil?"

"If I did the drilling, I would hardly have the suits..." Moving close, Gen grabbed his hips, pulling him in. "Come with me."

He stepped in, hips rocking some, moving against Gen's hands. "Mmm... feels just fine." He smiled over, cheeks heating. "Better than cobbler."

"Oh, and I liked the cobbler." That look was pure fire, Gen rubbing against him. "Nude this time, Dale. And in my bed."

Oh, yeah. He liked the sound of that, his fingers working the man's tie open and off. "Sounds like one Hell of a plan, Gen."

"Good." Gen worked his clothes, too, stripping him right down, and it wasn't like work one little bit. This was a whole other kind of naked.

Gen looked good, skin all dark and deep and warm under his fingers as shirt and pants and boxers were pushed away, leaving them both naked.

So pretty. Gen was just well put together, all hard angles and sleek muscles. Gen touched him back, sweet and hot, tracing the line of his pecs, down his sternum to tease his belly.

His hips rolled, the motion easy and instinctive, belly muscles hard as rocks. "You wanna take this horizontal?"

"I do. Let's go lie down, hmmm?" Gen led him to the bedroom, the big bed there looking like something out of Arabian Nights, all silk pillows and a canopy. Cool. Gen sat on the bed, beckoning to him.

He ran his fingers along the canopy, then settled close, breathed deep. "Oh. You smell good."

"Do I?" He got a smile, Gen stroking his hip, the hard cock Gen showed him making a lie out of the contemplative feel of the touches.

"Yes..." His own fingers explored Gen's sac, heavy and velvet-soft as a horse's nose, which should have been weird and gross, but it wasn't.

"Mmm." Oh, yeah. He was learning those sounds, and that hum meant Gen liked what he was doing. So did the spread of those heavy thighs, the way Gen licked his lips. "And I like the way you feel."

Gen leaned back onto bed and he followed, rubbing against Gen nice and easy, damn near like he was dancing, but... real.

One of Gen's arms wrapped around him, hand stroking down his spine, cupping his ass. The other hand slid up and down his chest, pinching his nipples, stroking his belly, teasing the curls above his cock. He just purred, hot and hard, caught in those eyes and hands. Bending close, he licked, nuzzled Gen's throat.

"Dale." He could feel the vibration as Gen talked, could feel the way Gen breathed deep. One of Gen's fingers dipped into the crease of his ass, sliding along his hole, surprising him. He gasped, knee bending, offering Gen a little more, cock jerking at the touch.

Gen encouraged him with more touches, deeper touches, one finger sliding in just the tiniest bit, the other hand wrapping around his cock and squeezing. It was like dancing at its best -- hot and rhythmic, primal, pure sex. He dipped his head, mouth sliding on Gen's shoulder.

Turning them on their sides, Gen let him go for a brief moment, leaning over and past him for something before settling back. Then Gen's hands were back, both of them slick and cool, Gen's finger sliding right into his body like it belonged there. This sound escaped him, rough and deep, and it made Gen groan, made the touch inside him deeper. His lips moved across Gen's throat, tongue pressing into the hollow of that long throat.

Moving faster, Gen stroked him inside and out, a second finger pushing in, stretching him so it burned in the best way. Head arching back, Gen gave him access to that smooth skin, a sweet noise meeting the press of his teeth.

A man could get addicted to that sound, could learn all about needing it. "Never met anyone like you, ever."

"It is the same for me, caro. I have never wanted this way." Some guys, you could tell they were feeding you a line. Gen wasn't.

Oh, he did like the way that sounded. Caro. Sounded cool. Special.

Real.

He lifted his face, and brought their mouths together.

Gen kissed him like he was precious, like he was something else, lips and tongue damned near invasive.

Oh. Damn. He. Oh.

Dale pushed up, hand sliding against those fascinating curls, the action tightening his body around Gen's fingers.

"Caro. Dale. So good." Opening him up even more, Gen worked him with those fingers, twisting them to find a spot inside of him that made starbursts pop up behind his eyes.

"Gen!" He rolled them, ending up atop that fine body, both of them shifting, those fingers working him again.

"Want inside you, caro. Want to feel you around me." Gen hit that spot again. He was supposed to think with that?

He nodded, hips beginning to rock, riding those fingers. "Yeah. Hell."

"Where I got the... the slick. There. There are condoms, Dale. Get one for me?" Gen's cheeks were flushed dark, his breath coming sharp, and Dale could feel Gen's cock hard against his balls, rubbing.

He nodded, reached out for the drawer, crying out as pleasure shot through him again. "Gonna make me come, Gen. Easy. Easy."

Easing back, Gen pulled his fingers part way out, stretching him some more, just lightly. "Wait for me, Dale."

Just getting the rubber out and open was a miracle in itself. Getting it over Gen's hard, hot cock was something else. Damn.

Gasping, shaking, Gen nodded, pulling at his hips. "Come. Venni. Need."

He straddled Gen's waist, teeth sinking into his bottom lip. "In me, c'mon now. Wanna ride."

Those strong hands pulled him up, one going to guide Gen's prick to his opening, pushing in the tiniest bit. Wide and hard, hot even through the rubber, Gen prodded him, watching his face. "Now."

He arched, thighs and belly going tight-tight as he sank down. Fuck. Burned. Oh, sweet Jesus. "Gen. You. Damn."

"Si. Caro." Gen arched, body tight and hot, every muscle straining as he moved under Dale, hands sliding up and down Dale's back.

Dale started riding, heart pounding, entire fucking body into it. Relentless, Gen rocked into him, pushing, rubbing him raw. One hand closed around his cock, pulling at it, those eyes like green lightning.

Shit, he wasn't going to last, not a chance. His balls drew up and he moved faster, fighting to just breathe.

Gen stroked him, loved on him, smiling up at him. "Si, caro. Soon."

"Yeah..." He leaned down, took a kiss as he lost it, shooting over Gen's belly. Hell, yeah.

He got a deep moan, Gen's hands clamping down on his hips to keep him moving until Gen shot, jerking inside him, panting hard.

Dale sort of... stayed there, holding himself above Gen, kiss lazy and sloppy.

"Mmm."

Fuck, yeah, he could get addicted to the way that man sounded when he was satisfied. Gen kissed him right back, slow and thorough, just petting him, soothing his bruised hips.

A man could so get used to feeling this good.

A man could learn to need it, even.

"Will you come with me for the holiday?"

"If I can get the passport thing finished in time? Yeah. Yeah." Like he'd say no to something he wanted so bad with the man's cock softening inside him, the man's breathing against him.

And that smile? Worth any number of yeses. "Good. I will make sure of the passport."

"Tomorrow, yeah? Tonight, we got plans." He squeezed Gen's cock, tongue sliding over the hot, swollen lips.

"Mmmhmm. Tomorrow. Tonight the only reason we leave this bed is for food and bath." Smiling, Gen pulled him closer still, skin rubbing all along his.

"Good plan. Real good plan." He settled right in, snuggling against Gen. Yeah. Bed. Bath. Food. Happy horny Italian sounds.

Damn fine plan.

Chapter Four

The flight had been uneventful, but Gen had discovered that Dale got a bit of motion sickness, so it had not gone as well as it could have. A shame, for sure, for he had a bed on his jet, and all it had been used for was to sleep, Dale with a washcloth on his head and pills in his belly. Gen had slept on a chair, his tie half undone, his legs stretched out in front of him.

The drive into Rome had fared only little better. Poor Dale. The driver had been kind, but still, driving in Italy, where the white line was a suggestion only, could be harrowing. Gen had put Dale to bed in a cool, shaded room, a little coverlet on him and ginger ale by the bed.

Now, though, he hoped Dale was up to some sightseeing. Or perhaps something else. He so wanted to show Dale his homeland.

He headed into the suite, surprised to find the bed empty, the door to the bathroom open and the water splashing in the tub as Dale whistled. Oh, someone was feeling better.

Excellent.

Gen wandered in, hands in the pockets of his thin linen trousers, looking to see what he could see.

Oh, what a luscious sight. Wet and slick, Dale was sprawled out in the tub, shaving, the sunshine pouring in and lighting his lover's skin to pure gold.

Gen simply watched for a long moment, his ability to speak English completely gone. Then he found it again. "Beautiful, caro. You're beautiful."

"Hey there, darlin'." Dale smiled, slow and easy, looking just settled in his skin. "You got yourself a nice place here."

"This? Oh, this is nothing. My home is really along the coast." He smiled back, enjoying the easiness Dale had with him, the trust. "But it is enjoyable, yes? You like the bath?"

"I do. I needed it, too. Lord, I was offending myself." Those toes wiggled at him.

"You were ill, is all." Gen moved closer, drawn by the unsubtle teasing. Lovely, lovely man. His hands moved over Dale's ankle. "You seem much better."

"I feel like myself again." Dale smiled, eyes sliding along his body, warm enough to be a caress. "How are you?"

"I'm good." His cock hardened, sweat beading on his brow from the steam. "I like you in bubbles."

That muscled body arched, stretched, belly taut, prick beginning to fill and swell. "There's room for you."

"Is there indeed?" He dropped his pants. "I think I might need to join you, caro."

Dale arched, tongue peeking out to wet those full, pink lips. "There is."

"Good." He dipped his toes in the water, testing the heat of it. Perfect.

Dale sat up, shifted over, one wet, strong hand sliding up along his calf. Letting Dale hold him, Gen stepped into the bath with his other foot, humming at how good it felt. Dale's cheek, smooth and soft and freshly shaven, brushed against his thigh, the caress enough to make him shiver.

"Oh. Caro. Si. Per favore..." There, he'd lost his languages again.

"Mmmhmm." Those lips started moving, slow and wet and lazy, heading toward his balls.

Nnuh. Gen shifted, letting his legs part even more, giving Dale access. The sensuality this man had all the way to his bones, it astonished.

Dale began lapping and nuzzling, the hot tongue pushing at his sacs. His belly went taut, his ass pushing in as he tried to get more of the feeling. His cock brushed Dale's cheek, the freshly shaved skin so soft and good that he moaned, the sound shockingly loud.

"Yeah. Just like that." Dale's teeth dragged over one hip, sharp enough to sting.

"Si." His fingers found Dale's hair, dragging through, wrapping soft strands around his fingers, around and around, then tugging Dale closer.

Low, deep sounds brushed over his skin, slid up along his shaft toward the tip of his cock. Gritting his teeth, Gen kept himself from thrusting too hard, from just opening Dale's mouth and demanding. He wanted to see what his cowboy could do. Wanted to let Dale take the lead

It was most difficult.

He felt every sound, felt it echo and vibrate down to his balls, Dale humming, body moving in the water to some music he couldn't hear.

His dancer. Yes. The sweetness of it nearly buckled his knees. "Dale. I... oh. I need more, caro."

"Careful. Don't slip." Dale's mouth dropped over him like a sheath over a blade, heated and wet, gripping him perfectly as Dale swallowed, began to suck with a particular hunger.

His toes curled, scrabbling for purchase on the slick bottom of the marble tub, but Gen stayed upright, the feeling keeping him glued to the spot. His hips rolled, his muscles bunching and pulling. Dale's hands found his ass, supporting and cradling him, thumbs pushing into the muscles and rubbing deep.

Groans kept tearing out of his chest as they found a rhythm, him pushing in, Dale pulling off, the feel of it like nothing else. Sweet. Dolce. Perfecto. Light and heat shot right through him, Dale's head bobbing and giving him everything he needed.

It didn't take much longer before he was shooting into the heat of Dale's mouth, crying out like an untried boy. Really, this man had an extraordinary effect on him. Dale took him down, swallowing and licking at him before letting his prick slide free, strong arms still wrapped around him.

He slid down along Dale's body until their mouths met. Gen reached beneath the water to search out Dale's cock, and sure enough it was hard for him, hot and strong.

"Oh, Hell yeah." Dale moaned into his lips, body arching right up into his touch.

"Like that, hmm?" Now that the urgency was off him Gen could make sounds that came out like English.

"Mmmhmm. 's good, Gen." One wet hand trailed through his curls, tugging and petting in the same motion.

He kept his own hand moving on Dale's cock, up and down. "It is. Very good between us, amato."

"Uh-huh." Lips parted, hips jerking, Dale was no longer listening, was simply feeling, eyes on his face. Sensual man.

"Si. Si, that's it, caro. Feel my hands on you." He reached out with his free hand and pinched one pink nipple, feeling it go even harder for him.

Always so surprised at the little sensation, the way those tiny nipples could feel made Dale shudder, flooded the tanned skin with heat. Stroking down that hard belly, Gen watched the muscles under Dale's skin twitch and pull before bending to press a kiss where his fingers had just lingered.

Dale started humping, rutting against his hand, cock hot and full and throbbing in his palm.

"Mmm." He reached below and cupped Dale's balls, weighing them, rolling them. So heavy. So hot.

Dale's mouth opened, a sweet cry sounding as heat pulsed into his hand. Oh, yes. Yes. He stroked the underside of Dale's prick with his thumb, soothing a little, listening to the sound of the water lapping against the sides of the tub.

"Hey." Dale grinned, looking as if he were boneless. "Morning."

"Buon giorno, Dale." He smiled back, leaning to take a kiss. "It's wonderful to see you in my bath."

"It's pretty cool to see you in your bath." That smile just shone.

"Wait until we get to Naples. Or Amalfi." Oh, the things he could show this man. "What would you like to do today?"

"Hell, today's been the first day where I feel like me again. I've never been here to know. What do we want to do?"

"Well, this is Rome." Leaning back, he started washing Dale's legs. "We could go eat something decadent or walk to the Piazza Navonna or the Coliseum."

"kay." Dale's eyes were on his hands, just watching him touch like it was magic.

Perhaps it was. It certainly seemed it. "Or we could stay in a bit longer..."

"We could. The bed is soft and big enough for two."

"And you no longer have jet lag." He let his fingers wander up to the underside of Dale's knee, no longer simply washing. Now he caressed.

Dale chuckled, leg lifted, spreading. "No, I don't."

"Mmm. Look at you." He could, for hours. Really. Perhaps he could get Dale to dance for him later. Not like Dale did for money. Just some music and the man himself, lost in it. For now he'd settle for rinsing off what he'd washed and standing. "Come to bed with me, caro."

"I can do that, Gen." That square hand took his, the sunshine and water making love on Dale's skin.

"Oh, good." He needed another kiss, so he took it, that water swept body slick against his, almost cool, but not for long.

Dale stepped out of the tub, right into him, walking them backward toward the bedroom. They made it into a sort of dance, a waltz in half time, both of them rubbing and moaning. Gen bit gently at the skin of Dale's shoulder as they stopped, watching it redden.

Dale blushed, gasped for him. "Oh. Oh, I. That's. Wow."

"Is it? Shall I try it again?" He bit down, just a bit harder, letting his tongue rub back and forth between his teeth.

"Gen..." Dale's hands landed on his ass, fingers squeezing tight, digging into his flesh.

"Mmmhmm?" So responsive. So his. He smiled at the thought, pushing Dale down on the bed and spreading those golden thighs, bending to bite the muscle along the inside of one.

Dale arched, hips and shoulders digging into the bed as those thighs pushed against his hands, testing his strength. Gen pushed back down, spreading those thighs again, licking up along one leg until he could nuzzle Dale's balls. Soap and water and musk and male -- the scents were heady, fine, enough to drive him mad.

Finally he opened his mouth and tasted, lifting the heavy sacs with his tongue and pushing back and forth. His hands stayed busy, stroking, touching, the damp hairs on Dale's legs clinging.

"Gen. Gen, you. You make me feel..." Dale's body twisted, words lost as Dale reached for him, so needy, so strong.

"Tell me. Tell me what I do, Dale." The feel of Dale's skin made him so hungry, so happy. He loved it. Craved it.

"I never. Shit, I never wanted so bad, so much, you know?"

"I know. Oh, yes, I knew that the first minute I saw you. You cannot imagine how angry I was when someone else tried to touch you." His breath landed on Dale's skin as he spoke. Then he moved his mouth, sucking Dale in.

"Gen!" Dale arched, feet landing with a thud on the mattress as those hips pushed up toward him.

"Mmm." Hot, salty, soap residue, all of it combined to make a heady taste. Lovely. He cupped Dale's balls with his fingers, his palm, rolling.

Dale spread a little more, offering himself up, pushing into his touch. He slid his hand farther back and pressed his thumb to Dale's hole, testing it. The heat astounded him, made him gasp even as he sank down on that sweet cock.

"Yes. Gen. Yes." Dale pressed down, a deep moan sounding as his thumb slid into that tight heat.

His eyes tried to roll, but Gen kept his focus, pushing harder, sucking harder. He wanted everything Dale could give him. *Everything*.

From the sounds to the scent to the way Dale moved, dancing between his hand and his mouth, entire body rippling, his Dale was an addiction. Gen lost himself in it, lost himself in the taste and feel of Dale's sweet body, his mouth and hands working and working. He licked the fingers of his free hand, sliding one inside Dale beside his thumb.

"Oh. Hell, yes." That deep voice rumbled, the accent thick and rich, almost as salty as the drops that pushed into his lips.

Pulling back, Gen licked the tip of Dale's cock and watched that face as he pushed and pushed, his fingers sliding so deep, the feeling raw. Dale's lips were parted, wet, cheeks flushed and dark, Dale caught in his touch.

Dio. His cock throbbed, making his whole body shudder. "Dale. Will you let me, caro? I would be inside you."

"Oh, damn. Please. Please, Gen. I'm wantin'."

"Si. Si." He eased away, moving to find something slick. His own spit would not do; he would never hurt Dale. Never. There. Lube. He got his fingers wet before pressing into Dale again, stretching.

Dale leaned up, mouth on his shoulder, his neck, soft words just brushing against his skin, begging him and wanting him.

"Mmm. Tesoro. You're so hot. So good. Are you ready? Am I rushing?" He wanted in. Now.

"Ready. God. I want you. Want to feel it." Dale's hand gripped his ass, tugged him right where he needed to be.

"Good." Moving between Dale's thighs and settling his prick against that tiny hole felt unbelievable. His cock sliding in felt even better. He thought he might come just from that.

"Uhn." Those bright eyes were fastened to his, wide and hot, watching him as if he was fascinating.

Gen laughed. "Indeed. Move with me, Dale." He rocked, his cock pressing in and sliding out. In and out. The rhythm felt as old as time.

"Better... better than dancing." So much more than dancing on the stage, this was his.

"I love the way you dance, amato. This one is for me, si? Only me." Breathless now, Gen worked his hips harder, clutching Dale to him as he slammed in over and over.

"Uh-huh. This... this is yours. I... I don't sell this." Dale groaned, moving faster, harder, their skin slapping.

"No. Not this. Never this." It occurred to him to touch Dale's cock, to reach for it and stroke it.

"Oh. Oh, Hell. Just like." Dale's eyes rolled, belly going taut.

"Mmmhmm." All he could do was watch, thrust and pull. Yes.

They lost their rhythm, both of them tumbling together, both crying out. He filled Dale as deep as he could, let his hips still as he poured out. His face felt hot, his balls empty, and he could not take his eyes off Dale's face.

Dio, he must be in love. Gen laughed with the joy of it.

Dale grinned, dimples deepened. "You look different, here."

"Do I? I suppose I must. Traveling for business is stressful. I'm glad I found you, though." Some things were worth the trip.

"Yeah? Funny what you can find in strange places."

"Yes. Yes it is, caro. And what you hold on to." They snuggled down and he decided they could sightsee later. For now, they would just lie together. And hold on.

Chapter Five

Man, Gen's house was...

Damn.

Dale wandered around, just looking, shaking his head. He'd seen churches that were smaller than this. For real. God, his baby apartment would fit in Gen's bedroom.

Still, he reckoned Gen had enough energy to fill the whole place, top to bottom. He stopped and looked at a painting of a naked guy and a fat baby angel and a big-assed fish.

Well.

Okay.

He was into fishing and sorta made his living on the naked...

Fat baby angels were a little. Uh. Different.

He jumped as Gen slid up behind him, arms closing around him. Hot lips slid up his neck. "Do you like that one, caro?"

"It's something else, sure enough." His head fell forward a little, a shiver sliding down his spine.

"I always thought the cherub a little overblown." The puff of air that accompanied the word blown had him grunting.

"Well, I guess fat baby angels are fun to paint. Lots of folks did it." Man, Gen was like a heater behind him, his whole body wanting to move, to push closer to it.

"Indeed. They represented youth and innocence. Though they always have the most lascivious grins." Loving on him, Gen kissed his neck and shoulder, hands starting to move on his front.

"Mmm. Innocent's only so much fun, darlin'." They started to dance a little, Dale humming low.

"This is true, tesoro. I like to be naughty. But you have seen nothing of Rome."

"Then you should show me what you like best." He wasn't much for being a tourist -- he didn't have a clue how to do it -- but he wanted to know Gen.

"Oh! I should. We should go out for food, too. There is a place down by the Tiber where they smash an artichoke between two bricks and cook it and serve it with sauce." Gen turned him in a jazzy circle, dancing him about so happily he had to smile.

"I like artichokes." Gen had taught him that -- slippery, spicy bits of artichoke sliding on his tongue, his skin.

"Mmmhmm. And it's in the old Jewish ghetto, which is one of my favorite parts of the city. We can cross right over into Trastevere..." Whatever business Gen had been doing that left Dale on his own to look at paintings must be done, because Gen towed him to the bedroom and started handing him clothes.

He tugged on his jeans and boots, Gen's enthusiasm contagious, exciting. God, the fine son of a bitch made him happy.

Those odd blueish-green eyes all but glowed for him as Gen bounced around, dressing in linen slacks and a silk shirt. "Oh, and we must get you Italian shoes, hmm? Yes, I think so."

"My boots are okay, Gen. You got a coat I can borrow?" Man, he'd never had a cold Christmas.

"Of course I do. And I am not saying your boots offend me, caro." Gen came and kissed him, rubbing his arms. "I simply mean that everyone should have one pair of Italian shoes."

He leaned and returned the kiss, tongue sliding against Gen's lips. "I bet I'll be the only cowboy stripper with a pair."

Humming, Gen opened for him, the little laugh blowing over his lips. The man just had a huge lust for life. It amazed him.

He still hadn't quite figured out how on earth he'd gotten so lucky. Still, he was glad he was and he'd take the ride as long as it lasted.

When Gen finally pulled him out of the house wearing a wool coat that cost more than his monthly rent, the sun was just going down. "Not to worry," Gen told him. "Dinner does not even begin here until nine."

"My time is just now getting put back to rights." He tugged his hat down a little against the cold. "Y'all eat awful late, though. It doesn't give you heartburn?"

"No, because we make eating a sensual, long-lived affair. Our meal tonight might last as long as three hours." Gen caught his hand and squeezed a moment before guiding him off toward a little square that then opened up to a main road.

He found out Gen's house sat near the Pantheon, a huge old temple with a hole in the dome, and that was right near the Piazza Navonna. The piazza had these enormous fountains with naked guys and it was all lit up at night.

"Y'all do like your pretty naked guys." He drawled it out, as deep and hick as he could, winking over at Gen and nudging the man.

"We do. They say we are so Catholic. Everything here is pagan somehow." He got a wink in return, and a flash of bright white teeth. "Come, we will walk along the river."

Dale knew he was just gawking, but it was all so new, so interesting. So *big*. "I guess y'all were pagan a long time before you got the Pope, though."

"We were. Tomorrow we will go to the coliseum. It closes at dusk, and you need to see the inside. It... awes me. Makes me feel tiny." Gen glanced at him. "Your Grand Canyon does the same thing."

"I feel like that at Big Bend. You just look and look and think about how you're nothing and you're something all at once."

"Si. Exactly. Oh, look at that." One of the big mansions, Gen called them palazzos, was all lit up, twinkle lights and candles in bowls and all, all of the windows glowing. "How pretty."

"Oh, now..." He stood and smiled. "I wish my momma could see this. She'd just love it."

"Would she? What is she like, your mother?" Gen started moving again, wandering on a seemingly aimless path.

"She's... She's very religious, very proper. Very nice. She doesn't hold much with my lifestyle, really, but she just sorta... lives and lets live."

Laughing, Gen nodded. "That sounds like my nonna. She disapproves in general of my life, but she loves me, si? She always supports me."

"Yeah. Yeah. They're mommas." And he did his damndest never to be alone with her.

"Or grandmothers. Ah, here we are. Dinner." The place was kinda downstairs, half underground. It smelled amazing, and had a kind of quiet elegance that was almost intimidating but not quite.

"Mmm." He took his hat off, ran his fingers through his hair. "Smells good, Gen. Maybe as good as that hotel cobbler..."

"Oh, I am not sure. Watching you eat that was a divine thing." That look scorched him down to his socks. Right on through.

"That whole night was pretty damn divine, sir." Lord, he was going to start sweating.

"It was indeed." Yeah, now he was getting a megawatt smile with eye crinkles. He was saved from crawling right over the table by the waiter, who spoke real decent English and explained the menu to them. The artichoke thing sounded good, and he could swear Gen bounced.

He chuckled and let Gen order, jonesing on the way Gen got into food and wine and every fucking thing.

When the artichokes came he almost forgot to eat his. Gen put on a show, sucking the leaves, licking his fingers, the tender stuff just disappearing bite by bite. And Gen was moaning like they were doing it right there at the table. He found himself just sitting and staring, eyes going heavy-lidded as he watched Gen's lips.

"Is it not to your taste, caro?" Gen asked, low voiced and hot eyed.

"I..." He wouldn't know. "A man could live on watching you." Well, Hell, that sounded like the world's biggest ijit.

"Oh, I can understand that." The last leaf disappeared between those well-shaped lips before Gen leaned his elbows on the table. "For now I get to watch you."

"Oh." His cheeks went all hot and he shifted, scooted on the chair. He was never going to survive this whole meal.

Then he managed to get himself a bite of artichoke and, sweet Christ in heaven...

So good.

"You see now, hmm? The lightest sauce, the most tender leaves. It's a delicacy. Tomorrow we will have to go to Trastevere and get baby artichokes, deep-fried."

"Oh, now. I'm a southern boy. I do like my deep-fried food." He grinned and dug back in, just licking his fingers and loving it.

"Then you will love Rome. We will explore thoroughly before going to my home on the coast." Gen's rich voice held a distracted tone, the man watching his lips and tongue like a hawk.

"I can think of a couple things I'd like to explore..." He went back to eating, his nerves just all lit up and buzzing.

"Can you?" Gen sipped his wine, still watching him, and when he finished the last bite he noticed Gen's free hand. The fingers stroked the fine linen tablecloth just like they would work his own skin.

Well, Hell. That made his skin feel tight, made things that didn't need to wake up and pay attention get all heavy and interested. "I. Yeah, Gen. Yeah."

"Oh, good. For all I can think of is devouring you. Too bad Alonzo will be offended if we ask for our primi and secondi in a box." That man. Lord. The things he could suggest with a look.

"Anticipation makes it good, though, yeah?" His foot slid over, so careful, so quick, nudging Gen's ankle with his toe.

He could play some.

"Y-yes." Oh, he'd made Gen stutter. That was something.

They got little pasta dishes then, Gen's with a bright green sauce, his with this fresh tomato stuff that tasted bright and amazing.

"Is yours garlicky?" It was something, wasn't it? Sitting in Italy, drinking wine that went straight to his head, and just feeling like he was something.

"Yes. I made sure neither of us would offend the other." Winking, Gen forked up a bit of pasta, doing that European eating thing where he never changed hands with fork and knife.

Of course, that got his eyes caught on those fingers, got him to thinking what all they could do.

Damn.

Gen's foot moved against his, sliding, making him remember where his was. Between that and the fork licking and the happy sounds, he didn't figure he'd make it through the pork chop thing with the figs.

Of course, his entire previous experience with figs was of the in-a-Newton variety, so there was no guarantee he'd survive it anyway...

The entree was as good as everything else. Really. And of course Gen shared his, too, both of them trading bites across the table as Gen's foot made tracks up and down the inside of his leg. Thank God they decided not to stay for dessert.

"We'll have to get gelato on the way home," Gen said. "You must try it."

"Mmm. That's like ice cream, yeah? I'm a fan." His jeans were just hugging him like he was wearing them for work. Lord.

"Si. Creamy and good. We'll take it home..." And do stuff. Oh, God.

"You? Are enough to drive a man into palpitations."

"Oh, Dale." Gen laughed for him, that booming sound drawing glances. And the waiter. "Si, si, we go now. Il conto, per favore."

The bill came, the bill went, and from the waiter's look of glee he'd bet the tip had been a lot better than most. He sorta felt bad, letting Gen pay for everything, but the fact was he didn't have much and he just. Well. Shit. There just wasn't a good answer.

Gen didn't seem to mind. Hell, maybe he thought he had to. Like to keep Dale happy. Oh, now. That could deflate a guy straight away. Shit. "How much do I owe you for my half of supper?"

"Pardon?" Turning, Gen stopped them right in the middle of a cobbled street, staring. "Nothing, caro. It was my pleasure."

"You sure? I... I don't want you to think you... I mean. I. Shit." He sucked at this.

"Think what?" Dark brows lowered over Gen's eyes, lines appearing between them. "I want us to enjoy the holiday. I am not trying to buy you, Dale."

"No. No, that's not." He took a deep breath and tried again. "I just don't want you to think that I'm just here because you have money. Even though, well, if you didn't, I couldn't, which sort of convolutes the whole fucking thing, but I know what I mean." Christ, Dale. Shut the fuck up.

Now Gen's face smoothed out, those eyes twinkling for him. "Precisely. We are complicated, you and I. But I am glad you are here, and I have far more money than I can possibly use. So. Come and get ice cream with me."

Complicated. Yeah. Yeah, but good. They had a good time. "Okay. Yeah. What's your favorite flavor?"

"Pistachio. And it must be real. Not made from a mix. If the pistachio looks more gray than bright green it will be amazing." The man lit up, grabbing his arm and pulling him along. Throngs of people wandered in and out of squares, chatting. Looked like late night strolls were a thing in Italy.

"Gray is not a good food color, darlin'. You know this, right?"

"Well, not if it is... how would you say, fuzzy. But this is more... green dotted white?" Oh, yeah. That sounded appetizing.

He chuckled, shook his head. "So far, you haven't killed me. Hell, supper didn't taste like Newtons, so I'll trust you. Grey ice cream it is." Hell, God knew Aunt Chrissy made that black walnut stuff that one year and it didn't kill anybody.

In the end he had the choice of about a hundred flavors. The gelateria, which was a damned fancy name for an ice cream parlor, had a long wooden counter and wooden booths, and the grumpiest damned old man behind the counter, but the ice cream? Oh, damn.

"Okay, I didn't think there was anything better than Blue Bell, but damn." He grinned over at Gen, shook his head. Fucking cold outside and they were eating ice cream. Lord.

"I shall have to try Blue Bell." He'd bet Gen would, too, sitting at a picnic somewhere, smiling and laughing and fitting right in.

"Mmm. Peaches and cream. You'll love it. Almost as much as cobbler."

"Mmm." Gen smiled. "Shall we go home now?"

"I think I can manage that." He nodded, grinned back, licking the ice cream off his upper lip.

Those eyes cut to his, the heat there contrasting with the easy grin. "Good. I need, caro."

"I hear you." Yeah, since way before the figs. Hell, before the artichokes.

"You are an addiction, caro." Gen led the way through a seemingly endless but pretty damned quick bunch of twists and turns, and before he knew it they were back at the palazzo and out of ice cream. But that was okay. He had kisses the second they got inside.

He groaned into Gen's mouth, their tongues sliding together, mouths going from cold to fucking hot in just heartbeats. Gen tasted him like he was a bigger delicacy than anything they'd had for

supper, tongue pushing into his mouth over and over. It felt like Gen wanted to just eat him right up.

His hands pushed up, tugging at Gen's shirt as he hunted for skin. Those little nipples were tight and dark, that belly just enough to feast on. The muscles under that fine flesh twitched for him, flexing, giving him a show. Gen moaned, going up on tiptoe, so ready to enjoy sex just like he did a good meal. Hot. So hot.

Dale slid down to his knees, graceful as he could, lips parted as his tongue slid and licked along those ripped muscles.

"Dale... oh. Sweet. Your mouth." Gen knocked his hat off stroking his hair, fingers digging in. The man had the warmest skin, like they hadn't even been outside in the cold.

"Mmmhmm." He licked the skin about Gen's bellybutton, let his hands splay over Gen's hips, thumbs sliding over the fabric covering that thick, heavy shaft.

"More. Per favore, caro." Now Gen massaged his shoulders, fingers digging into his muscles, keeping him just on the verge of overheating but relaxed.

"Uh-huh. More." He kept kissing and nibbling, fingers working open Gen's slacks as he tried to get more skin, more Gen.

Gen helped, fingers sliding over his lips as those clever hands dug in and got rid of the slacks, pushing them down for him. Gen's cock jumped out, sliding along his cheek, musky and hot as anything. His moan surprised him, loud enough to echo. His hips started moving, riding a little. Christ, he'd remember that smell forever.

"Si. Tesoro. Caro..." Hot words he couldn't understand for the life of him started falling, Gen's hands clutching more than petting now. There was this moment, this little whoosh, where Gen like, lost it for him. It happened every time, smooth and suave going to uhn, please. God, it was just so good.

The skin of Gen's prick fascinated him, so soft on his tongue, so fucking sensitive. He closed his eyes, focused on the flavors and the smells, on the way it felt on his lips. Gen's balls nudged his chin as he worked down, showing him how hard Gen arched into his touch. He could hear Gen panting, hear the words trail off into constant moans.

He took his good, sweet time, tongue sliding over the thin foreskin, pushing within to flick at the wet slit, gather the flavor of Gen. A long, harsh moan sounded, Gen's hips pumping hard, more drops sliding over his tongue, faster and faster. Gen was so damned close. Dale felt it in every tremor.

Finally, Dale just relaxed, let Gen in deep, lips wrapping around the base of Gen's cock as he pulled hard.

"Dale!" Gen came for him, hard and hot, sliding against his tongue. He had to swallow hard to get it all. He kept sucking and humming, head moving careful and slow, drawing out the aftershocks.

"Oh, caro." Pulling him away slowly, Gen tilted his face up and sank down to kiss him, tongue tracing his lips.

He whimpered, hips rolling, fucking the air, cock just rubbing against the denim.

Gen didn't leave him needing. Never left him needing. The man opened his jeans and grabbed his cock, thumb rubbing the underside.

"Gen. I need. Lord, your hands..." He pushed into the kiss, if for nothing else than to shut himself up.

"Mmm." The moan echoed into his mouth, Gen stroking him, loving on him so good that his hips started snapping like he was dancing to really good music.

His thighs were hard, the blood rushing through him, heat spraying from his cock.

Gen smiled for him, rubbed him, watching him with those bright eyes like he was the eighth wonder of the world. "So beautiful, caro," Gen said. "So very beautiful."

"I. Damn. Gen." Yeah. Words. Words were good.

"Mmm." Gen looked about, his eyebrows going up. "We are on the floor. In the atrium."

"Uh-huh. Is that against the rules?" It was a pretty damn room.

"Of course not. Nothing is against the rules with us, caro." One finger traced down his cheek. "I simply cannot remember ever being so eager."

"It was a good, good supper." He turned his head, kissed that finger. "Real good."

"It was. We should do it again. Soon."

"Mmmhmm." Yeah, they should. They might ought to go explore that big bathtub again, too.

Or the library. Or that big-assed room that just had this weird tufted couch thing right in the middle. It might be a ballroom...

With Gen? The possibilities were endless.

The Amalfi coast was one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world.

Even in winter, when the convertible would have been too brisk, Gen loved to drive the winding roads to his home, listening to the waves and watching the clouds change out over the sea. He

never tired of it, from the whitewashed buildings with terracotta roofs stacked nearly to the water to the long piers and the boats out on the water.

Seeing it through Dale's eyes was even better. A treat. Better than lemon candy.

Dale just stared, fascinated by everything, face shadowed by that hat. "You grew up here? Lord. It's just amazing, darlin'. I mean it."

"I did. I cannot wait for you to see my house. It is much less imposing than the one in Rome." Well, at least he thought it was.

"Yeah? Well, given that my apartment is smaller than your bathroom, I bet I'll be impressed." Dale hadn't let him in to see the rented room, blushing and stammering and meeting him elsewhere.

As if he cared. He would give Dale his whole world if he didn't think it would seem like he was trying to buy affection. Dale had a very hot button there.

"I think you will like it."

"It's your house. I'll like it." Those lean cheeks went red again, Dale ducking his head.

He reached over after gearing down and put a hand on Dale's thigh. "That makes me happier than you know, caro."

"Yeah?" Those amazing muscles tensed and relaxed, almost like they were rubbing his hand back.

"Si. I swear, caro, you have given me a new lease on life. I have never been so glad of a business trip."

"Do you like what you do, darlin? Does it make you happy and all?"

"It is not so bad. I suppose it is like... making money to keep money? The business was a family one, an old one, and Gen just kept it up. He was good at it, but did he love it? Perhaps.

"Well, that works. I mean, I won't dance forever. I'm not good enough to be a headliner and I won't make pornos. Eventually, I'll have my schooling done."

He squeezed Dale's thigh. "You're very good. But I can see where you don't want to do it always." His English sometimes shorted out when Dale's body was close by, waiting to be touched.

"No. Well, maybe in private..."

"Oh. Would you dance for me freely, Dale? Without thinking that is all I want from you?" That made him... gear up as he almost ran off the road, and start thinking of driving. Si. Just driving.

"Yeah. Yeah, I'd dance for you, just to dance. Hell, I'd dance *with* you, Gen."

"I would like that. I have not danced in some time..." And never like Dale did. The thought made him sweat, even in the cool of the air coming into the vents.

Dale smiled, the chuckle soft and husky and pure sex. "We'd do good together, you and me. Hand in glove, I bet."

"We do with everything else, hmm? Si, I think we should dance when we get home." He would not speed to get there faster. He would not endanger them.

"I'd like that. I... Yeah. I'd really like that." Dale shifted, one hand dropping to cover the bulge in those tight jeans.

"We will be there soon, caro. I promise." Lovely. So wonderful, the way Dale reacted to him.

"I can smell you, Gen." Dale's head ducked, that hat brim dipping.

"I bet you can. I'm burning for you, Dale. I want you so badly. If it was not too cold I would take you to the beach and love you there." He shifted both the car and himself, his hardness uncomfortable.

"You'll still have to take me to the beach. Later." Dale moaned, eyes burning over at him. "After we dance."

"I will." The cliff his home sat on came into sight after what seemed an endless drive of panting and moaning, Dale touching himself and Gen watching with half of his attention. When he finally parked in front of the palazzo, Gen was ready to explode.

"Oh, Gen. It's so pretty..." Dale's eyes were near glowing, the tanned throat sheened with sweat.

"Mmmhmm." He mumbled it, grabbing Dale's hand as he climbed out of the car, pulling. They needed to be inside, someplace private. Now.

Dale followed closely, heat against his hip, against his side, pushing him to move faster. Thankfully he could walk to his private suite with his eyes closed, and his servants were too well trained to interrupt their flight. The minute the door closed behind them Gen turned and took Dale in his arms, rubbing and shifting.

"This... this isn't dancing." Dale brought their mouths together, tongue fucking his lips.

All he could manage was a moan as he opened up and let Dale take the lead. It thrilled him, how hot Dale was for him, how fast the flame burned out of control. One hand landed on his hip, tugging them together and moving him in a slow, sensual dance that was a complete counterpoint to the intensity of the kiss. Dio. Lovely. Dale had such an innate sense of rhythm, such a perfect bump and grind. Gen went with it, swaying and humming.

"Want." Dale's hips rolled, their bodies shifting.

"Si. Want you. I... Dale." He couldn't think. He knew they should take off clothes and move to a bed and perhaps touch and kiss for hours. His brain simply refused to let him move any other way than in their dance.

"Yes. Over and over." Dale's hand supported his shoulder as their hips swiveled, Dale almost dipping him backward.

That brought his aching cock into full contact with Dale's through their clothes, and Gen surprised himself as his prick throbbed and his body shook and he came, just like that. Like he hadn't done since he could remember.

"Yeah. Yeah, darlin'. Just like that." Dale stood him back up, those amazing eyes wide and hungry.

Gen stared into those eyes for long moments before sliding to his knees and opening Dale's jeans. He wanted. Still.

"Gen..." Those hips still moved, Dale's cock thick and long, wet-tipped and heavy with need.

"Si, caro. I know." Licking his lips, Gen leaned in, finally opening his mouth and taking Dale in as far as he could with one strong pull.

A man could sell his soul for those sounds, for the way the moans rang out and filled his rooms.

Perhaps he already had. How else could he have such luck as to find Dale? Gen sucked hard, his hands pushing at those jeans so he could find Dale's balls, cupping and rolling them.

"Darlin'. Darlin', I..." Dale arched, knees bending a bit, hips thrusting up toward his lips.

Gen closed his eyes and breathed through his nose, thinking briefly how long it had been since he even wanted this, how usually he had someone do it to him. And then he stopped thinking and just tasted, licking and moving his lips up and down, making Dale feel good.

Dale groaned and shifted, entire body beginning to beg as the pleasure grew, climax close.

Gen let go of Dale's balls, letting his fingers circle the base of Dale's prick and push up as he slid his mouth down, adding pressure to the pleasure. He was pushing Dale to come, his whole self needing to feel and taste it.

Dale grunted, prick pulsing in his lips, salt and heat splashing on his tongue. Oh. Oh, yes. Just so. Perfect. The best sort of dance he could imagine. Gen licked Dale clean before letting him slip free, bending to nuzzle at the golden fuzz on one thigh.

"I think we shall have to try the dancing again, caro. I lost track of the beat."

"Next time we'll have music, even." Dale swayed, a look of pure pleasure on his face.

"We will. For now I suggest the bed." Dale would love his bed. Gen's knees popped as he stood, making him laugh. "And a shower. I am a mess."

"Mmm. I'll scrub your dangly bits." Dale smiled, eyes twinkling.

"Do not think I will turn you down." Once again he took Dale's hand, leading his lover toward bath and bed. There would be time for dances later. Many of them. He'd make sure of it.

Chapter Six

He found his tightest jeans, a CD with his favorite music, a fake leather shirt, and got himself dolled up. It felt a little weird, getting ready to dance in a house, getting ready for a private show.

A little weird and a lot sexy, really.

Dale leaned forward, lined his eyes with the barest hint of eyeliner, darkened his eyelashes just the tiniest bit. If he was lucky, Gen would like it. Want it.

Want him.

"Are you ready in there, Dale? I'm waiting." That accented voice scraped across his nerves so good, making his breath catch.

"Turn the music on, darlin'. I'm ready." He pinched his nipples a couple of times, licked his lips.

The music started up only moments later, the low, throbbing beat just perfect. He could hear Gen make a happy noise, could hear the rustle as Gen sat back down.

Dale pushed the brim of his hat down, stroked the bulge in his jeans once, and opened the bathroom door, dancing to the music, hips moving nice and slow.

"Oh..." That sound, that one gasping noise, told him more than anything else could have how much Gen liked his look. Which was a lot. A whole lot.

Oh, Hell, yes. Dale smiled, one hand trailing down his body, knowing that nobody but Gen could see. Nobody but Gen would touch.

"That... Dale." Gen watched him like a bird of prey, those hot blue-green eyes just like lasers on his skin. Every move, every bit of his body had Gen's full attention.

The shirt went first, slow and easy just halfway down his arms, the music letting him bounce a little, play a little. Hell, play a lot. Each moan made him feel that much better, that much sexier.

At home.

Wasn't that a scary thought? Because this was Gen's place, but damn. It felt good. Right. Gen shifted on the low sofa, legs moving restlessly, hands clenching and unclenching.

When the music sped up, he started riding the bull, one hand on his hat, the other balancing him. Hell, yes. That felt good.

A low moan tore from Gen, sorta echoing the music. Like it was part of the beat. Yeah. That just helped him move and move, hips grinding.

His cock didn't get hard often, doing this, but this time it did. He was swollen and aching, prick pushing against his zipper like nothing going.

"Dale... take off the shirt. All the way. I want to see your skin, caro." Gen's voice sounded raw, harsh.

The shirt slipped down a little more and he teased, letting his thighs spread and show off his package some. "More?"

"Si. Per favore, caro. Tutti..." Oh, he loved it when Gen lost his English. He really did.

"Yeah. Yeah, darlin'." He let the shirt fall, fingers hooking in his waistband and framing his cock. "Anything you need."

"I need you. Just you." Gen had put on a soft silk shirt. It came off easily, making them even.

Dale danced over, snatched Gen's shirt off the chair. He took a deep sniff of it, loving the smell of Gen, before rubbing it on his belly, mingling them both up.

"Dio." Gen stared at him, mouth open, tongue touching Gen's full lower lip. Gen's hands moved, touched the ripped abs, the tight chest, making them both pant.

He stepped closer, hips fucking the air, making promises he fully intended to keep.

Gen's head tilted, his fine nostrils flaring. "I can smell you, caro. Hot and spicy and good. Oh, I want you."

"I'm yours." He unfastened his belt, his top button, the zipper just sliding down on its own.

Staring, Gen nodded, undoing his own pants, pushing them down so they pooled on the floor. "Mine. Yes."

The music changed to a new song, this one slower, deep and sultry.

"Yeah." He straddled Gen's legs, hips bucking, ass rubbing Gen's thighs. Come on, darlin'. Take what you need.

Gen reached right into his open jeans to pull at his cock, fingers circling it firmly. "Oh, caro. So hot for me. You dance so well."

"Uh-huh. Want to ride you." He leaned down, took a deep, hard kiss that had his head swimming.

Gen's other hand cupped the back of his head, fingers sinking into his hair. They rocked together, Gen moaning and pushing up against him, agreeing wholeheartedly with that whole, lean body.

He reached down, fingers wrapping around Gen's prick. Dale wanted himself a piece of that, but that would mean stopping, getting his own jeans off. That might be too much to ask, especially the way Gen was tugging at him, touching him so good. Gen's thumb rubbed up and down his length, pushing him higher.

"Want you. Gen. Want." He matched Gen's rhythm, the music, ass clenching and releasing in time.

"Yes. We can... later. Right now, let's just dance." Those hips moved faster as the music changed again, Gen loving on him, kissing his mouth so hard he could feel his lips swell up.

Dancing. Hell, yes. He could. Oh, fuck. He pushed into the kiss, holding those pretty eyes as he did, fucking Gen's lips. Gen moaned for him, right around his tongue, holding him closer. God, that man had good hands. Yeah. Uhn.

His boots slid a little on the floor, driving him harder against Gen, against that hand.

"Si. Si, caro. Now. Come for me now," Gen said, squeezing him, stroking all the way down to his balls. The man bit his lower lip, too, daring him to do as ordered.

His orgasm slid down his spine and poured out through his prick. Dale cried out, losing the music, the rhythm.

A deep, heavy groan was his reward, Gen coming right on his heels, hot and wet and good. That prick jumped and danced for him on its own, jerking wildly as Gen panted and thrust, finally going still.

Dale leaned down, licking at Gen's lips, humming with the music.

"Mmm. I do love the way you dance for me. With me." Gen kissed him over and over, giving him sweet, then hard.

"Anything. I'd give you damn near anything..." Too fucking much.

"Be careful saying that, amato. I feel the need to ask extravagant things." Gen nuzzled his cheek, his throat. "I want all I can get."

"I would..." He wished he had enough to give Gen something, anything.

"Just you, Dale. All of you." The music clicked off and Gen nudged him, moving him up so he was standing again. Gen got up, too, moving to the stereo to put on another CD, something low and kind of bluesy. He got to watch Gen come back, unabashedly naked, moving like a big cat.

"Dance with me, caro," Gen said, reaching out to him.

He nodded, straightened his jeans and his hat, and drew Gen into the curve of his body. "I'd love to."

This time they actually managed to dance, Gen's arms sliding around him, drawing him close. They fit well together, just like they always did. They swayed, Gen humming along with the music, moving him in slow, slow circles.

Oh, that felt nice. His nose buried into Gen's neck, the scent of his lover filling him up. Gen smiled against his skin, breath warm on him, hands moving lazily against his back. They'd taken the edge off and now they could just move, feel, dance. Sensuous and sexier than anything he'd ever seen on stage, any dance he'd ever done.

One of Gen's hands settled at the small of his back, moving him in a more intricate dance, covering more ground. Yeah, the man could dance, could move to the music. And that mouth... Lord, it just kept moving on his skin.

His lips found Gen's ear, teeth scraping at the lobe.

"Mmm. Sweet." Gen's whiskers scraped his face and neck, that hand starting to pet right above his jeans, fingers dancing, too. God, it felt good.

He knew his moan vibrated, his teeth teasing Gen's earlobe, nipping harder. Gen's hips rolled against his, the rhythm of their dance stuttering a little. Oh, that was a sensitive spot, wasn't it? Another bite proved it to him, Gen rubbing and gasping, the heavy cock rubbing against his hip.

Touching him all the way up his spine, Gen massaged the back of his neck, fingers rough against his nape, scraping his nerves. That cock, damn it was hot, wet, and growing.

"You're the finest thing I've ever seen, darlin'. Ever." Needing. Wanting. He ached.

"And you're mine, caro. Mine." Such certainty. Gen just held him, saw him. Needed him right back.

"Yeah." He wasn't sure what that meant, if it meant anything at all, but he agreed with all his heart.

Gen danced him backward toward the bedroom of Gen's private suite, moving out of the sitting room. The music got faint, but with Gen humming the melody they could still dance just fine. He kept kissing, kept licking his way down Gen's neck, teeth working the curve of shoulder.

"Oh, si. There. Right there." Gen went up on tiptoe, hips rocking and rocking against him, cock sliding against Dale's skin, his jeans.

"Here?" He bit down harder, marking Gen's skin. His hands dropped down, fingers grabbing Gen's ass and squeezing.

"Mmmhmm. *Right* there. I love your mouth, you know? I love the way you touch me." Generous with touches as well as words, Gen gave him kisses, hands sliding up and down, up and down, all over his back.

"Could eat you up like a pie supper." He left another mark, then another, his tongue working the heated, slightly swollen spots.

The way Gen swayed into each and every touch made him hard as a rock. That man really did love every little thing he did, never complaining once, even when he bit a little too hard.

They made it to the bedroom, the backs of his knees hitting the edge of the mattress, putting him a touch off-balance. Gen laughed, the sound coming right up from the belly, and let go, tipping him over so he landed on his back. Then Gen attacked his jeans.

He wiggled, helping Gen out, his cock slapping against his belly as his hips jerked. Shit, he was a slut, pure and simple, begging for it like that.

"So pretty, amato. So fine." Fingers sinking into the curls at his groin, Gen stared at him, licking those swollen lips.

His boots came off, then his jeans, and Dale could finally spread, knees lifting so his heels could catch on the edge of the mattress.

"I swear, caro, you make me want to do things I never cared about before." Gen bent to nibble at his thighs, and he had to figure that yeah, Gen wasn't the kind of guy to suck much. He was the kind of guy who got sucked.

There was a part of him that blinked about that, about how they were both into each other and how shit like that only ever happened in movies and all. Most of him wasn't thinking at all. It was just happier than a pig in shit, having Gen's mouth on him.

"Dale. Smell good." That accent got thicker and thicker as Gen worked up to his balls, nuzzling them, moving them back and forth with his tongue. Then Gen tilted Dale's hips up and moved lower, tongue pushing at his hole.

Some weird assed sound slipped out of him, loud enough to echo, to make his cheeks heat and his whole body arch.

A soft chuckle brushed his skin, Gen's hands clamping on him and opening him up so that tongue could slip in and out, wetting him, opening him right up. Thumbs digging into his ass cheeks, Gen worked him relentlessly, never letting him down for a moment.

Dale forgot how to think, how to breathe, how to do anything but move and feel and ride the waves that shook him. Gen started to moan, the sounds moving right into the core of him, making him tremble. So good. Then Gen's mouth moved, leaving him gasping as Gen sucked at the head of his cock.

"Gen. Gen. I. I can't..." His hips bucked like he was on an eight-second ride, his belly tight as a board.

That mouth popped right off him, leaving his cock wet and aching. "You can, and you will. I would have you, caro. Inside you. Wait for me."

He reached down, gripped the base of his cock good and hard, knees drawing up as his whole goddamn body throbbed, wanting to come.

"Good. Oh, good. That's it." It didn't help one bit when Gen's fingers stroked his at the base of his cock, moving over his hands and his balls.

"Never needed no one like this." Not ever. Not even once.

"No. Only you." Then Gen was slipping up, pushing between his legs, cock prodding at his wet hole, just sliding right inside him like nothing doing. Just like that.

His breath huffed right out of him, his eyes popping open. Dale reached out, hands landing on Gen's arms, encouraging him down, closer. Giving him what he needed, Gen leaned down and kissed him, their skin rubbing together all along their bodies. That cock spread him unbearably, making him moan and thrash.

Gen's kiss sent him flying, and his fingers dug into Gen's arms. He squeezed down, feeling every inch, every fucking millimeter of Gen inside him.

That mouth smashed down on his, bruising his lips, and Gen's hips moved, humping hard into him. Dale could feel that sweet cock throbbing, feel it growing, knew Gen was getting close. His fucking heart stopped, all his focus on his prick and ass, spunk spreading between them, spraying over their skin.

Gen's head snapped back, those blue-green eyes going hugely wide as hot come filled him, Gen crying out loud and long. That whole lean body convulsed before Gen finally relaxed, slumping down on him.

Dale just held on, rocking Gen a little, holding tight. Shit. Gen was. Damn.

Just damn.

"Mmm. Grazie, Dale. For our dance." Gen said it softly, breath barely stirring on his skin.

"Anytime, darlin', I swear it. You just let me know." He kissed Gen's temple, humming low.

"I'll let you know in perhaps a half hour," Gen said, words slurring. "After a nap."

He chuckled, stroked the curve of Gen's ass. "And a snack. I know you."

"So... predictable." Light snores sounded, Gen dropping right off to sleep.

No, he didn't think so. Not predictable. He just knew Gen now.

He just knew.

Chapter Seven

Weeks.

They had had three blissful weeks together on the coast. Gen had shown Dale where he grew up, had taken him to the beach and watched him play. It had been simply marvelous.

Sadly, now Dale was talking about going home. As if he would allow that. He would simply have to make Dale see that his place was right at Gen's side, no matter where that was.

"No, no, Lorenzo," he said into the phone, watching Dale pace about his study, touching this and that, restless as a man could be. "I need those figures by noon. Si. Grazie. I can always count on you."

He rung off, standing and wandering over to touch Dale's back. "Shall we go to the beach, amato?"

"Surely." Dale leaned back toward the touch, gave him a warm smile. "You got the business done you needed to?"

"I did. Are you all right, caro?" Dale's skin felt warm and good when he pushed up the sweater and put his hand on the small of Dale's back.

"Yeah. Just trying to get my mind back to studying and working again. I've gotten lazy and spoiled rotten."

"I would hardly say you have been lazy." No, indeed. They had been most industrious.

Dale's eyes lit up, the grin sudden and infectious. "No? You sure? I'd hate to get back on the stage and have lost my ability to ride."

Gen frowned. "I assure you, you have not. But must you go back to work there?" It did not... how would Dale say? Sit well with him.

"It depends on what else I can find, you know? I'm taking fifteen hours this spring so I won't have lots of time for office-type work."

"There's got to be something else." Still, he did not wish to fight, so Gen let it go. "Let's go. It's warmer today. We can maybe take off our shoes, hmm?"

"Wiggle our toes in the sand?" Dale's arm wound around his waist, tugging him out of his office and down the long hallway.

"Si, caro. Let the waves wash up on us." He so loved to watch Dale on the beach. The absolute wonder in those lovely eyes amazed him.

"It's prettier here than back home. Colder, but prettier." Dale had become used to the chill, though, seeming to almost enjoy it.

"You certainly improve the scenery." They wandered, stopping by the kitchen to grab some bread and some wine. A fine Chianti and some crusty loaf went well with salt sea air.

"Flattery will get you laid, darlin'." He got a quick kiss, tongue pressing in to taste him, taste his smile.

"Will it? Then I must do more. That has become my favorite pastime." Dio, he loved this man. How quickly it had come on them, and how deep it ran. Gen took another kiss, then another, loving the taste of Dale on his mouth.

"We're never gonna get out of the house." It did not sound like a complaint, not with Dale's hands landing on his hips and drawing him closer.

"No? We can always go later and take our feast upstairs." Really, the bed or the beach, it didn't matter.

"Gonna lick wine off my belly?" Dale nuzzled right in, smooth-shaved cheeks delicious against his throat.

Oh. His cheeks heated and his cock jumped. "Si. That would please me a great deal. I love how you taste with wine on you. I do."

"Then take me to bed, Gen." Teeth scraped his throat, scratching and teasing his skin.

"Mmm. Yes."

He twined his fingers with Dale's, carrying the wine while Dale carried the cheese. He forgot the bottle when they reached his quarters, however, letting it drop and roll to the corner as he reached to pull Dale to him for more kisses.

Dale managed to get the food onto a little table, saving it from the floor before pushing into his arms. Their hips rolled together, this dance more and more familiar, more necessary as each day passed.

His tongue pushed right into Dale's mouth, his hands cupping Dale's buttocks so they could get closer, better, more. That body was so hot, so good. He loved the feel of it as they began to sway.

"Haven't ever wanted nothin' like I want you." His slacks were opened, pushed down as Dale began to work his shirt open.

"Yes, caro. I feel the same." That was why Dale had to stay. Simply had to. He shrugged off his shirt and then put his hands back on Dale, looking for skin there, struggling with cloth.

Dale's nipples were tight and pebble-hard, that rippled belly taut and begging for his touch.

Oh, God. Where was the wine? Gen shoved at Dale's chest, knocking him back on the bed before scrambling to get the wine. "Need to taste this on you, caro."

"It'll stain your sheets." Dale arched, hand sliding slow and easy on that hard, fat cock.

"Has this ever been a problem in the past?" Oh, damn it. He'd forgotten to uncork. That was all right, he had enough adrenaline running through him to pop it out just by pounding on the bottom of the bottle.

Dale's laughter filled the air, husky and deep, filled with pleasure. "I should buy you red ones, just for this."

"What a clever notion. You see, I knew I depended upon you for a reason." The little trail of golden hair from navel to cock Dale sported fascinated him, and Gen poured a tiny strip of wine along it before bending to lick it off.

It was an addiction, the way Dale stilled, the way those muscles tightened as he licked and lapped, tugging the wine from those curls with his lips.

A bit more dripped out of the bottle, trailing along Dale's belly, leaving him chuckling as he chased it. Lovely. The wine was warm, only a bit cooler than Dale's skin, and it heated on that flesh like mulled wine, heady and good.

"You're sure red wine goes with cowboys? Not white?" Dale's fingers stroked through his curls, cock just nudging his cheek.

"Oh, chianti is just robust enough to go with you. It stands up to the salt and musk." It was perfect, just like parmesano reggiano or good prosciutto.

Dale's belly flushed for him, those strong thighs spread and open for him.

"Darlin', I... you make a man mad."

"Do I? Caro, you are obsession." Licking harder, Gen dragged his tongue along Dale's sensitive skin, rubbing his cheek against Dale's cock.

Dale reached down, fingers tugging on his own tight sacs. The sight was quite enough to make him arch, rub himself against the bedding.

"Caro. How beautiful you are. Lovely." His own balls felt like stones. He licked around Dale's fingers, playing them and that hot shaft with his tongue, the wine going to his head.

"Want you, darlin'." Dale reached down for him, tugging him up and around so that hot little tongue could slide over his thighs.

"Si." It came out as a groan as he let Dale turn him, push the rest of his clothes off. The mouth on that man was enough to send Gen to Heaven. Tongue and lips, sweet soft groans and the barest hint of teeth teased him, tried to drive him to madness.

Gen finally reminded himself to move and touch back, licking and sucking, still tasting wine. His hands moved, sliding along between Dale's thighs to cup the heavy, hot balls. He felt, rather than heard, Dale's groan, the velvet-soft skin in his fingers wrinkling up, so alive for his touch.

"So good, caro." Gen smiled and wiggled, making room for himself, stretching to lick at Dale's sacs, needing that flavor, too.

Dale's lips slid down his shaft, tongue teasing the tip of his prick, pushing in enough for a slight burn. Grunting, Gen twisted up into the touch and pulled Dale into his mouth, moving from balls to cock so he could suck hard. The sounds Dale made had his cock throbbing even harder.

Strong fingers gripped his ass, pulling him into that hungry mouth. Dale's nose nudged his balls as suction surrounded him, the tip of his cock slipping into Dale's throat. Gen cried out around Dale, his whole body shuddering as he came, his eyes wide and his muscles tight. Oh, Dio.

Dale sucked and licked through his orgasm, through the aftershocks. Then those strong hips began to move, driving that lovely prick into his lips, begging for his attention. He gave it, licking along the underside, tongue rubbing up and down. He loved that taste. Good. So good. Gen cupped Dale's hips in his hands, pulling and pushing, adding to the sensation.

"Gen..." Dale planted his feet on the mattress, driving up toward him, deep groans filling the air.

"Mmm." Yes. Si. Per favore, caro. Gen hollowed his cheeks, letting his lips seal tight, letting his mouth drag the pleasure out of Dale's body.

Salty seed splashed on his tongue, bitter and perfect against the hint of wine that lingered.

Gen crawled up the bed, grabbing the bottle of wine and taking a sip to share with Dale. "You always amaze me. caro."

"Do I?" Dale hummed a little, the sound vibrating his lips. "I'm just a guy, you know?"

"Si. Mine. If that does not scare you..." He realized he might sound a tad possessive.

"Only thing that scares me is how hard it's gonna be to go back home to my baby apartment."

"Yes. I imagine it is. Well, when I come back with you for a few weeks you can stay with me." He kissed Dale's cheek and throat, dread like a ball in his belly.

"I'd like that." Dale sighed, holding him tight. "One day I'll be able to stand beside you, yeah? Have my schooling and a decent enough job and all."

"I wish you would stay now. I hate the thought of you leaving." Passionately. Urgently.

"I wish I could, darlin', but I can't afford to miss a semester, not when I'm so close."

"Of course." He could understand. He was a reasonable man. Education was important. It really was. A man needed every chance to better himself.

Dale kissed him, lips clinging. "You'll have to come see our beaches in the summer, if you're not too busy."

"I will never be too busy for you, caro." He stroked Dale's cheeks. "I promise it. No, I worry you will find someone more your age. At college."

Dale actually laughed, but those eyes were serious when they met his. "Oh, darlin'. Like there's anyone in the state of Texas that can do for me what you do. No, Gen. You. You're something else. A one of a kind deal."

"Swear it and I will believe it." He had no idea what it was about Dale that simply made him mad with need, but there it was. He considered himself a confident man, but with Dale the ground shifted beneath him.

"You have my word, Gen. I don't want anyone else, whether I have to wait to see you or not."

"Good. I only want you, caro." He rolled on top of Dale, kissing him madly.

Kiss-swollen lips parted for him, Dale holding nothing back from him. One hand tangled in his curls, dragging him closer. They kissed hard, both of them straining together, suddenly even more needy than they had been before. Gen scrabbled at Dale's skin, trying to get a good hold.

"Yours." Dale's leg wrapped around his hip, body sweat-slick and needy.

"Si. Oh, si." He humped hard, feeling his cock sliding on that skin, letting it ride. His back arched, his head snapped back, and he groaned, needing more.

"Take me." Dale grabbed his hand, pushed it down to that muscled ass. "Please, darlin'. Want to feel you."

"Yes. Need." His prick knew what he wanted, knew to slide down between Dale's legs as he moved. Rubbing against Dale's heavy balls, he grabbed the tube they'd left on the nightstand. He needed it to ease the way.

Dale grabbed one knee and tugged, spreading himself out like a private feast, a banquet for him alone. His mouth watered and he bent to lick the sweat from Dale's throat even as he got two fingers wet and slid them between Dale's ass cheeks, pushing at the tiny hole there.

So easy, the way Dale took him in, held him with that grip. Dale bore down, Adam's apple bobbing and shifting under his lips as his fingers pressed deep.

"Love. Oh, love." He pushed deep, opening Dale up, loosening the tightness there before slicking up his cock, pressing it to Dale's entrance.

Dale nodded, mouth slamming against his own, tongue taking his lips even as he took Dale's body.

Hips rising and falling, Gen moved them, cock sliding all the way in before pulling almost out again. He needed the deep, deep strokes, needed the friction. Gen groaned, pressing deep, feeling every inch of his prick as it moved. His muscles jumped under his skin and he humped, really working Dale hard.

It was a beautiful thing, to watch Dale buck and shift and arch, lips open and needy as he took that fine ass. All he could do was touch and fuck and bend to kiss and lick. Gen felt greedy as Hell, wanting everything. Simply everything.

"Need. Gen, darlin'." Dale squeezed him, muscles working him, fluttering and shuddering around him.

"Need what, caro. Tell me. I want to hear." His words were not coming easily, his English trying to slip away as he rocked harder and harder.

"You. Touch me, lover." He wrapped one hand around Dale's shaft, hips pressing deep as he did. Dale's eyes flew open, shoulders lifting as the man curled up toward him. "Uhn. There. Again."

"Again? Si. I can do it again." His hand moved in time with his body, pulling and pushing, stroking up and down.

Dale keened, bucking and rolling beneath him as seed pulsed over his fingers, against his belly.

That body clamped down on him and oh, Gen lost control, coming so hard he saw stars. "Dale!" he shouted, his hands tightening, his cock throbbing.

Dale groaned, hands grasping and holding him as both of their hearts pounded together, slamming.

Gen let his forehead drop on Dale's shoulder, breathing in the scent of salt and musk. "Oh, love. I may not be able to stand it if you leave."

Dale nodded, lips on his temple. "Yeah, but I gotta finish my schoolin', Gen. I'll stand beside you, but I need to be on my own feet."

Nodding, he leaned a little more, letting them sink into the bed. "Si, caro. Si. I am trying not to make it difficult."

"I know. Shit, you think I want to go back to my place after being with you?"

That had him smiling. "No, I hope not. What a pair we are, hmm? When must you leave?"

"The semester starts on the twenty-third of January."

Too soon. It was too soon. "I'll come with you for a week or so." Just to ease them into it.

"I'd like that." The smile he received eased him, deep down.

"Then that's what we'll do." Gen rolled to his side, arms closing around Dale and holding him tight. "Do you still want to go to the beach?"

"Mmm. I could take a walk with you." Dale drew him closer, fingers petting along his spine. "After a minute here."

"Si, caro. In a minute," he agreed, slipping down to rest his head on Dale's shoulder. The walk could wait. For now he would just celebrate the closeness.

Good lord, his little baby apartment never seemed so white trash as when he opened the door to invite Gen in for the first time.

"Home sweet apartment, darlin'. Come on in."

It wasn't dirty. Dusty, maybe, because damn, he'd been gone, but nobody'd broke in and nobody'd set the building with its dozen efficiency apartments on fire, so he figured it was all good. He put his suitcase on the floor beside the door, encouraging Gen to wander through.

Gen looked around, walking to one end and back. "You've made it very homey, caro."

"Thanks, darlin'." The walls were covered in posters and shit -- Justin McBride and George Strait, Bodacious and Li'l Yellowjacket. The sofa had been his grampa's, the big ole honking thing denim-covered and comfy.

Gen must have been thinking the same thing, because that twinkle he knew so well entered those bright eyes. "That looks very comfortable."

"It is. Sturdy, too." He went to grab them both a beer.

"Have you tested it? I mean, really tested it?" There was something about the way Gen sucked down that damned beer, tanned throat working...

"Depends on what you call testing, darlin'." He dragged the cold base of his bottle along Gen's collarbone. "I've been up close and personal with my own hand on it a thousand times."

"Well, I think you need to see how it holds two bodies in motion. Si? Who knows, it might collapse." Oh, that man was wicked.

"I bet it'll hold us both." He pushed closer, crowding right into Gen's space.

"Let's try." They toppled as Gen tugged at him, both of them falling to the couch. His beer rolled off, bouncing along the floor, and he kinda watched it until Gen pulled him around for a kiss, mouth really moving on his.

Oh, Hell. Yes. He gave as good as he got, dragging Gen's shirt out of his waistband. Gen pulled at his clothes, too, tugging his shirt and jeans open, hands pushing into his clothes to find skin.

Oh, Christ, that felt fine. His skin loved those fingers, loved the way Gen touched him and made his nerves sing.

They rolled a little so Gen could get to more, could get his shirt all the way off and pinch at his nipples. That sent sensation zinging all the way down to his toes. He kicked his boots off, arching as he did it, those hands fixin' to drive him mad.

"Oh, pretty, caro. So pretty." Gen cupped his cock, curving one hand about it, rolling his balls a second after. He loved that, the pressure and heat, the hint of ache.

Dale started working Gen's pants open, shoving the cloth down over the lean hips. Yeah, that was good. Lord, that man knew just where to touch him, just where to press and pinch to make him crazy. It took him way too long to get the man naked, the way he kept getting distracted.

Gen's fingers slipped behind his balls, nudging his hole, teasing him something fierce. "Si, caro. Inside, hmm? I would have you." That look just blazed down at him, all the teasing gone as Gen moved between his thighs.

"Hell, yeah." He spread, draped one leg over the top of the sofa, knowing he had to look like the world's biggest slut.

Didn't seem to bother Gen. Hell, from the way the man looked at him it seemed to work just *fine*. Gen looked around a minute, then just stuck two fingers in his mouth, coming out wet enough to ease the way as they worked into Dale's body.

Dale moved, thinking idly that if he ever danced like this on stage he'd make a fortune. Of course, he wasn't sure he'd ever dance like this for anyone else... "Gen!"

"Pay attention, caro. Right here." Two fingers pushed right into him, again and again, opening him up. The scrape right across his nerves was almost unbearable.

"I. I am. God, I am. Don't stop." The words tore out of him, his throat working, hips bucking furiously.

"Are you? I'm not sure. Remember, this is a test." Gen smiled for him, bending to lick at his cock, tongue gathering up the moisture there and pulling it into Gen's mouth.

"A test..." He groaned, eyes popping open to stare down at Gen as he rocked between mouth and fingers.

"Of the couch." Gen's breath liked to burn, it was so hot. So good.

"Uh. Uh-huh." He wasn't even sure what he was agreeing to anymore.

"I think we need to do more... rocking. Testing." Gen lifted up and rubbed against him, cock sliding up along his balls. Those fingers never stopped moving, making him crazy.

"The things you make me need, darlin'..." He slapped up against Gen, mouth meeting those smiling lips as he moved.

"Mmmhmm. Want to make you remember me when we're apart." Finally those fingers slipped out and Gen's cock moved into their place, pushing against his hole.

"Never fucking forget you." That was the sweetest goddamn burn. "You're the one."

"Love you, caro. Dale." Gen pushed inside him, boom, just like that. It was a little too much scrape, and not enough.

"More. More, now, darlin'. Please." Please. Christ, he'd never been one to beg, but Gen did it for him.

"Si. Oh..." Gen looked like a damned Greek god or something, kneeling between his legs, hips moving back and forth. Muscles clenched and released and sweat started to pool in the hollows of Gen's collarbones and hips, and God, yeah.

He reached up, fingers finding Gen's nipples, pinching and teasing, encouraging the man to give him everything. Gen grunted and started moving faster and faster, slamming into him, making that old couch groan. Nipples hard and cock harder, Gen gave it right to him, spreading him so wide.

Shit Marthy, the top of his fucking head was going to pop right the fuck off. He grunted as fireworks lit up behind his eyes, balls drawing up so tight they ached.

"Sweet. Yes. Good. Come for me, caro. I want to see your face." Gen put both hands under his ass and lifted, sliding so deep he felt sparks go off in his body.

Heat sprayed over his belly and chest, his entire fucking world distilled down to his cock and his ass.

Then Gen was off and running, fucking him so hard he saw stars, coming right into him, so hot and good he just hollered. Gen panted, stilling, eyes looking right into his, that look saying all sorts of stuff. He reached up, cupped Gen's jaw in his hand, thumb brushing Gen's bottom lip. He fucking loved the man more than was reasonable.

"Mmm. Love." Gen collapsed right down on him and the couch creaked, but held. "This is indeed a fine sofa."

"Uh-huh." Hot. Good. His.

"Next we'll have to try your bed, caro. I want to make sure you can remember me in safety."

"The bed. The kitchen counter. The bathtub. There's lots of surfaces."

"Mmm. We shall have to try them all, si?" Gen just grinned at him, but there was something serious behind them, something they knew would have to happen eventually but didn't want to talk about.

"All of them." He nodded. Yeah. It was gonna have to happen, but it didn't fucking have to happen today.

Today they could just play. He and Gen were good at that. The rest, well, that could wait until tomorrow.

At the earliest.

Chapter Eight

Lord, he was tired.

Bone-tired.

It was different, being here now and knowing that he wanted to be somewhere else.

Dale sighed and lit another cigarette, blowing the smoke out the coffeeshop window and staring at the little laptop he couldn't afford and he couldn't afford not to have. Come on now.

Study.

Study and then maybe you can see if Gen is online. Christ, was it only fucking *February*?

Okay, dude. This whole moping over your lover situation was bullshit. He was a fucking man and, if he was *ever* going to be able to be Gen's partner for real, he needed to focus and work and be able to *be* Gen's equal. Okay? Okay.

O-fucking-kay.

"Dale? Man, you're up late." Buck Davis plopped down beside him, coffee sloshing a little bit. Lord, for a good guy, Buck was a big ole dork. Still, Buck was cool with the gay thing and the dancing thing and lord knew a guy needed friends. Good, steady friends. "Studying for old man Moody's mid-term?"

"Dr. White's paper." On the connective tissue of bovines. Ick.

"Ew."

"Yeah. No shit."

"Man, I bet you wish you were jet-setting around with that guy, huh?" There was a mixture of prurient curiosity and flat-out jealousy in that boy's voice. It was going to be a while before Buck went jet-setting with anyone, what with a baby coming and a woman planning a quickie wedding before somebody's daddy grabbed a shotgun.

Dale fought the blush and lost. Fuck. But still, yeah. Yeah, he did. "Italy was fucking cool, man. Cold, but damn."

"Yeah? Did y'all. I mean, I know y'all were a... you know, a *thing*. Are you still?"

Were they? Yeah. Yeah, he thought so. "Yeah. He's busy and I got school 'n stuff, but we are."

"When do you get to see him again?"

"Summer, probably. Maybe spring break, if he can swing it." He took a deep drag and crushed out his smoke. "When's the wedding?"

“Week after next. That’s why I’m here. Will you stand up with me? You don’t gotta wear more than jeans and a good shirt, but Bonnie’s having Lisa Cartwright there and she’s all about things being even.”

Lord, lord. Thank God he was queer as a three dollar bill. “Sure, buddy. I can do that.”

“Cool.” Buck looked a little like he might just bust apart. “I tell you what, this is just... You know.”

Dale nodded, even though, no, he didn’t know. “It’ll be cool. You like kids and you’re fixing to graduate.”

“Yeah. Baby won’t be here ‘til June.” Buck’s eyes slid over to his smokes and he handed one over without a word, working the Zippo some flappy-lipped customer’d given him for a lap dance out of his jeans pocket. Gen’d be back by June.

He’d have to decide whether or not to spend the summer watching the world in them big old blue-green eyes or be smart and take two full summer sessions and keep on keeping on.

So he could graduate.

So he’d be free.

The first few weeks without Dale went well enough. Oh, Gen missed him terribly, and called him frequently, but Gen managed. There was actually a great deal of work to be done, work he had been neglecting with Dale there. In fact, Gen had traveled the last two weeks, from Rome to Paris, and from Paris to Brussels, making up meetings he had simply cancelled when Dale had been at his home.

Now, though, he was home. And pining for his dancing cowboy.

“Dio, Adriano. Have you heard a word I said?”

“Hmm?” Gen turned his attention back to the phone and his cousin Alessandro, who went on and on about some olive oil export scheme. “Sorry.”

“You are not. What are you daydreaming about now? That little boy you’re seeing?”

“He’s hardly a little boy, now is he?” Gen asked, looking out the window at the waves crashing on the shore, feeling the chill in the air as if he was out there walking on the beach. “And si, I miss him, hmm?”

“Bah. You are besotted, my friend, and it makes a fool of you. Who knows what he is doing at college with his young friends, eh?”

That had his hand clenching on the phone before Gen made himself calm down and breathe. “I trust him. He would never do that. Not when he has promised to be true while we work at this distance thing.”

“It is easy to promise, and easier to break.”

“For you, perhaps.” His cousin had been married at least three times. “For some of us it means more.”

“If you say so. So do you wish to go in with me on this project or not?”

“Si, si. I will do it. Come down to Napoli next week and we will sign the papers.”

“Why don’t you come to Palermo?” his cousin asked. “We could have some fun.”

Gen wrinkled his nose. “I don’t have time. I have to leave for America on business again soon.”

“Business. Hmm. Is that what you call it? Any excuse to go see your American cowboy.”

“I am going to Chicago, not Houston. You worry too much.”

“I just know you and your obsessions. Very well, I will come down sometime this next week to work out the details. Make sure you are there.”

“I will be. I am still a business man, cousin.”

“I hope so.”

They rang off and Gen sat and stared at the phone for long moments, grumbling to himself. He was not obsessed. He wasn’t. He was simply in the first blush of his passion still. That was why even as he was telling himself he was fine without Dale he was reaching for the phone. And hoping Dale was awake.

“Dee. Kid. C’mere.”

Dale wiped the sweat off his chest, neck craning to see who was calling. Fuck, it was Jorge, the club owner, looking a little pissy. Goddamn it. If Jorge was gonna bitch about not doing a lap dance for that grabby little fuck, he would quit. The little prick always got grabby and never fucking tipped and then ended up jacking off which was fucking nasty. He was doing his fucking job. He hated this fucking job. It was getting to where a nighttime security job was looking more and more like something he could manage. “Yeah, boss?”

“I been thinkin’, man. You know Ken?” Jorge had this diamond in his front tooth that caught the light and made it hard as fuck to focus. Really. Dale pulled on his jeans, wincing as the denim rasped along newly-waxed bits. Hated. This. Job.

He bet Gen'd like the smooth, though.

"You mean the new guy? Does the Indian thing to Tim McGraw?" He sorta liked that song. Hell, Ken seemed a decent sort. Had that long hair thing working for him. It would be a money maker.

"Yeah. Him. He wants to do this cowboy and Indian dance, with rope." It came out 'wit rup', which damn near made Dale laugh. "Thinks the money will double for you."

"I don't do partner dances, man." It was hard enough to work it single, to ride that imaginary bull. Although it was easier now than it ever had been. He sorta just closed his eyes and thought of Gen.

Which was like baseball, but different. Real different. Did they *have* baseball in Italy? He'd have to ask, because damn. Baseball. He still wasn't over the no-football thing. Weird-assed country.

Really, fucking *soccer*? Shit.

Where was his clean shirt? He knew he'd *brought* one. Oh, man. Time to wash the chaps. Ew.

"...Saturday?"

"What?" Fuck. Focus.

"I *said*, if he's right and you two is good you can have the good nights."

Oh. Oh, dude. Headliner nights meant way more money and more nights off to study. More nights off to study meant more scholarship money and shit. Fucking A. "I might could handle that. So what? I just go talk to him?"

Jorge grinned again and that damn tooth went to sparkling. Shit. It was like a fucking hypnotism thing or something. Jorge and his Amazing Fucking Sparkly Tooth performing in the dressing rooms Tuesday and Thursday. Come on down! Lord. "Nah. You say yes. I talk to him. He says yes. Then you two come in tomorrow and make up a show."

Tomorrow. Tomorrow. "I have class from eight to eleven, but I can be here at noon."

If he had more money, he could maybe swing a call to Gen. A new swimsuit for the trip Gen'd been talking about to the Mediterranean. Maybe new tires for the truck.

Dude.

"Noon is okay. I will talk to Ken. You two will make up something."

Yeah, yeah, he reckoned they would.

"May I get you anything else, sir?" the stewardess asked, slipping a pillow behind his head.

“No, thank you, I’m fine.”

“Then I’ll just let you nap.” She gave him that dry-lipped smile that so many flight attendants had and left him alone, treating him as if he were on an overseas flight.

Which he was not.

Gen had debated hard about going to Houston. In fact, he had taken commercial flights, just to make it more difficult to travel. His business was in Chicago, and he should have returned home soon after.

Instead he was on his way to Houston, to surprise Dale.

It came as something of a surprise to him, as well, how much he needed that sweet golden body and pale hair, though he thought he might need Dale’s laugh even more than his touch.

Stunning.

He checked his watch one more time. Another forty-five minutes at least. He had the choice of driving himself mad thinking about what Dale was doing without him, or of opening his laptop and getting some work done.

Gen chose the latter, hoping he could get his mind to settle.

There would be time to be with Dale soon enough.

For now he just needed to regain some of his former discipline and handle his own life. Before it got out of control.

Houston was rainy. Gen smiled a little. It had been rainy in Chicago, too, right before he left. He hoped that was not a sign.

Gen called after he got out of his meeting, but Dale did not answer at home or on his cell phone, so Gen assumed he was working and went to the club.

Dio, he had missed Dale so much. Not just the sweet, hot body, but Dale's darlin’ed, drawling voice and bright eyes and amazing smile. He had missed conversing and showing Dale Italy and lying beside Dale at night.

They deserved some time.

He got to the club late enough that he had to show his passport to get in, and Gen settled in his usual semi-private box after asking a waiter if "Dee" was on. The smile the man gave him when he indicated an affirmative made something hard and angry rise in Gen's belly, but he shrugged it off and waited, watching one lovely young man gyrate for ten minutes before the next dancer came out. The dancer who should be Dale.

"One of them's a cowboy from the west; the other's his Indian outlaw. Please welcome our own Dee and Keno!" The announcer's voice was grating, ingratiating and utterly aggravating, the tone scraping down along his nerves as badly as the words did.

Then the lights came up, Dee's body glowing golden in the light from where he was bound to a fake log, wearing nothing but a hat, g-string, straps and a rope. The music started and Dale started shifting in time, a muscled, dark man in warpaint and doeskin gyrating around him.

Gen watched, his mouth twisting up as pure male rage shot through him. Dale worked alone. The job bothered Gen, but he'd let it go, because Dale worked alone.

He supposed things changed.

As he watched, Dale seduced the other man -- Keno, what a ridiculous name -- into untying him, letting that fine body move under the lights. First one arm was freed, then the other, the damned stranger rubbing against Dale, slick skin rubbing against slick skin.

His hands clenched on his thighs, and Gen rumbled a little, the loud music hiding the sound as he waved the waiter away. This was... he had no words for it. In English or Italian. He just had a sick feeling, clammy and shaking.

The lights swirled and sparkled, Dale's face hidden under the hat brim, stomach muscles shining with sweat as he grabbed onto the pole he'd been bound to, started humping it.

Dale never failed to move him. Not ever. But even the sight of Dale's beauty could not distract him now though. Not when there was another touching what was his.

The lights fell and the crowd screamed and waved cash, both men heading to the main floor to collect tips and compliments. So confident. His Dale seemed to have lost some of that delicious innocence.

He did wonder if that was his own fault.

As much as Gen wished to confront Dale about this new development, he had to respect that this was Dale's workplace. Only that kept him from forcing Dale to leave, naked if need be. Instead he put a business card in a twenty.

"Give this to Dee, please," he told the waiter. "I will be watching."

He watched as the waiter made his way toward Dale, who was avoiding an ancient man's hands with a particular skill. When Dale read the business card, those bright eyes shot up to the shadows where he waited. In the room where he'd watched Dee dance the first time.

That smile was almost happy enough to make him forget his fury.

Almost.

Torn between pride and rage, Gen waited, knowing Dale would come to him. Soon.

Dale made his rounds then disappeared as another man took the stage. Gen nearly vibrated with the waiting, the tension.

Then the little door opened, Dale's eyes dragging over his body. "It is you. Really."

"Amazing, hmm?" See how composed he could be? "I can see you certainly did not expect me."

"No. No, not for another few weeks." Dale stepped in, still shining with the sweat from his dance. "It's good to see you."

"Is it?" It was not like him to be cruel, but he held himself away.

"Yeah..." The smile faded away, Dale stopping short, the hat brim dipping and hiding those eyes.

Gen reached up and snatched the hat off. "You have a new dance partner, hmm? You did not tell me that, caro."

"What?" Dale reached for the hat, the act immediate and instinctive.

"No. I want to see your face." Tossing the hat back on the couch behind him, Gen moved closer to Dale, staring into his eyes. "Who is this man?"

"Which man? What the fuck's up, Gen? Who pissed in your Wheaties?"

"You!" His voice rose, and Gen took a deep breath. "You dance alone. You always do. Why have you suddenly started letting someone else touch you for money?"

"This is about me doing a dance with Keno? You're shitting me, right?" Dale's cheeks got red as ripe cherries, the blue eyes flashing. "I needed the fucking cash, Gen. I make a third more, dancing with him, and they let me have three good nights instead of four shitty ones."

Gen's eyes narrowed. "I have told you many times if you need help you can ask." As if he had done something wrong. Dale was the one who had omitted the news of his new job status. "If you had at least told me I would not have been surprised by that display."

"I won't take your money, man. I can't. Hell, I didn't think you'd give a shit. It ain't sex. It's just work."

"He was touching you." It came out as a growl, almost too guttural to be English, but he thought Dale understood.

"We were *working*! How many fucking assholes do you think touch me a week? How many men want to feel up the redneck? I'm a goddamned pole dancer, Gen. *You* came in here to gawk the first time, just like everybody else."

"I..." Gen cursed, and viciously. That was true enough, but somehow another dancer was different. More of a threat. "It is not the same," he said, sticking his chin out.

"Bullshit." Dale stared him down, just vibrating where he stood. "I ain't the kind to fuck around. You oughta know that."

"I know very little. You had to leave just when we really started to get past the, how do you say? The darlin' moon." He knew he was being a bastard, but so be it.

"Yeah, I guess." Dale's lips twisted, fingers balled up into fists. "I'm gonna get changed."

"I will wait. We have more to discuss." Somewhere else. Surely he could calm himself once away from the bar.

"kay." Dale grabbed his hat, moving carefully so that they didn't touch. "I gotta tip out and stuff. I'll be fifteen or so."

"Very well." Gen watched Dale go, all of the pleasure lost for both of them, and he sighed. Was it so wrong to want Dale for himself?

It took twenty-three minutes for Dale to appear, dressed in jeans and a simple black t-shirt, hat pulled low over Dale's face, shadowing those eyes. Gen thought Dale was leaner, perhaps -- not thin at all, but more spare, muscles more defined.

Jealousy surged in him at the thought of Dale working out to look better for someone not him, but Gen pushed it down, trying for an even tone when he asked, "Are you ready to go?"

"Yeah. My truck's in the lot."

"Will you follow me to the hotel, then? Or I could give you a ride." The long silences hit him hard, completely unused to them as he was.

"Are you gonna let me... want me to stay?"

"Of course I want you to stay." He wanted to push Dale against the car and kiss him now. The urge was a violent, immediate one, and he was actually moving forward with his hands out before he thought to stop.

"Oh." The tension in Dale's body seemed to change, Dale taking a step toward him. "I'll ride you. With you. Shit. With you." That quick grin flashed at him, then disappeared under the shadow of that hat.

Gen chuckled, that little slip of the tongue doing wonders for him. "Come on then, caro. I want to be somewhere I can touch you."

"Yeah." Dale's fingers just brushed his wrist. "Missed you fierce, darlin'."

"And I you, caro. That was why I..." Gen sighed again. "I was. Well, many of my friends say you are too young for me. That you need someone your own age."

"I'm not a kid. I know what I need."

"I should trust that, hmm?" They finally got in the car and Gen turned, pulling Dale to him to take a short, harsh kiss. "I need you."

"Yeah. Yeah, like breathing." Dale nodded, fingers twined with his and squeezing tight.

"Good." Gen held on a moment before starting the car and heading off, needing to get to the hotel. Now.

They didn't say a word on the way to the hotel. He drove; Dale watched him. The drive was interminable.

When they got to the hotel he turned off the car and sat a moment, trying to compose himself. He smiled when Dale gave him a look, feeling rueful. "Sorry, caro. I've just been swinging wildly from thought to thought.

"You want to go inside? Have a beer?"

"I do. Among other things." Patting Dale's knee, he got out of the car and lead the way, moving fast enough that he had to stop to hold the door open for Dale. Dale nodded to him in thanks, tipping his hat at the security guard in the lobby.

Once they got inside his room he gave into the urge to grab Dale and pull him close for a kiss, one that bruised them both. Dale wrapped one hand around the back of his neck, rubbing him and keeping him close. Hungry. His Dale dove into the kiss, tongue pushing against his own.

Everything else could go away, at least for a while. He kissed Dale back, his hands sliding down that perfectly formed spine, all the way down to squeeze Dale's ass. Dale was hard -- from the broad shoulders to the stiff prick, all the way down to those taut buttocks, knotted in his hands.

Gen wanted to see that body, see what sort of work Dale had been putting into it. He wanted many things, most of them obscene.

Dale's eyes were flashing, holding his, staring into him. "Gen. I. Want, yeah?"

"Si, caro. Now. Now." His own prick felt too hot, too hard, almost painful. He started in on Dale's clothes, tugging at the thin t-shirt.

His fingers dragged over Dale's muscled belly, the skin smooth and waxed, still just slick with the oil they used for dancing under the lights. Gen moaned, wanting to erase the touch the other dancer had left there, and he started to do just that, the path burned into his eyes. Dale rippled, muscles shifting, almost dancing for him. It was enough to make him growl, remembering that same dance for another man's hand.

Turning, Gen gave Dale a push, sending him stumbling back toward the bed. There had to be... difference. He didn't want Dale to do for him what he did for others. Not ever.

"Gen?" Dale landed on the bed, hat going flying. "What are you thinking?"

"That I want to feel your skin under my hands, caro. That I want to be the one touching you now and forever." How self-indulgent that sounded. Gen moved, pushing Dale's legs apart so he could step between them.

"I could live with that, darlin'. I surely could." Dale reached up for him, tugging at his shirt.

"Bene." His shirt went first, then Dale's, then he tugged at Dale's jeans, working the button and zipper, pulling out Dale's cock so he could tug and pull.

"Careful. I haven't. It's been awhile. I don't wanna blow early."

"You are young, caro. You can get up again." The idea that Dale would be that ready for him enflamed him. He chose to believe it was for him.

"For you? Yeah. Yeah, I reckon..." Dale arched up, pushing into his touch, eyes burning into him.

"Si, you can." Dropping to his knees, Gen spread Dale even more, bending to nuzzle his cheek against Dale's cock, then pulling those jeans down far enough that he could lick at Dale's fuzzy balls.

Dale moaned, chuckling a little. "God. Missed that. Missed you. Been praying for June."

"Mmm." God, he had been waiting, too, impatiently. Now he had what he wanted and he was damned if he would be too angry not to enjoy it. His mouth dropped over Dale's cock so he could suck hard.

"Gen!" Dale's hand landed on his head, hips bucking up furiously, cock pushing deep.

Oh, that felt good. Gen closed his eyes and sucked harder, wanting Dale to come so hard he forgot everyone and everything else. And Dale was nothing if not honest. He would not let Gen suck him bare if he had been with anyone else.

His name rang out, over and over, Dale's voice hoarse and raw as it poured over him, He pushed at Dale's sac, seed splashing on his tongue. Licking Dale clean, Gen rested his head on Dale's thigh, the springy hair there scratching a little. That flavor sustained him.

"Damn, darlin'." Dale's fingers petted his hair, his temple. "Feels so good."

"Love." Suddenly impatient again, this time to be skin on skin, Gen rose and yanked Dale's jeans off the one leg they still clung to, then took off his own pants and crawled on the bed with Dale. "I missed you so."

"I hear that." Dale's leg wrapped over his hip, tugging them close together. "Been the longest semester in history."

"Yes? I would be lying if I said that did not please me. I fear I am very jealous right now, caro."

His fingers stroked down Dale's back, his hard prick settling against Dale's hip. "I would apologize, but I simply need you too much."

"There ain't no need to be jealous of Keno, darlin'. I'm just making money and keeping my job." Dale moved him, rubbing them together in steady motions.

"I know. You wouldn't lie to me." He smiled, the grin moving into a chuckle. "That does not stop me from wanting to hit him."

Dale snorted, then started to laugh, the sound almost bubbling against his skin. "He's kind of an arrogant asshole, when it comes down to it, darlin'. I wouldn't stop you."

"Oh. Well, then, if I see him again I will." Laughing with Dale was pure joy. Gen rubbed, kissing Dale's throat, licking at sweat.

"Mmm. What do you need, darlin'? How do you want me?"

However he could have Dale, Gen wanted him. "This is fine, caro. We have time. I want to know how you are. I want to hear you are graduating."

"Well, I got one semester left." Dale sighed. "If I take the summer sessions, I can be done in August. If not, it'll be December. It depends on you, I guess."

"Depends on me? I can come and stay here. You can go to class in the mornings..."

"Yeah? I can do class and be done in August." Dale looked... excited.

"Si. Si, I can do my business from anywhere. I wanted you for the summer, but I would rather you got out of school." Gen kissed that smile, feeling the excitement grow in his belly.

"Yeah, me, too. This whole schooling and working and missing you thing is getting hard."

Hard. Oh, yes, he was hard. Gen hummed a little, rocking. "As long as you miss *me*, caro, we can work it out."

"What do I gotta do to prove it to you, Gen?"

The plaintive note in Dale's voice had him sighing, taking more kisses. "Just be with me now, Dale. I will have to get over this on my own."

"You think too much, man. Honest." Dale brought their lips together again, tongue pushing into his mouth.

He always had. It was one of his great failings in his personal life, one of his best attributes in business. His hands slid down to hold Dale's hips, letting him rub them together, giving his aching cock some kind of friction. Of course, Dale seemed quite intent on not allowing him enough breath to have even a single thought. Smart boy. Gen smiled into the kiss, moving faster, feeling that he might get it up again as well, despite how much older he was.

Dale just hummed, lovely eyes shining up at him. The kiss went deeper and longer, Dale's hands pushing him faster.

"Good, caro. So good every time." All he could do was kiss and touch some more, needing to come so bad he hurt.

"Uh-huh. Come on." Dale tugged him hard, dragging him up and up so that mouth could reach his prick.

"Oh, oh, caro." Arching, he pushed into Dale's mouth, needing more heat and love and skin and... si.

Dale's fingers gripped his ass, tugged him in deep. God help him, those lips wrapped around his cock, the suction curling his toes, tugging him into that tight throat. All he could do was shoot. Shoot and hope he could indeed rise again, like he'd been thinking earlier.

He was held in that hot mouth, tongue and lips cleaning his prick, loving him.

Gen stroked Dale's hair, his shoulders, luxuriating in being able to touch. "Grazie, sweet."

"Mmmhmm." Dale kissed the tip of his prick, eyes laughing. "See? Thinking bad."

"You're right. I should do more and think less." Rolling, he put Dale on top of him, his eyes half closing as they moved together again.

"Mmmhmm. Fuck, you're real. Here." Dale licked his lips, his jaw, his chin.

"I am. So are you." His fingers found the small of Dale's back, catching on the tiny hairs there. Kissing Dale's throat left him moaning, the taste of salt and musk filling him.

"Uh-huh." Dale groaned, arching against him. "You were a good surprise."

"Mmm." He was losing the English. His hands bracketed Dale's hips once more, squeezing, rocking. His cock rose again, amazing him with his swiftness.

Dale straddled his hips, cock rubbing his stomach. "Fuck me?"

"God, yes." Nothing would please him more. "Get yourself ready?"

"You have any stuff, darlin'?"

"I..." No. He had forgotten entirely. He'd been so angry. "Give me your hand."

Dale tilted his head a moment, then that hand was offered over, Dale balancing his weight on the other hand. He took Dale's fingers into his mouth. That got him a deep, sweet moan, Dale's eyes rolling back into his head. Yes, he liked that as well. The suggestiveness of taking Dale's fingers in pleased him, they way Dale writhed on him pleased him more. Gen sucked harder, loving the taste of that hot skin.

"Oh. Darlin'. I." Dale shuddered, cock dropping a hot spot of heat right on his belly.

"We need to hurry, caro. I swear, I feel like a teenager. Now, put your fingers around here." Pushing that hand around behind Dale, Gen carefully set Dale to making himself ready.

Dale straightened up with one hand on the headboard, riding his own fingers and looking...

Bellissimo.

"Caro. Te amo. You are... please. Hurry." His body ached, arching and rubbing, his skin overly hot.

"Uh-huh. Want you. Deep. Hard." Dale leaned forward, almost growling. "Been empty for so long."

"Now. Yes." He helped lift Dale up, feeling Dale's arm move once more, then twice before Dale groaned and leaned down to kiss him. They broke for air. "Ready, caro?"

"Hell, yes." Dale nodded, eyes lit right up with need.

"Good. Come up here." They moved, both of them a little awkward because of their wet hands and skin, but managing to get Dale into place, Gen's cock nudging and poking at that hot, wet little hole. Then he pushed in and the whole world went white hot.

He heard Dale's grunt like it came from forever away, then Dale's body clenched tight as a fist around him, those muscles fluttering all against his shaft. His eyes rolled back in his head and his hands clenched on Dale's hips, just as hard. Shaking, squirming, Gen planted his feet and rocked up, grunting, working into Dale's body.

It was an inferno, this thing between them -- skin sliding and slapping, grunts and groans filling the air. His words left him like they always did when he was with Dale this way, and he hoped what he felt came through in his touch. In each and every thrust.

Dale rode him, stretched out tall above him so that he could see every long line, every gleaming inch of skin. Sliding his hands up Dale's body, Gen let his thumbs roll over Dale's nipples, rubbing them hard, adding to the sensation. The way it made Dale clamp down around him had him crying out.

"Again. Do. It. Again." Dale's cock slapped against that flat belly.

"This?" He pinched this time, hard enough to make those tiny nipples go a deep red when he released them. And then he had to taste them, pushing up to wrap his lips about one.

"Uh. Uh-huh. Gen. Darlin'." Dale started jacking that long, heated cock, muscles going tight around him.

"Oh..." He froze for a moment, just staring. Then he arched hard, really fucking Dale now, hips rocking and rocking. God. Yes.

Dale's cries echoed, rang through the room as Dale gripped the headboard, muscles shaking violently.

Gen came so hard he saw stars, his body shaking, his legs pulling up to cradle Dale when Dale shot. Their skin slapped together and they jerked and moaned, both of them heaving with the force of it.

"Goddamn. Darlin'. I. *Damn*." Dale collapsed against him, muscles trembling.

Nodding, he held Dale close, breathing hard. His body felt completely alive and yet completely unable to move. The things Dale did to him amazed him.

Dale murmured something - something about being happy and seeing him and love -- then just collapsed against him with a soft sigh.

They could talk more later, he thought while he stroked Dale's sweaty back. He truly did believe Dale when he said that other man meant nothing. It was his own jealousy he had to deal with, somehow.

For right now he would just luxuriate in them being together.

And look for a new apartment in Houston.

Chapter Nine

“...the shape of this shows us...”

Dale blinked and tried to focus on Dr. Martin’s words, but it wasn’t working.

Shit, it wasn’t even close.

His head bobbed, eyes fluttering as they tried to close.

He and Gen had gone after it again last night. Gen’d been all pissy about him missing a dinner date and he’d been all het up because he’d been stuck in traffic with his truck overheating and then he’d blown a tire and goddamn, he was trying, wasn’t he? Trying to live three fucking lives at once and it just wasn’t fucking working for him because this three hours of sleep a night thing was going to kill him.

Shit.

It wasn’t that he didn’t fucking love Gen. He did, but Gen couldn’t stay in his ‘tiny little apartment’ and Gen’s sublease was downtown, which goddamn, the traffic there could kill a man and he was fucked if he spent the night and had an eight o’clock class, but he was more fucked if he headed home because then Gen pouted.

And then there was the work part, which was going well except that Gen growled and fussed every time him and Keno danced. And now that the show had a little play whip on top of the ropes?

Jesus Christ.

Still.

He wasn’t going to have to do it long.

Just a summer.

Hell, right now, he’d settle for just surviving this class.

Gen was worried about Dale.

Oh, he had stopped worrying about Dale cheating on him with Keno. The Native American boy had no interest in Dale, really. He was there to work.

In fact, Gen had stopped worrying about Dale cheating on him with anyone, despite how watching Dale dance with someone else made him feel. Dale was his. If he had learned anything during his time in Houston it was that Dale was his, as Dale would say, lock, stock and barrel.

No, he was worried about Dale's peace of mind. His health. Dale came to him tired every night, and he felt selfish as could be, not letting it go. But he needed the closeness. The loving.

He was addicted.

Gen could only hope his addiction did not cost Dale his dreams.

“Dale, you need a tattoo.”

“What?” He looked over from where he was packing his costumes up for cleaning.

“A tattoo. On your lower back, maybe. It would be sexy. People’d love it.” Keno was brushing his long, long hair, eyes looking at him in that coldly professional way Keno had. Sometimes it was cool, knowing Keno wasn’t interested. Sometimes it was creepy as Hell.

“I don’t think so. Tattoos are permanent.” And they hurt. And Gen would scream.

“It would make you more money.”

“I’m not going to be dancing forever, man.” Hell, Keno wouldn’t be dancing forever. It was a young guy’s job. “Hey, what’re you gonna do when you don’t dance any more?”

“I’m going to open a club. Real exclusive. Only private dances. I’ve been saving up, learning the business side.” The dark hair went back, Keno grinning at him. “What about you?”

“I probably will find a big company to do research for, maybe do PR on a freelance basis for a bunch of little guys.” Maybe he could help Gen out. There had to be a job for him that would let him and Gen be together.

“Maybe you and me, we could work together. We dance good.”

“Yeah, maybe. That’d be cool.” Except that he was gonna be in Italy with his man if it killed him and if that didn’t work out, he didn’t know what his plan was.

Maybe become a clown in a Russian circus.

Or go back and try bull riding again.

He grinned at himself. Nah. That led to serious ass-bruising and that just wasn’t attractive.

"You need to focus, Dee. Your mind's not on the dancing today." Keno wiped his forehead, tossing another towel over.

Well, no.

No, it wasn't.

Not with Gen pacing back and forth outside like a caged tiger, waiting for him to get finished.

Lord, he was bone-tired.

Eighteen hours of college, twenty hours of work, nights with Gen, rehearsals -- he'd not been in this good a shape in his life. You could bounce quarters off his belly. Hell, he had a guy last night that paid to do that.

"Sorry, man. Just having an off night. They still loved us, huh?"

Keno dried his long hair, grinned over. "Your man? I think he was watching close."

"Yeah. Yeah, he probably was." He wiped off, grabbed his jeans. He wasn't doing a private show tonight. He wanted a burger and a beer.

"You be careful. You ain't doing nothin' wrong, man. Jus' makin' money."

"Yeah. I know. I do. It's cool."

Just making money and driving Gen out of his mind.

He waved and went to cash out his tips, boots tapping along with the music. Gen was right there when he was done, hand cupping his elbow to walk him out. Like a granny chaperone or something.

"Hey, darlin'. You have a good evening?" See him. See him not pick a fight.

Go him.

"Buona sera, amato. I enjoyed watching you, as always." Gen wasn't as stiff-lipped tonight, not as hard through the shoulders.

"Keno is pissed at me. I wasn't on." He shrugged, leaned a little. "I'm dying for a burger, man. You hungry?"

"I wanted to wait for you, so yes." Gen stopped by the car, handing him the keys. "I fear I drank on an empty stomach."

"No problem. Thanks for waiting. You want to take my truck or your car?"

"Whatever you're comfortable with, love." That would explain why Gen was so low-key, he guessed.

"Hmm. No one'll steal my truck, darlin'. Your pretty little car? Shit. It's worth more than three of us make in a year."

Besides. Driving the little car. Woo.

He led Gen over to the little hotrod and tumped the man right on in. Okay. Burgers. Beer. Possibly pie. Maybe the Dairy Dart. They had onion rings.

"You like the idea of driving, hmm?" Gen's hand landed on his thigh when he sat down, fingers stroking.

"Hell, I used to dream about driving something like this." Never really thought he would get to, either.

"Well, then perhaps we shall have to drive about a bit after supper." Gen squeezed his thigh, smiling at him, and he had high hopes for the evening.

"Yeah? I'd like that. Hell, I got tomorrow off -- school and work. You want to just head for the coast?" Oh, man. That would be fun as all fuck.

"Oh. I would like that." Gen chuckled. "You know how I feel about the beach."

"Yeah. Let's go." He grinned, headed for the highway. "You want to grab some McD's on our way out or do you want to stop?"

"Whatever you like, caro. You wanted a hamburger."

"I do. We'll get take out." Cokes. Fries. Burgers. Ooh. Fried pies.

"That would be lovely. I don't think I've eaten on the highway before." There wasn't a hint of irony in Gen's voice. Sometimes he just had this wonder for all things American.

"Well, then. You haven't experienced life." He pulled into a Jack in the Crack, ordered enough food to feed a small army. Tacos, egg rolls, fries and burgers and shakes. God, he was hungry.

"Are we feeding more than just us?" Oh, yeah, like Gen had never ordered them room service for fifteen.

"We've got a few hour's drive and I just shook my ass off." He grinned over, grabbed a taco.

"You did. I am not sure why Keno thought you were off."

He shrugged, heading for 59. "Cause I didn't want to be there. Because I'm tired, maybe."

"I am sorry, caro, if I am making it worse." Gen's hand moved off his thigh.

"Don't, man. Please." He was tired, sure, but he loved having Gen close. "It's so good, having you close. I'm just working my butt off."

"You are. I worry, caro. I can't help it." Shrugging, Gen reached for some kind of food, crunching as he munched.

"Isn't that what we're supposed to do?" He grabbed a burger, unwrapping it with one hand.

"Si. I know." Gen got all quiet, the way he did when he was thinking. Thinking was overrated.

Shit. And in the car there wasn't dick to do about it. "Two cents, darlin'."

"What?" Glancing over, Gen frowned. "What two cents?"

"Oh. Right. It's just a saying, I guess. It means I want to know what you're thinking so hard on."

"The same things I always do, I suppose. I do not want to make things harder for you, caro. I just want to be with you." Smiling a little, Gen crunched into his food, making a surprised sound.

"This is good."

"Well, then, you and me, we're on the same page. I don't want to fuck shit up for you either. Ever." He found a smile and this one felt good. "Junk food is proof God loves us."

"Yes." Laughing harder, Gen just sat back and relaxed, chowing down. "We're ridiculous, you know?"

"Darlin', I waggle my cock at folks for money and you're worth a hundred of me without even trying. We're meant to be ridiculous."

"Stop. That is not what I meant." But Gen was laughing hard, all but choking on his food. "You come home with me every night. That is my pleasure."

"Of course I do. I don't look at all those folks like I look at you." Even if some of them looked at him near as hard as Gen did.

"I know it. I am trying, caro, am I not?" Hell, Gen had even met Keno and taken them both out to supper, so yeah. He was trying.

"You are." He nodded, reached out over all the food and squeezed Gen's hand. "Thank you, yeah?"

Gen turned his hand over and brought it up to kiss it, a little greasy but still fine as frog hair. Then Gen licked his thumb, humming a little. "Whatever you had, I want one."

Dale hooted, tickled as a pig in shit. "Egg roll. They're damn good."

"They are, if this is anything to go by." Those bright eyes gleamed shockingly blue in the light of a passing car. "Of course, it could be that it is the taste of your skin that I like."

"Oh." He blushed and grinned. "Now, you get me revved up in the car and I'll be aching all the way to the coast."

"And how would that be bad, love? We could stop somewhere for a few minutes..."

"Damn..." His prick went from gee-I'm-happy-to-be-alive to oh-hello-fuck-me-raw faster than the sports car went from zero to sixty.

"You like that idea?" Gen was teasing him so bad. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Gen spread those fancy pants legs and reach down to rub between them.

"You're an evil, evil man." He was damned fond. Honestly. "I ought to get you up on stage with me."

"Oh, heavens no. We would get arrested. I would dance for you, though." Yeah, Gen probably would. Sensual, wonderful man.

"Yeah? I'd love to see that." God knew dancing for Gen alone made him hard as nails.

"Then I will do it for you. Do you think the guise of an Italian businessman will work for a costume?" The sound of Gen's zipper coming down echoed through the little car.

"Uh-huh. Love the way your ass looks in those slacks." He swallowed hard, hand sliding over Gen's hip.

Gen took his hand and pressed it to that hot cock for a moment before letting him go to shift gears. "I think we need to stop someplace quiet."

"Uh-huh. Let me get out of town." His own cock throbbed, aching in his pants. Someplace dark and quiet where he could lean over and suck that sweet cock in...

"Please."

Man, that little car could move. Not too fast, because if he got pulled over with Gen's cock hanging out, well, that would be hellacious bad.

"I can smell you, darlin'. Makes me ache like nothing else."

"Does it? I can see you want me, love. I can feel it." Gen's arm was really swinging now, that hand working up and down like nobody's business.

"I do. I do, man." He nodded, shifting in his seat. Christ, Gen made his mouth water. "I can't think of you when I'm up there, 'cause it'll make me hard, make me wish it was just you and me and the music."

"I always wish it was just me and you, sweet. Much as I love to watch you work." Those lean hips were just rolling, Gen panting like a hot dog.

"I want you, darlin'. So damn bad. Wanna see." His prick was going to fight its way out of his jeans.

"Find us a place, love... oh, caro. So close." Shit yes, Gen was close. He could smell it.

"Want to suck you. Want you in me. Christ, Gen. You're so fucking hot." He was going to cream his jeans.

"Uhn." Gen's head snapped back against the headrest, and the smell of come permeated the little car, hot and musky.

"Jesus. Jesus." Dale groaned, hands squeezing the steering wheel. "You're something else."

"Te amo, caro. So much." Lying back against the seat, Gen smiled over at him. "Pull over soon and I shall use my mouth."

"Uhn." He tossed over a couple of napkins, shaking his head as his balls throbbed. "You'll drive me mad, sure enough."

They were both chuckling as Gen mopped up, started shoving trash into bags. He got a couple jalapeno bites, the last onion ring dipped in ranch. "Okay. We've eaten, I'll find a place to stop."

There was a rest stop up ahead and Dale pointed to the sign. "That should do, huh?"

"That will be perfect, caro." One hand touched his leg, just barely, grazing along his jeans.

"Cool." He flipped his blinker on, heading for the exit sign, thinking about nothing but Gen's mouth, Gen's touch.

He never saw the pickup that cut him off.

Never saw anything but the brake lights right in front of him before everything went black.

Chapter Ten

The pain woke him. It was not a sharp pain, like a broken bone or a punctured lung. No, this was the driving ache of sprained and bruised muscles and tendons. Gen had torn his ankle, once. That had felt the same; his whole body felt that way now.

When he blinked his eyes open, everything was white. Everything but the cheerful salt water fish scrubs the nurse wore. Nurse.

Dale.

Gen grunted, trying to sit up.

"Easy. Easy, honey. You just sit tight a second, huh? You don't want to tear your IV. How's your head?" The woman patted his arm, effectively keeping him where he was on the bed.

"There was another man. In the car with me. Can you tell me how he is?" He needed to know. He needed to, despite the burst of raw agony sitting up had caused.

"I'm sorry, honey. He's not on this floor. I'll try to find out for you, though. Okay? Just let me check you out. What's your name, honey?"

"Genovese. Adriano Genovese. His name is Dale." His arm itched, and he tried to scratch it but only got a handful of tube.

"Careful. You need the hydration." The nurse scribbled on a chart, closing it with a click. "Is there someone I can call for you?"

"I just need to know about Dale." The rest could wait. His family would only fly in and make a mess.

"Okay. I'm going to get a doctor in here to look at you and I'll hunt up your friend." She left, taking that amazing outfit she was wearing with her.

Gen struggled to find a comfortable position. He didn't. If someone did not come soon he would take his little wheelie pole and run.

A tiny little man came in, talking so fast that Gen could barely understand him, poking here and prodding there, shining lights in his eyes. Honestly, this was quite insane.

"Please," he finally said, flapping his hands. "My friend."

"I'm sorry; I don't... "

The door opened again, that same nurse coming in. "Hey, honey. I just wanted you to know. Your friend's in surgery, but he's going to be just fine."

"Surgery." He sat up, his hand groping for something solid, trying to get out of the damnable bed. Dale was in surgery. Oh, God.

"He's going to be just fine. He's got some injuries, but he's going to pull through. No worries." No worries. How exactly did one not worry in a case like this?

"What sorts of injuries?" His English threatened to fail him when the doctor prodded his abdomen, making him grunt and wince. "Stop it! Just stop it."

"Did that hurt badly?" The touch came again, the ache deep, but not excruciating.

"Not as badly as I will hurt you if you touch me again. What is happening to Dale?" He flailed, but fell back, panting.

"He's in surgery getting his leg repaired. He's going to be just fine, I promise."

His head felt like it hovered two feet over his body. "He's not... it's not. He still *has* his leg, si?"

"Yes, sir. It got broke pretty good, but it's all there. They'll patch him up, make him good as new. I swear."

The doctor pushed past the nurse, shot something into his IV. "Just a relaxant. It'll ease the soreness."

It did more than ease the soreness. It began to work rather quickly, making him feel slow and heavy eyed. "Please tell me when he comes out of surgery." His natural tact began to reassert himself. "I am sorry to be so much trouble."

"You were very lucky. You have some scrapes, some contusions, but you didn't break a bone." The doctor nodded, looking like a toy, somehow.

"Oh. Good." He drifted, then, completely unconcerned with his own health. He simply needed to find Dale.

Jesus fucking Christ he hurt.

Dale shifted, swallowed hard against this amazing dryness in his throat. Okay. Okay, he was.

Uh.

Okay.

He'd been to Jack in the Box.

They were going to the beach.

He.

Uh.

Okay.

Dale swallowed again, moaning. Thinking.

Thinking was good.

"Well, hello there, honey. Welcome back. I bet you'd like some water." That nurse had some big-assed hair.

"Yes. Please. Gen? Is he okay?" A straw was put to his lips, cold water pouring into his mouth.

"I'm not sure who Gen is, honey." She pulled away the water and swabbed his lips with some kind of sponge. "Are you hurting?"

"Uh-huh." His leg felt like it was on fire, his toes just burning. "Where am I, honey?"

"You're in the hospital. You were in a car wreck. Do you remember?"

"No. I mean, I remember Jack in the Box and Gen liking the egg rolls..." His heart started pounding like nothing he'd ever felt. "He didn't die, did he? You gotta tell me."

"You have to calm down. I'll see about your friend."

Her butt looked like... well. A rhinoceros. Not because it was wide, but because it had a rhino printed on it.

Man, some fabric designer had a mean-assed sense of humor. Really.

He found himself dozing, floating in and out of pain and confusion and a crushing worry that wouldn't go away.

She was gone and gone, and he thought maybe she'd forgotten about him, but he couldn't reach the call button. Finally the little curtain opened again, but it wasn't a nurse. It was Gen, wearing a terrible hospital gown, and wheeling some little stand.

"Gen." He closed his eyes, counted to ten and then opened them again.

Oh, fuck him. Gen *was* real.

Gen smiled, coming close. "Oh, caro. There you are. I've been searching."

"Are you okay? Did you get hurt? Can you remember anything?" The words poured out of him in a rush, his hand shaking badly as he reached.

"I'm badly bruised, I suppose. And stitched." Gen grinned a little, lopsided as all get out. "They want to keep me a few days."

"I'm sorry." He didn't know what he'd done, but he'd been driving and...

Oh, God.

"Did I total your car?"

"Oh. You know, I have no idea, caro." As if unsure if he was real, Gen reached out with the arm not hooked to a contraption, touching.

"I'm sorry." Dale tried to move toward the touch, his leg just screaming. Jesus, what had he done?

"No. No, caro. You did nothing wrong. He came out of nowhere." Gen sort of creaked, slipping down next to him so one hip rested on the bed. "I'm trying to get us a more private room. Together."

"Can you do..." Oh, God. He was in a hospital. He didn't have even a bit of insurance. "They won't do that for me, darlin'."

Gen's eyes crinkled at the corners. "They will for me."

"Am. Do you know what happened?" He wasn't going to ask if he was hurt bad, but he wanted to know.

"They said you broke your leg, tesoro. They had to do surgery, but they said you would be fine." Gen stroked his cheek, staring at him like he was the second coming.

"Yeah?" Relief crashed over him in a wave. Oh, God. He could've. Damn.

"Si. You'll be fine, caro. Just rest." Gen was looking kinda green around the gills, too, like he might fall over.

"Come on, darlin'. Lay down here, you're gonna keel over." He did his best to scoot over, the little bit of motion leaving him sweating with the effort.

"Don't hurt yourself." But Gen eased all the way down, nuzzling in as best he could through all of their tubes and shit. "Oh. Better. Even with the drugs I haven't slept well."

"How... how long has it been?" He petted Gen's belly, careful as he could.

"Two days. Two agonizing days, caro. They wouldn't let me out of bed." One shaky hand traced his arm.

"Sh. You're okay. I got you." What good that was, Dale didn't know, but his daddy always said if you were lost, fake it 'til you figured it out.

"Si. Si. I was so worried..." Poor Gen sounded as wonky as he felt.

"Yeah. Sleep a little, huh? I. We'll figure it." They would.

Really.

Later.

Gen sighed, running his hand through his hair. Poor Dale was still hurting, and the doctors wanted to release him in the morning. Gen had been released the day before, but he had gotten Dale a private room so he could stay in with his lover.

"Are you certain he is able to go?" Gen asked, worried about the poor leg.

"He'll need to see a doctor to deal with the stitches and he'll need at least eight weeks of physical therapy, but beyond that, he just needs rest." The little orthopedic surgeon patted his arm, bald head nodding.

Gen sighed again. Time to make some calls. "Very well. You will recommend a place for the therapy?"

"He doesn't have insurance, so he can choose. I'd recommend Pete Ellerson or Kim Walker. Both of them are solid. Dedicated."

"Will you have someone write that down for me?" He wanted to get back in there and see Dale.

"Of course, sir. There will be a packet for you during checkout. He said you'll be helping to care for him for the next while, yes?"

"Si. I will help. No problem. Thank you." He shook the little man's hand and went into Dale's room, a smile breaking out despite Dale's pained appearance. "Ciao, caro."

"Hey, darlin'." Dale sat up, shifting in the bed. "Is it time to go home yet?"

"Tomorrow morning they will release you." Gen sat gingerly, patting Dale's arm. They both moved like old men, still, but he knew they were on the mend.

"What's the difference between tonight or tomorrow? Did someone from the club bring my truck so I can drive home?" The longer they stayed here, the more the hard edges of worry showed in Dale's face.

"Caro, I have a car. And a driver. We'll get home and then get your truck." As if he would let Dale drive with that leg.

"I just. I've fucked up your car. I got you hurt." Dale met his eyes, squeezed his fingers.

"Oh, love. You haven't done anything wrong." He laced his fingers with Dale's, smiling and bending to kiss that sweet mouth.

Dale groaned and kissed him back, holding him close for a moment. They needed to be home, to settle in the big bed in his rooms. To rest without people disturbing them at all hours.

His arms slid about Dale, gentle as could be, his lips on Dale's cheek. "Caro..."

"Yeah. Yeah, darlin'. I'm just. Fuck, I want out of here. I'm missing school, work. I want to be able to be done with this shit; go with you."

"Soon. One more night." He wanted it, too, worried as he was. He wanted to sleep again. God help him, he hadn't in days.

"Yeah. Yeah, I know. One more night. I gotta call the club, see if there's something I can do."

Gen bit off the word quit, instead nodding and saying, "I'm sure they will understand."

"Yeah..." Dale didn't sound too sure at all. "I can't go back to dancing there. You know that, yeah? By the time my leg heals, I'll be graduated."

"I know. School is most important." When Dale got out of school, most of their problems would end. "You'll have to study hard."

"I will. If. I'm going to try and see if they'll let me be a bouncer. I could read and bounce."

"Oh." No. That would not work at all. But they would cross that bridge when they came to it.

Dale sighed, leaned into his arms, eyes falling closed. "You feel good, Gen."

"So do you. I miss you." They leaned on one another, dozing, both of them still tiring so easily.

The evil haridan nurse came in just about the time Dale was truly asleep, heading to wake the poor man up, poke and prod and fuss.

"Can you not let him sleep?" he asked, blinking at the light she directed at them. "He's finally resting."

"I need to check his vitals." Dale grunted at her words, hiding against him.

"No. That is enough." Gen sat up a little, groaning at the ache in his muscles. "That's enough."

"Look. I'm just doing my job..."

Dale's eyes flashed open, a quite impressive growl sounding. "Leave me the fuck alone, lady. I'm *tired* and I'm done being a fucking pincushion."

"Now, don't you cuss at me, young man." The nurse pursed her lips, then marched out, leaving them blessedly alone.

"Shit, if I'd known that would work, I would have started a couple days ago."

"Oh, I imagine someone will be back." Then again, he was paying for the room.

"Maybe they'll throw me out." That was the first honest smile he'd seen in days.

"Oh, then we could go home. By all means, be as obnoxious as possible." He loved it when that made Dale laugh.

"Hey, I'm *all* about the obnoxious." Dale leaned into him, cheek on his shoulder. "Lord, is it tomorrow yet?"

"Not yet, sweet. Soon." Gen snuggled in more comfortably, settling Dale's head against his chest. "Sleep now. I'll watch over you."

"What about you, darlin'? You haven't been sleeping worth a damn."

"I can sleep later, caro." Dale was the important one, the one with the worries on his shoulders. Gen knew he would be fine. He had only his family to worry on.

"We can sleep together. Tomorrow." Dale's whiskers were soft, longer than he'd ever seen them.

"We can. We can sleep for days and days. Then we will start your exercises." The doctors had been very adamant about that.

"Slave driver." Dale didn't sound terribly worried.

"I will be. I will crack the whip." The idea of him looking like a lion tamer amused him so that he laughed aloud, his breath stirring Dale's hair.

"Mmmhmm." Dale took a deep breath before relaxing completely, breath slowing into the slow rhythm of sleep.

Gen hummed and settled in himself, just letting his eyes drift shut. He would wake if the nurse came back.

They just had to make it through one more night.

Then they could go home.

Home.

Home.

Home home home.

Well, except not his home because Gen brought them to Gen's apartment which was bigger and had food in the fridge.

Still.

Home.

Home home home.

Dale slumped on the sofa, his leg screaming at him as his crutches fell to the floor. He was going to just die right here, damn it.

"Better, caro?" Gen smiled at him, bringing him a pillow and a drink.

"Uh-huh. Home." He took the drink and drained it, swallowing hard, the cold water splashing into him.

"Good?" Poor Gen looked a little fluttery. Like he didn't know where to land.

"Uh-huh." He reached out, tugged Gen next to him. "Sit."

"Oh." The tense set of those shoulders relaxed when Gen sat down next to him, leaning gently. "Oh yes."

"Better." He found a comfortable spot for his leg and then tugged Gen into the curve of his body, hand on Gen's belly. "Good."

"Mmmhmm. I thought we would be naughty and order Chinese tonight. We don't have to get anything spicy." The doctor had told them both to go easy on the heavy food after all that great hospital slop.

"Yeah, I could go for that." Something cheap. Really cheap. Because, damn.

"Wonderful. I love the rangoons. What do you like?" Damn. Had they never eaten Chinese together?

"Whatever ten bucks can buy, darlin'. I'm easy as pie." He liked it all -- sweet and sour chicken, beef and broccoli, anything.

"Oh, we can do better than that." Gen called down to the dude at the desk and put an order in for more food than God could eat in one sitting.

"You're hungry." He understood that. That shit from the hospital was just plain nasty.

"Oh, I just want us to have a variety." Gen smiled, leaning to kiss him, sweet as pie. The man just had no sense of poor college student.

It was kind of sweet and kind of aggravating because damn, he couldn't afford to keep it equal.

Gen kissed the corner of his mouth. "You must stop worrying, caro. We will work it out, you and I. I know we will."

"I try, darlin'. I just... I just want it to be fair between us, you know? I don't ever want you thinkin' I'm loving you because of the money."

"As if I could. You've made that clear, love. I just want to make it possible for us to be together. Why shouldn't I if I can?" Man, sometimes he wanted that to make sense so bad.

"Because..." He tugged Gen closer, took a kiss. "Because I was raised that a man did his part, that I'm supposed to contribute my half and I can't, darlin'. I don't know that I ever will. It's a hard thing to wrap my head around."

"You think too little of yourself." Gen settled against him, hands moving on him too gently to make him wince. So sweet.

"I think a whole lot of you, darlin'." He thought he could maybe die happy, just right here.

"And I of you, so let's not argue about who does what."

They dozed until the food came, then Gen fed him little bites of everything, all sweet and sour and crunchy. It was so much better than the fucking hospital.

They got to telling stories and laughing, Dale licking that sticky red sauce off Gen's fingers and Gen eating sweet rice from his. When they were together like that it seemed like nothing could go wrong, like they could just make it all work. Like he could stop thinking and just be. Dangerous as Hell.

He wasn't sure what that fucking meant. What the Hell he was supposed to do now.

The knock on the door kinda answered the immediate question, and he and Gen blinked at each other for a long moment before Gen got up and limped to the door. He looked out the little fish eye and cursed a blue streak in Italian before opening up to show a guy that looked an awful lot like Gen.

Goddamn. Family. Dale shifted his sweats around and sat up straight. Gen's folks made pretty babies.

"Adriano! There you are. We heard that something happened. Something that you were in the hospital for?" The man took Gen by the shoulders and kinda shook him like a dog with a bone, glancing at Dale. He figured the guy must be speaking English for his benefit.

"You know, shaking him like that ain't gonna help..."

"Oh. Si. Of course."

The man let go and Gen shook his head, rubbing his arms. "This is my cousin, Salvatore. Salvatore, Dale."

"Hey Sal. Pleased. You, uh, want some sesame chicken?" At least that's what he *thought* was in that container closest.

"No, thank you. I want to know what happened!"

Man, he'd forgotten how dramatic Italians could be.

Gen hobbled to the couch and sat with him, pointing Sal toward a chair. "We had an auto accident. Certainly nothing to call the famiglia about."

Dale nodded. "He's okay. The docs said he was going to be fine."

"Dale is the one that broke his leg." Gen sighed, rubbing his belly. "You have a hotel?"

"You need to see a family doctor. These hospitals, they can't be trusted. You're pale."

Dale thought he deserved brownie points for not laughing. Pale. Gen. Uh-huh.

"I am fine. We need to arrange therapy for Dale, though." Always thinking about someone else, his Gen. Well, okay, about him. It made him proud.

"Therapy? Is this serious?" Dale wasn't sure if the guy meant his leg or them.

"The injury needed surgery." Whatever the guy meant, Gen took it as a question about his leg. "We will have to set him up. Can you take care of it for me?"

"Of course. I'll arrange everything." The conversation turned to Italian then, the Sal guy just sorta jabbering away.

Gen stroked the back of his hand and played with his fingers, keeping him a little drowsy and a lot loopy. His full belly made him sleepy as all get out, and he woke up to Gen telling Sal he could take the guest room if he had to.

"Shit, darlin'. I'm sorry. I was wore out." He sorta blinked a little, staring, trying to decide whether it was worth moving.

"No problem, caro. He talked and talked. We should go to bed. I think we need to prop up your leg."

"I could just stay here. Then I wouldn't have to move it." He winked, but he was only half joking. Moving meant hurting.

"Yes, but think how much closer you will be to the toilet in there." That had been an ordeal, that whole bathroom thing.

"Oh, now. That's no fair." He winked and stood up, wincing as his leg protested like a whore being forced into a police cruiser.

"I do not try to be difficult, caro." Gen stood with him, one hand on his back to help balance while he got his crutches and shit.

"No, you don't, darlin'. I'm just grumpy and sore." He gimped along, letting Gen help him.
"Good to be out of the hospital, though."

"It is indeed. We can sleep in a bed that has padding, and is big enough for two." Gen detoured them to the bathroom, getting him all taken care of before going to the bed.

"God, I feel like I could sleep for a week." He got into the bed, naked as a jaybird, except for all the damned paraphernalia on his leg.

"I think that sounds like a fine idea. We'll have to make sure to get your assignments, though." Gen was all about him finishing school. Maybe he could get incompletes...

"Yeah. I need to talk to the Dean. I can't repeat the semester." He couldn't afford to.

"No. Your grades were good enough that they should, how you say? Extend." Gen was so certain. So sure of him.

"I hope so. I'm so close." They got settled, Gen so good beside him. "Sal settled in okay?"

"I think so, yes." Gen shook his head. "I should have known I would not be able to keep the family out of it. When they saw the hospital bill, they would come."

"They love you. I think it's sorta sweet." He didn't want to think about hospital bills right now.

"Si, but sometimes inconvenient." Gen shifted, wincing a little. "I do not know how you get comfortable with that leg. I am only stiff and it's hard."

Comfortable was a strong word, really, but he'd take it. "I took another pain pill. It helps."

"Oh, that I never thought of." Those bright eyes blinked at him, Gen looking slow and sleepy.

"I'm a smart guy." He took a slow kiss. "Rest, darlin'. I got you."

"And I have you. We'll work it out. I promise."

Yeah. Gen was always as good as his promises. He was learning to count on that.

Chapter Eleven

Sal was going to make him quite insane.

Gen simply wanted to be alone with Dale, and work at getting well. Instead, he had his personal assistant from Napoli, his two cousins, Lorenzo and Filipa, and a bevy of nurses and physical therapists.

He thought perhaps they should run away to the beach again, this time with a driver. Gen slammed his date book down on the desk, giving poor Massimo an evil glare. His assistant jumped.

"That is enough for today," Gen said. "I want to go rest, now."

He wanted to go rescue Dale from the therapist, actually. The man had some sort of crazy anti-gravity tub.

Massimo nodded, fluttering a bit. "I will fetch your nurse. She can give you a massage, yes?"

"No!" Dio, he was going to explode. "I want everyone out. Now." Everyone but Dale.

At the very least, they were all still scared of his bark, all of them scattering like ants. He growled at Filipa, who dared to try to open her mouth, and when her skirt vanished out the front door, Gen locked it behind her. Then he went to look for Dale.

"Caro?"

Dale looked over from what looked like a table for torture, face flushed, body covered with sweat. "You made that evil son of a bitch go?"

"I did." Poor love. Gen went over and stroked Dale's belly. "Are they hurting you?"

"That man's a fucking sadist."

"Then I will fire him. You need your therapy, but I will not have you suffer." Damn it, this was supposed to make Dale better.

"Okay. Tomorrow. Right now I want up off this fucking table and into a hot tub." Dale let him get them moving, Dale leaning hard, limping a little. "I'm never going to get back to work at this rate."

"I think school is more important. I know you want to contribute, love, but I promise I will let you pay me back if that is what you want, once you graduate." He eased Dale down into the hot tub, the special wrap on the leg the one good thing the therapist had done.

"I. Oh..." Dale groaned, throat working, the look pure bliss. "I just never want you to feel like I'm using you."

"Love, it may be a fine hair, is that how you say? To split? But I am not paying you to stay with me. I am paying for things so you can. You will find a fine job once you graduate." He had to make the man believe that.

"You think? I want to be able to stick with you, darlin'. I surely do."

"Then stop worrying and get well." His own bruises and such were mostly healed, but he needed Dale to stay to make him whole.

"You make it all sound easy."

"It can be. I know I tend to..." oh, what was the word? "Bulldoze? But I want you."

"Yeah. Want you too, darlin'. With all my heart." Dale held his arms out, open. "Come soak with me?"

"Oh, si." He took off the soft shirt and pants he'd slid on that morning, easing into the water, right into Dale's arms. "Good..."

"Hell, yes." Dale nodded, kept him close as if he were the most necessary man, ever.

Nuzzling in, he let the water push them together, careful of Dale's leg. The taste was sweat and man, and he licked at Dale's neck, needing more.

"Mmm." Dale lifted his chin, let his head roll, giving Gen all that fine skin. His lips traced a path up, across the Adam's apple, along the fuzzy chin, right up to Dale's mouth. There he took a long, slow kiss.

"Oh. Hey." Dale's smile tasted sweet, hungry, and the strong hands on his hips rubbed in slow circles.

"Ciao, caro. You taste good." Addictive. Home. Gen had a thousand superlatives. Fortunately for him, Dale arched and moaned for every one of them, offering him every sensation.

"That's lovely, sweet." Goodness he loved touching this man. He loved Dale's skin, loved the feel of the blond hair on Dale's body.

"I want to go back to your home. Walk on the beach with you. Dance with you in your big ole bedroom."

"Yes. I cannot wait for you to dance with me again." He kissed Dale's throat. "We could see if you can take your courses online."

"Yeah? You think maybe?" Dale swallowed hard, chin lifting. "Don't stop, darlin'."

"I think so, yes. I find I am unwilling to let you go." The feel of Dale against him had his cock hardening, his legs shifting under the water.

"Promise? 'Cause I'm thinkin' I'm all yours." Dale's hands slid over him, petting and tugging him close.

"Mine, indeed." Moving even closer, he kissed Dale deeply, his tongue pushing in to taste what he simply could not resist.

Dale opened right up, welcoming him in to that sweet mouth, letting him take the kiss deeper and deeper. He cupped the back of Dale's head in one hand, his fingers slipping and sliding in the heavy curls. Dale tasted of salt, sweat he supposed, but it was so good, so intensely *Dale*.

His lover hummed into the kiss, almost dancing under his hands, his lips. Beautiful man. Gen moved them both, careful of that leg, and put his other hand on Dale's hip, pulling him closer to rub. Dale's cock firmed, starting to slip and slide against his belly, his hip.

Gen smiled against Dale's mouth, reaching to touch that sweet prick, needing to feel it throb in his hand. There. Just like that.

"Seems like it's been a while, darlin'. Too long, huh?"

"Yes. Far too long. But I will not hurt you. Si? Should we move to bed, or is this easier?" He stroked, long and slow, giving Dale a firm grip.

Dale's eyes rolled back in his head, hands gripping the sides of the tub. "Huh?"

"Never mind, caro." He would give Dale what he needed right there. Gen let his fingers trail down, farther down, rolling Dale's balls.

That earned him a grunt, a groan, a deep, sweet sound that echoed in him. Soft. So soft. His thumb ran back up the underside of Dale's cock, tracing the vein. That heavy shaft throbbed for him, entire cock swelling and jerking in his fingers.

"Sweet, caro. Tesoro mio." He lost his English, the feel of Dale, the smell of him taking over Gen's senses.

"Yours. Don't stop." No. No, he had no intention of stopping. None at all.

In fact, he speeded his motions, his hand sliding and slipping in the bubbly water. He wanted to feel Dale come for him, needed it. So badly. Dale groaned, moaning his name again and again as those long thighs went tight.

"Si, love. Now, per favore." Please. Please, come for me. That was his only thought.

"Now..." Seed sprayed from that long cock, coating his fingers before being washed away.

He hummed low and sweet, just loving the sounds, the way that Dale danced for him in the water.

"Oh, man. Darlin'. You blow my mind." Dale's eyes rolled, the grin on that face silly and happy.

"Do I? You have no idea what you do to me." Gen laughed, letting his cock rub Dale's skin, not caring that his own pleasure was delayed a bit.

"I want to taste you, darlin'. It's been forever."

"Then we go to bed." That way Dale could lie down and take it easy and Gen could give him what they both wanted.

"Yeah." The smile Dale offered him warmed him, bone-deep, reminding him how stressful the last while had been.

He cupped Dale's cheek, taking a kiss that was as sweet as it was needy. "Come to bed, caro."

Helping Dale out of the hot tub was a tricky thing, but they managed without a mishap, and he took Dale to his bed, drying them off before stretching out.

Dale spent a good, long time stroking him, touching the curls on his head, on his belly, above his cock, dusted over his thighs. Gen curled into the touches like a cat. So many people had been there. So many people to watch them like hawks. It was good to be quiet and alone together and happy.

Each fading bruise was touched, kissed, worried over. "I could've killed you."

Tilting Dale's chin up, Gen met those worried eyes. "No. It was not your fault. And we're fine."

"We are. I..." Dale bent, kissed his palm. "We are."

"Mmm." His hand tingled, and his fingers curled. "I love you, caro. So much."

"Good, 'cause I'm sticking around." One of his fingers was taken into that hot mouth, lips wrapping around as Dale sucked.

"Mmm." Oh, that sent shocks all the way down to his prick. Gen arched, asking for more with his whole body. He was starting to ache.

Dale's head bobbed, Dale sucking and nibbling, fellating his finger. His thumb ran up along Dale's cheek while he watched and shook and moaned. He wanted to feel Dale everywhere. Dale groaned, fingers wrapping around his hips, tugging him up toward that mouth.

"Caro! Oh, si." His body arched hard, his hips pumping up. That touch. Oh, yes, that perfect touch.

"Yeah. Yeah, come on, darlin'. Need you. Now." Those lips wrapped around his cock, hot as Dante's inferno. Gen cried out, his belly tight as a board, his hands clenching into fists. His cock throbbed, needing more, needing everything. Dale's hands squeezed, drew him in and in until

Dale's lips were wrapped around the base of his prick. Oh. Oh, his own. Dale watched every movement he made, sucking and swallowing, pulling him in deep.

He met those bright eyes, begging for it, his mouth shaping words that even he didn't understand. He stroked Dale's cheeks, his throat, his fingers finally unclenching enough to give back.

Every time he touched Dale's throat, his lover swallowed, those muscles taut and moving.

"Love. Per favore. More." His balls drew up, his skin so tight he wanted to explode. Dale's hands slid around his hips, fingers rubbing his hole, two pushing in, stretching him.

"Sweet!" His eyes went wide, his hips bucking up, his thighs shaking. Oh, Dio, Dale. His Dale. Inside him. Dale groaned, pulling him in deep, throat gripping around the tip of his cock.

Everything went white hot, his brain shorting out, his body tight as a drum. God in Heaven. The pressure on his cock was amazing. He came so hard that he bit his lip until it bled. Those lips and hands worked him, held him through each shudder, each aftershock, Dale loving him as no one ever had.

"Te amo, caro." What else could he say? What else could he give? Just that.

Dale kissed the tip of his cock, smiling. "Good. Love you, darlin'."

"Come here and kiss me." He pulled at Dale's arms, wanting to feel that weight of him, trying to remember to be careful of that poor leg. Dale shifted and rolled, lips wet with his seed as they kissed. That had him licking at that amazing mouth, his own taste flowed through him, making him moan. He slid his hands down Dale's back, cupping the tight bottom, squeezing.

Dale was beginning to fill again, swell for him, lips parted as they kissed.

"Mmm." How could he resist that? Gen reached down, grasping that hot flesh in his hand, pulling at it. "Again, hmm?"

"Over and over." Dale's grin was flash-quick, teeth nipping his lips. "As long as you'll keep me."

"Always." He pulled harder, letting his fingers roll open and closed. Yes. So hot for him. So tight and hard.

"Want to go home with you..." Dale's head rolled, lips parted.

"Si. Home to Amalfi, si? It will be nice there now. Sunny and warm." He kissed Dale's throat, his chin, loving the salty taste of sweat.

"Yeah. Yeah, darlin'. I... Fuck, I'm ready to start my life, huh? Start a life with you." Dale groaned, trying to arch under him.

Gen moaned, helping Dale with his free hand, helping that amazing body rub up. He stroked, his

thumb sliding along the underside of Dale's cock. Such trust. Dale finally trusted him, them, to make a life. "Si, amato. Soon."

"Soon... Don't stop. Please, I need." Dale grunted, bucking under him, muscles tight as stone.

"Not going to. Going to make you feel so good." The skin of Dale's shaft was so delicate, so sweet, and Gen took time to savor it with his fingers, alternating slow and fast. It took a few repetitions before Dale relaxed, melted back into the mattress and simply allowed him to touch, to drive that beautiful body to bliss. Gen touched all over, his one hand busy with Dale's cock, his other sliding up along Dale's ribs, over his chest. Each nipple got a hard pinch, even as he leaned to take another kiss.

Dale moaned into his lips, holding his eyes, staring at him as heat poured over his fingers.

He stared right back, holding Dale's gaze, making promises he very much intended to keep.

Epilogue

After a day of baking in the sun, then a long bath, Dale was ready to dance. The music was throbbing, he was freshly waxed, dressed in his chaps, his g-string cupping his cock, his balls. All he needed was his hat.

Dale grabbed his hat and pulled it down low, strutting out into the dimly lit room where his audience waited for him. Wasn't nothing like the last place he'd danced. No, sir, this was high class, all marble floors and silk wallpaper and gold ceilings. Real pretty. Not as pretty as his audience of one, though. Yep, this was a private dance, and Gen waited for him wearing nothing but a silk bathrobe that was the same blue-green as his eyes.

He smiled, cock starting to fill in a way it never had before when he danced, reacting to the man that watched him. Fuck, this was good. He let the music take him, no pressure, no stress, just riding and shaking it. His hand slid down his belly, fingers pushing at the g-string. Look, darlin'. I'm all bare for you.

Gen stared at him, that gaze like a damned laser, just hot and good and right. There was nothing like Gen watching him dance. Nothing at all.

It was the most natural thing in the world, to start moving across the room, one step at a time. It was a far damned cry from Houston and dancing for tips, this life him and Gen had made.

Italy was pretty strange sometimes, and he got to missing Texas once in awhile, but Lord knew the minute he mentioned it, Gen took him home for a week. The man could work anywhere. And with the family Gen had, they could go anywhere else, too. But mostly they stayed right there on the Amalfi coast, laying on the beach and loving on each other.

Gen shifted for him, legs falling open, robe parting to show him strong, fuzzy thighs.

Licking his lips, he sauntered over, flexed. "You looking for a lap dance, darlin'? You like what you see?"

"Oh, si. I love it." Gen's face lit up with a purely evil smile. "That is if I can touch..."

"Well, we'll have to see what the house rules are, now." He came close, leaned down until his face was centimeters away from Gen's, nostrils flaring as he took a deep breath. Their lips almost touched, him teasing and flirting like he never could have as a working man.

"I think the house allows anything we want." Gen leaned back, though, one hand sliding under that damned silk robe to wrap around Gen's fat prick, the other hand reaching for a glass of ruby red wine.

Tease.

"Mmm. Look at you..." He braced himself on the chair, straddling Gen's thighs and grinding away.

"I'd much rather look at you." Gen held the glass up for him, offering a taste. That wine was something else, he'd discovered. It kicked like a mule.

"You tryin' to get me tipsy?" He took a sip, moaning at the way it was like a liquid velvet, coating his tongue and heating him up, deep down.

"No. Just warming us up some more."

Yeah, like he needed that.

He took another sip, then bent, offering his lips to Gen.

Gen opened right up to him, lips on his, tongue reaching for the wine. They shared it, slow and sweet, just touching mouths together. Dale couldn't have stopped the moan as their mouths parted if he'd tried, and God knew he didn't have enough sense to try.

"Mmm. Better on your lips, caro. Now dance." Gen touched his hip then, pushing him back into motion. Demanding man.

He backed away, remembering that first night he'd danced, avoiding one touch while doing his damndest to attract another. Addictive fucking man.

Now he didn't have to avoid. He just had to smile and nod and Gen was coming up off the chair, robe falling to the floor. This time, Gen could dance with him. Gen's hands slid down the leather of his chaps, sliding around to cup his ass and squeeze. Goddamn, that felt good. So good. Even better when Gen traced the little strap on his g-string around to the front and cupped his cock nice and hard, squeezing there, too.

He arched, body reaching for that hand, thighs going taut.

"Mmm. Someone liked that. Do you have any idea how amazing you are?" The words were low, almost slurred, Gen's accent blurring them into something hot enough to shoot sparks against his skin.

"Just a cowboy." An incredibly lucky cowboy.

"My cowboy." That grin was just... decadent. Fond. Edible. Gen kissed him then, strong and hard, hands pulling him close, one on his as, the other still on his cock.

The music got lost in the pounding of the blood in his ears, Dale rocking now, riding that touch for all he was worth. Gen moved even closer, like the man was trying to crawl into his skin, like it was necessary. That hot skin rubbed his all over, the hair on Gen's chest scraping his nipples.

"Love." He sank his fingers into those dark curls, tilting Gen for another deep kiss.

"Yours," Gen agreed, murmuring it against his lips. They moved in a slow circle, just grooving on each other like he never had with Keno. Who Gen still snarled about occasionally.

"Mine." He rolled his hips, doing a little booty popping, just for Gen.

Gen laughed, the sound hot and husky, and that cock rubbed him, getting his g-string wet. "I love the way you dance, caro."

"You did from the start, calling me up to the rooms." He grabbed Gen's hand, drew it up his belly.

"I did." That hand wandered up his chest, Gen's fingers pulling at his nipples. "I wanted you immediately."

"I didn't make you wait too long." Gen must have thought he was such a slut at first, just coming home with a perfect stranger. It worked out, thought, Hell yes it did.

"I was glad. I was already more than half in love." Bending, Gen bit his shoulder, licking the spot after, heightening the sting.

"Good." He wasn't sure if he was talking about the bite or the love.

"Mmmhmm. Come and sit with me." Instead of the chair, Gen took him to the decadent couch with the lounging end thing, sitting back and pulling him down.

He covered Gen, humming at the heat, at the feel of their skin together. "Going to let me ride you?"

"Oh, si." Those eyes glowed blue and green for him, hot as a two-dollar pistol. Gen arched under him, begging for it, cock hard as nails.

Dale smiled, sliding the string away so that he could slide Gen's cock over his hole, let it sink inside where he'd slicked and stretched, readied himself for his lover.

Gen's eyes flew open wide, that mouth forming an 'O'. "Dio! Caro...Dale."

"Yeah. Yeah, darlin'. Fuck me." He pushed back and back, taking Gen in to the root.

Gen pushed up, face and chest flushed deep red, hands pulling at Dale's ass. God, it felt good to take Gen in, to hold him there.

"Love." He braced himself on the arm of the sofa, squeezing Gen tight before he started to ride. Grunting, Gen pulled at him, bit at his chest, just going wild under him. That sweet cock pushed at him, rubbing in and out.

The music swirled all around them, giving them a rhythm, a beat that just got faster and faster. Their hearts pounded, their skin slapped together, and Gen moaned for him like the happiest dying man ever.

"Love you. Come on. Come on, darlin'. Gimme." He was ready for Gen to fill him up, fill him deep.

"Si. Amato." Gen gave it right up for him, so good and hot that he cried out with it. Gen filled him so completely. So damned perfect.

"Love..." It didn't take him long, a couple of bounces and one good tug on his cock and he shot, covered that dark belly with his come.

"Mmm." That was a satisfied sound. Pure happiness. Gen held him close, both of them panting, both of them floppy.

"Oh, darlin'. Damn." He nuzzled right in, just breathing Gen in.

"You dance very well indeed, caro." Gen's hand slid up and down his leg, as if searching for his scars. "I'm so glad you are able to, hmm?"

"Yeah, darlin'. Glad I can and that I don't have to." No, he had his place here, managing the family stables, building the lines there.

A soft chuckle answered that. "You only dance for me now, caro. Private dances, si?"

"You know it, darlin'. I got myself whisked away." He stroked one hand down Gen's side, loving as best he could. "Thank God for favors large and small."

Gen only nodded and kissed him, and Dale figured he ought to be grateful for that dancing job that had gotten him through school and brought him Gen.

He'd dance for that man anytime.

end