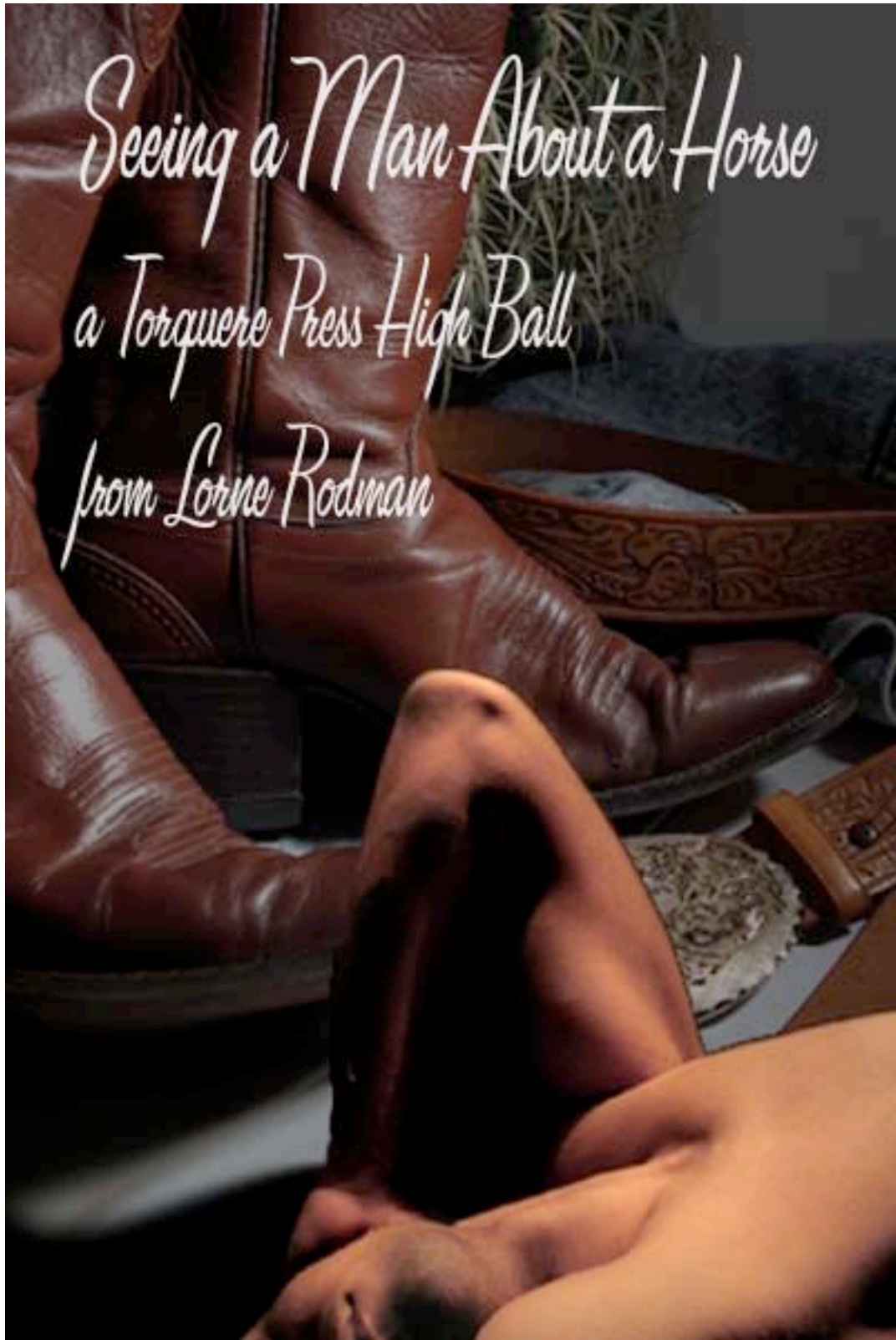


*Seeing a Man About a Horse
a Torquere Press High Ball
from Lorne Rodman*



High Ball: Seeing a Man About a Horse

Copyright © 2005 by Lorne Rodman

All rights reserved. No part of this eBook may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews. For information address Torquere Press, PO Box 4351, Grand Junction, CO 81502.

ISBN: 1-933389-44-3

Printed in the United States of America.

Torquere Press electronic edition / January 2006

Torquere Press eBooks are published by Torquere Press, PO Box 4351, Grand Junction, CO 81502.

www.torquerepress.com

Chapter One

Casey got to the round up just in time, he figured. Sure, he shoulda waited for the auction, but he wanted a look at the stock first, and the holding pen adjoined his land, didn't it? So he had to make sure none of his strays had ended up in the corral.

He wandered over to old Eddie Frame, leaning on the top rail and propping one booted foot on the bottom. "Hey, old timer. No bleeding heart camera crew this time?"

"Nope. And a good thing, too, the rate they've been cuttin' them colts." Eddie spat a stream of tobacco juice, nodding over to where Doc Hayden had a castration station set up. Out here in the middle of nowhere they still did it the hard way, even if they did have a modern crimper.

'Bout the time he looked over, the wranglers cut the stallion out of the herd, roping him good and solid with no less than three ropes and pulling him out of the pen toward the station.

"They're doing the stallion, too?"

Eddie nodded, staring at the horse, who was damned big for a mustang. "Yessir. He's not purebred. Got some domestic in him, so they don't figure on needing him for breeding."

Damn. And damned if about that time that stallion didn't go crazy, just a' buckin' and a' kickin'.

The red roan was about sixteen hands high with a wild, white mane and it knew what was coming all right. Casey could see the whites of the stallion's eyes as he shivered and kicked and tried to get away from the men who were going to turn him into a gelding.

It was the bucking that got him. That damned fool stallion sent Jimmy O'Donnel winding, eating a mud pie good and proper: put on a damned fine show. Casey tipped his hat at Eddie and headed over, wanting to stop them before they damaged his new breeding stud.

"Hey now, boys! Ho!" Waving his hat, he headed the guys off from the smaller pen where the doc was set up. "Don't be cutting this one up now."

Jimmy hopped up, spitting dirt. "Case, he's dangerous as all hell."

He nodded, watching the horse stomp and dance. "Yessir. And he'll make a fine bucking horse stud. That's all I lack to get the business up and running. I'll adopt him, but only intact."

The horse actually seemed to calm some at that, feet still kicking up the dirt. He could have sworn the beast looked him in the eye before snorting and kicking some more.

"Lemme get the crew boss then."

Jimmy trotted off and Casey headed over to grab the trailing rope that Jimmy'd dropped, walking along it until he was about four feet from the stud's shoulder. Then he started crooning. "Hey, big boy. Not gonna hurt you at all. No, sir. Gonna take good care of you, I surely am."

The stallion settled a little, just quivering.

He didn't get too much closer, just moving in on the rope another foot or so, moving around closer to the stallion's head, enough to control him, but not to get bit.

"So you want this bag of glue, Sutton?"

Casey grinned at Mark Garcia, who was just as brown as a nut and all toothy smiles. "Yessir. I'll wait until the adoption auction if need be, but I want him, and I don't want him cut."

Mark looked the stallion over and shook his head. "Your funeral, buddy. Come on and we can do the paperwork right now. Boys, just hitch that pony to a rail. Casey, you can either come on with your trailer or ride on over this afternoon and lead him home."

He grinned hugely. Well. Looked like that was that.

He'd got him a new stud.

He could only hope the damned horse would live up to his high hopes.

Feder shook his head and snorted, pulling at the lead. He was a stallion! He did not *follow* horses that allowed themselves to be tamed and saddled and ridden.

He was ready to make his move and break away as soon as they cleared the gate when he remembered what the man leading him had just saved him from.

Feder whinnied.

It was the culmination of a very bad few days.

One moment he'd been running with the herd, making his play for the mares, the next huge flying metal contraptions had come out of nowhere and rounded them up.

His nostrils flared, his whole body shaking as he remembered the panic, the noise, the fear, trying to get away. Feder bucked, head pulling at the rope as the memories threatened to overwhelm him.

The man leading him jerked, arm flying back as the rope yanked it.

"Whoa there, boy." The man turned, eyes looking dark and shadowy under the brim of the hat he wore. "Don't you go pulling me off this nag. They have to chase you down again they'll cut you for sure."

He liked the sound of the man's voice, it soothed him and he settled again, shaking his head. No. No cutting.

His testicles were trying to crawl up into his body. No cutting.

The day waned into night as they walked, the cool air giving some relief from the biting flies, and the rhythm of the gait of the mare in front of him lulled him, his exhaustion starting to take its toll. He did not come out of his doze until they stopped, a wooden building rising before him.

He looked at the man and then the building and then back at the man. A building. So strange.

He shook his head and snorted, waited. His chance was coming, he would change and make his escape soon, he knew it.

Climbing down off the mare, the man let the reins to her bridle drag, holding the long rope attached to his halter instead. So well trained that mare. Feder snorted. Give him a week with her out on the grasslands and she would not be so docile.

"Come on, buddy. Let's get you in the barn. It'll be a shock to your system, I bet, but it's dark and quiet and there's sweet feed and water. Come on, boy. Lord, I need to think up a name for you." The rope got a gentle tug, the man walking into the gaping maw of the building.

He had a name. He walked backwards a few steps, head jerking, tugging at the rope, hoping to get it out of the man's hands.

"Oh, now, don't be that way, pretty thing. I know it's scary, but I swear it's safe and warm. Come on now. There's three mares in there with your name on them." That voice. It intrigued him so, low and rough as the gravel under his hooves.

He took a step forward, confused, torn between running and staying.

The rope just barely pulled at him again, the man not letting go. "Come on, buddy. I want a beer and I want these boots off my feet. I get you settled and this lead will come off."

That had him moving another step forward. To lose the rope, to be free of it. To be free...

"Yeah. Yeah, like that. Been a long day, huh, buddy? So long I bet. And I betcha if I tried to pet you, you'd take my hand off. Come on now. Come on."

One more step, then another, and he was inside the dark, cool interior of the building. The smell of hay and oats was strong, along with the smell of mares. They stuck their heads over the little doors they were tucked behind, ears swiveling as they scented him.

He whinnied, picked up his feet a little, lifted his head and his tail. He might be more interested in food and freedom right now, but he had his pride and could put on a good show for mares.

There was a bigger door at the end of the row, and that was where the man took him, leading him all the way down and then inside, slipping out to close the door behind him, locking him in. It happened so fast he could hardly blink. The man was slippery, no doubt.

"Now c'mon over here and let me get that lead off your halter, buddy."

The maddening rope tugged at him again, leading him to hang his head over the door, just like the mares. Quick as another wink, the rope fell away under the man's hands, leaving him free to move around without the pull, the ever present tug.

He reared back and gave the door a kick or two, not at all happy with the situation.

"Oh, I know. I know, boy. But those panels are oak and they ain't going nowhere."

The man moved about, shifting things around until he had some sort of container hanging over the heavy panel with water in it, and another with oats, along with a pellet of hay on the floor.

"That ought to hold you for tonight. You be good, buddy. I'll see you in the morning."

With that the man left him, walking back toward the square of night visible through the door, patting the mares' noses as he went. He had glimpses of the man as he unsaddled the mare he'd ridden and groomed her, but then the door closed and he was alone. All was quiet.

Feder shivered and jumped a little. Change or food? Change or food?

He ate and drank first, filling his physical needs before he closed his eyes.

He thought about it, remembered what it was like, taking on the shape of a man. And then he did it, the change coming over him and he was shivering in his man's skin, trembling on exhausted legs.

He grabbed onto the edge of the stall, leaning heavily against the wood. With each breath his legs grew firmer, more sure. It was in his grasp now.

Freedom.

Casey'd gone on back up to the house, gotten some supper and turned on the TV. Just about the time he was about to pop a beer and plop his ass on the couch to watch some Mesquite rodeo, Abbey got up and woofed at the back door.

Well fuck. Abbey was the oldest, laziest dog known to man, but when she had to go, she had to go.

So he went to let her out, propping open the door to let the breeze in through the screen. When Abbey started growling low, he squinted out, searching for skunk or raccoon or something. Nothing. Nothing except the way Abbey's tail and ears went low and tight as she trotted toward the barn.

The barn.

He whistled her back up, not wanting her to get in the way, and grabbed his shotgun from right inside the door. Once the door shut safely behind the worst guard dog ever, he headed on down, cat-footing it to the barn. Just to be sure.

The place was dim and quiet, smelling strongly of manure and straw, and the musky scent of animals. Casey let his eyes adjust to the dark, searching for whatever had set Abbey off.

None of the mares were acting strangely, but the new stallion was nowhere to be seen.

He caught a movement out of the corner of his eyes and when he turned to look he'd be a monkey's uncle if there wasn't a man in his barn, in the stallion's stall, a butt naked man at that.

Casey brought the gun up to bear, not really sparing too much thought as to why a thief would be naked. Just a little more thought went into the fact that his new stallion was gone.

"Who the hell are you? And what have you done with my horse?"

The man jumped, limbs pale and slender, dark brown eyes a little wild, his nostrils just flaring. Long, almost white hair fell in a wild tangle around a long face. The man started to back away, steps clumsy, slow.

"Hey. No way. Stay right where you are." No way was the guy gonna slip away.

The man stopped, eyes on the gun and then took another step, stumbling and rolling into the shadows. Before he could take a step forward, the whereabouts of his new stallion became clear, the animal bucking and rearing near where the man had rolled to. He could hear the horse's hooves hitting the barn wall, making the place ring with the noise.

"What the fuck!" He ran over, peering over the stall door, safe from the flashing hooves, separated from the animal by the stall gate. The stallion's brown eyes were wild, long neighs and whinnies coming from the animal as it kicked out.

"Shh. Hey, shhhh." The shotgun clanked against the barn wall as he set it aside far enough that no struggles would knock it over and set it off. Then he climbed up on the slats of the stall door and leaned in a little, crooning. "Hush, now. Ain't nobody gonna hurt you."

The horse shook its head and its back legs went out, making the walls ring again with the power of that kick. His voice did seem to have some effect though, the bucking stopping, turning into a sort of prancing in place, the horse's sides quivering.

"Yeah. That's it, buddy." He had to get the damned nag calmed down so he could look for the guy. Hell, the man was probably pulp by now. Casey just couldn't believe he'd missed the horse in there on first glance.

The stomping started and the horse shook his head, snorting, nostrils working hard.

"Whoa. Whoa, now." Damn it, if the silly fool didn't hold still he'd never see anything. "I just need to see..."

The horse backed up suddenly, getting as far away from him as possible and whinnying at him.

Well, Hell. No man. Casey eased back down, grabbing up his shotgun and checking out the rest of the barn. He could feel the stallion watching him, the horse snorting now and then. The barn was definitely empty though, no sign that anyone had been there but him and the horses.

Blinking, he looked back at the stallion, brow furrowing. "Shit. Well, you sure did scare him off, buddy."

The horse shook his head, snorting again. A single kick hit the stall door.

"Yeah. Good job." There was something damned odd about that pony, that was for sure. Casey went to check the mares, making sure no one'd gotten hurt. His new stallion went back to watching him, head hanging over the stall.

It was damned disconcerting.

He moved around patting noses and necks, loving on Lulu and Keena. That beer was calling him. As soon as he knew everyone was settled, he grabbed his gun and nodded at the new arrival.

"Behave."

The barn door shut behind him, but Casey didn't leave. He eased the door back open a crack and kept an eye out, just to see. The stallion backed away from the stall gate, but he could hear him moving around a little and then everything went quiet and still, just like it ought to be.

Casey stayed a few minutes more, but nothing happened. He had no damned idea where the guy had gone, but hell, maybe he'd hallucinated him.

And he really wanted that beer.

Now.

Being caught as a man by a human had scared Feder. Especially the look in the man's eyes when the man had seen him.

The kicking and bucking had helped, but what he needed was a good long run with a herd, with a herd that was *his*, wind in his mane, wild grasses under his hooves.

Instead he was stuck in this stall in this big, dark building. No sky above him, no earth beneath him. It was wrong.

But it was safe.

The mares spoke of kindness from the caseyman, of oats and hay and fields where they could run, of mating and foals.

It was still wrong, but he knew he would not be harmed here -- the caseyman had already kept him from losing his balls, he would be grateful for that. At least he would not be harmed as long as he kept his equine form.

He ate and slept and rested through the night, waiting to see what would happen next.

What happened next was the same thing that had happened the night before, the caseyman coming in to feed them and talk to them. The mares went eagerly to have the man touch them,

and he could see that they ate something out of his hand, all of them munching and snorting happily as the caseyman crooned.

That crooning was something he'd never heard before and it touched something inside him, soothing, making him want to trust.

He moved to the back of the stall -- he wasn't a mare to be taken care of, he was a stallion!

"Hey there, you. I really gotta give you a name, huh?" His show of disdain did not seem to matter to the man, as he came right over to fill the water and food buckets, leaving a bright orange root on the top of the stall door. A carrot.

One that smelled really good.

He snorted and whinnied -- he had a name.

He turned away from the carrot and then looked back at it, nostrils just flaring. It definitely smelled really good.

He moved casually toward the door and nabbed the carrot, moving a few steps back as he ate it.

The caseyman laughed. "Yeah. That's the good stuff, huh? Want another one? Oh, I bet you like apples."

A shiny red apple appeared out of the man's clothing. It too went up on top of the stall, tempting him.

Oh, he could smell it. It was good and juicy and would taste sweet.

Once again he moved toward the stall door as if he didn't care. He grabbed the apple with his teeth and lips and forgot to move back it tasted so good.

"Yeah." He felt the fleeting touch of the man's hand on his sensitive nose before the man moved away, whistling.

He quivered for a moment, nostrils flaring as he pulled the scent of the caseyman in. He would not forget what the caseyman smelled like.

The oats tempted him, but he waited and watched to see what the caseyman would do.

The man just worked, moving the mares out of their stalls and grooming them, then cleaning out each stall. He shoveled out the refuse, then layered each stall with fresh straw before leading each mare outside.

Outside.

Feder whinnied and started to move restlessly. Don't forget me, caseyman.

The caseyman came back in after all the mares were out and watched him for a moment, smiling. He could see the man well now, unlike the night before. He had brown hair under his

hat, the same deep brown that one of his mares had displayed once, and bright blue eyes. He also had a very white smile in his brown face.

"You think I'm not gonna let you go out, huh? Well if you behave yourself when I try to put the lead on? I'll let you get out in the pasture and run, buddy."

Lead on? He snorted and stepped back a bit, torn.

He watched the caseyman's hands as they fingered the leather.

"Come on, now. Who gives you apples, huh? And the girls are waiting for you out there. I got to feed the cattle and help Jimmy Lawson with his branding yet today. The lead'll come right off."

Come right off? Well, he could do that.

If the caseyman was speaking true.

He moved toward the stall gate again, tossing his head to let the caseyman know he was expecting the lead to come right off.

"Attaboy." Reaching over the stall door, the man clipped the lead to his halter. Then the stall door swung open and the caseyman led him out into the fresh air and sunshine of the early morning.

Oh. Oh, it felt good.

He pranced along, just enjoying the feel of the sun on his face, the earth beneath his hooves. Yes. Yes, this was what he needed. And to run.

The mares waited for him beyond a high fence, all of them prancing and looking for him. The big gate swung open and the caseyman led him into the green pasture, closing the gate behind him before slowly moving close and unclipping the lead that tugged and pulled at him.

Feder tossed his head and danced away before he started to run.

To run!

He headed off as fast as he could.

"Whoo!" The caseyman whooped, clapping his hands. Maybe he liked to watch horses run. Feder came up short against the fence at the end of the pasture, but there was more to run in, much more, if he just turned and went the other way.

So he turned and he ran and he ran, feeling good for the first time since he'd seen the flying machines.

Chapter Two

Damn, he ached. He'd been stepped on, kicked, and otherwise just run roughshod on during the day, and he still had his own chores to do.

Casey sighed, pulling off his nasty clothes and changing into a pair of soft sweats and a t-shirt. He'd go round up the girls and put them in for the night, then worry about that darned fractious stallion.

"C'mon, Abbey. Get off your ass and come keep me company."

The old shepherd heaved herself up and came along as he headed out to the pasture. He pushed his hat back, not needing the shade it gave him as it was getting on toward dark. His stomach rumbled as he got to the fence, opening it up and whistling up the girls, who were ready for their sweet feed, for sure.

The stallion came barreling toward him, heading straight for the gate, hooves thundering.

Shit!

Casey swung the gate as hard as he could, pushing it closed and hopping up on the fence rail to scramble over it. The stallion was moving too fast to stop and his body slammed into the gate.

Oh fuck. Oh, shitdamnfuck. The horse screamed in pain and bounced back, legs like jelly. He didn't go down, but Casey could see blood spring up from a hellacious cut on that deep chest. Shit.

Casey scrambled back over the gate, tossing the loop from the rope he always carried for the nightly round-up over the stallion's head, digging his heels in to keep the horse from running. The stallion tried to buck, to fight the lead, but was obviously in pain, soft whinnies sounding.

"Shh. Come on, boy. I'm sorry. Shit. Come on, you gotta calm down so I can look at that." He'd have to get the stallion in the barn, cross tie him or something so he could doctor that cut. Fuck, he hated to see an animal hurting. And this was his fault.

"Come on. Please."

The stallion calmed some, seemed to react well to his voice.

"Yeah. Yeah, like that. I can make the hurting stop. Lord, I'm sorry. Come on. Jesus, I'm sorry." He kept his voice at the low croon he knew calmed the horses, but his words just sort of tripped over one another as blood stained that pretty gray red coat a deep black in the half light. "Come on."

The gate took some effort, as it was dented all to hell, but he finally got it, looping it shut again to keep the girls from wandering off. The stallion followed, walking unsteadily. He could hear the labored breaths, feel them against his neck.

"God. I'm a fucking idiot. But I couldn't just let you get away, could I? They'd be hunting you down again in no time, telling me how dangerous you are. Jesus."

There. Casey tied the rope to one post inside the barn, then got another lead and clipped it to the horse's halter, surprised at how easy it was, how docile the stallion acted. The stallion started quivering, but didn't fight the leads.

"That's it. That's it, honey. You just stay right there." Antiseptic, swabs, some clean water from the tack room. Yeah. He got set up and came up on the stallion's right side, holding the halter with one hand and doctoring with the other.

The stallion's ears went back and occasionally there was a strangled scream, stamping of feet, but the horse let him work, like he knew Casey was helping.

It wasn't as deep as he'd feared, just long, and the worst of it was the bruising. He'd have to leave the wound open, but maybe he could put a compress on it for just a bit to get the swelling down.

All the while he hummed and apologized.

At one point the stallion's soft lips nibbled at his neck. If he didn't know better, he'd have said it was a thank you. Casey grinned. It was probably more a 'gimme an apple'.

He finished up, making a satisfied noise. There. That ought to hold it. Now he just had to get the booger back in his stall and get the mares put up and... Casey sighed, hand going to the small of his back.

God he was tired.

Those soft lips nibbled at his neck again, the horse's snort blowing warm air over his skin.

Chuckling, he turned and patted that soft nose. "You're something else, buddy. Now. Come on and get in your stall for me and we'll be good to go."

The ropes loosed easily and he led the stallion to his stall, hoping against everything that he'd go easily. The stallion followed, nibbling at him the entire way.

At least it made him laugh. He closed the stall door behind that dappled red-gray ass and turned to pet that soft nose one more time. "You be good and don't be rubbing that on anything. I got to go get the girls."

Stumbling a little, cussing a lot, Casey headed out to get the mares, old Abbey finally coming up now that those sharp hooves were a safe distance away.

Fuck, he was dizzy. Casey sat down on a bale of hay, pretty damn abruptly, damn near denting his spine.

He heard the stallion suddenly, neighing and whinnying, making all sorts of noise. And he'd be damned if the girls didn't all come right up to the fence, just like that. "Well, damn. That makes it easier."

If he could just get up. Damn him and his funky blood sugars anyway. Casey looked at his shaking hands and groped along the fence to pull himself up.

"Sorry, ladies. Gotta go eat somethin'. Now. I promise I'll bring you apples when I'm done." Except he couldn't make his legs go, so he just stood there, shivering.

The stallion seemed to call out to him, and he'd be damned if there wasn't a kick to that stall door.

"M'okay," he called out, his words slurring a little. "Jus' need some food."

The snort he received in reply sounded very human.

"Yeah. Any minute now I'll go." He swayed, Abbey whining at him and nudging his leg. Damn it. Damn it. Damn it.

He didn't know how long he stood there, but suddenly there was a man in front of him. That naked man from the other night, with wide, scared brown eyes and wild hair. The man had a long gash across his chest and didn't seem terribly steady on his feet.

Casey stared, reaching out with his free hand to touch the edge of the wound. "Can't be. Can't."

The man winced and took a step back, out of reach. "H...help?"

"I can't... I need to eat somethin'." Man, he'd hallucinated before when he was hypo-ing, but never this solidly. "I need. I need juice. Sugar." He swayed some more, just wide-eyed and stupid.

"Apple." The man reached out and started patting his sweats where his pockets would be in his jeans.

"No. I didn't have anything...I need to. The house." He needed to get to the house. He took a couple of stumbling steps, catching himself on the mystery man's shoulders. They nearly went down together, but the man braced himself and they didn't.

Soon they were walking, slowly -- damn it was going to take them forever to get to the house, but they just might get there. He only went down once. And by the time they got there he was shaking like a leaf, but they got to the back door, Abbey walking around them in circles the whole way. Inside and he pointed to the fridge.

"There. Juice."

The man went to the fridge as he sat and hit the door softly. He frowned and kicked it with one foot. Then the handle was grasped, pulled, the door flying open.

Whatever worked. "Th-the top shelf."

The man reached in and grabbed the top shelf, tugging it up and off its rails and carefully bringing the whole thing over, managing to set it on the table without anything falling off.

Casey blinked. If it wasn't for the cold blast of air, he'd think he was passed out and dreaming. He reached for the orange juice carton, cursing as his hands fumbled, almost knocking the damned thing over. He couldn't quite lift it to his mouth.

His strange visitor helped, lifting it for him, letting him guide it to his mouth himself. "Juice. Top shelf."

"Mmm." He drank it down, taking several long gulps before he pushed it away, staring stupidly at the man in front of him. "You're naked."

The man looked down at himself and nodded. "No clothes."

All righty then. "You're not my horse."

The man nodded again. "I am no one's."

"No, no." Casey blinked some more. "I mean, you can't *be* a horse."

"Not right now."

He needed more juice. Obviously. Even if his shaking was easing off. "More."

The man held the juice up for him again and as he drank he realized his shaking was catching, or maybe transferring.

"Oh, you'd better have juice. Here." He pushed the container at the... "What's your name?"

"Feder."

"Well, Feder, have some juice." It was a damned odd name, but it suited those earth dark eyes and the wild look.

The man -- Feder -- picked up the carton and put it at his mouth. The juice spilled all down his front and Feder dropped the carton, whimpering as the juice splashed against his wound.

"Crap. Sorry. Lemme just..." He sorta scooted to the fridge, getting an apple. Apples were good. "Here. Eat."

While he was there he got himself a piece of bread and some ham. Yeah, he was definitely feeling stronger. And he got a wet paper towel to wash the acid-y juice off Feder's chest.

Feder ate the apple with quick, sharp bites, standing next to the table and watching him with familiar brown eyes.

Mopping at the cut on Feder's chest, Casey looked Feder over carefully. Probably a little too carefully, he figured, as he found himself staring at the large cock laying quiet against Feder's thigh. He sure had a lot in common with that damned stallion.

Feder's eyes had gone wide at his touches and that cock stopped being quite so quiet, filling slowly.

Casey stepped back, dropping the paper towel. "Sorry. I. Sorry."

"You have a good touch, Caseyman." Feder didn't seem embarrassed at all by his sudden rise; indeed, he stood proudly, cock reaching up toward the nice muscles of his belly.

"Thanks?" It came out weak, froggy in his throat, and Casey felt his cheeks heat until they felt like they were glowing.

"Something is wrong with the caseyman?" Feder frowned, pale eyebrows coming together. A solid, blunt fingered hand reached out to him.

Watching that hand as it slowly moved to touch him, Casey swallowed, jumping a little as Feder's fingers connected. Warm. Warm and firm, that was what the touch was. Oh, it felt good. Lord, that sugar drop must have fried his brain. But he didn't move away again, just leaned right into the touch like Abbey or one of the mares would into his own hand.

Feder cupped his cheek, palm against his skin, fingers moving along his hair line, stroking. "Feder would help the caseyman."

"H-help?" Stammering was something he only did when he was really flustered. So hello, fluster. "How?"

Feder shook his head. "I do not know, but if something is wrong with Caseyman, Feder will help. Caseyman has been good to Feder."

"I hurt you." Without any thought at all he sought out the cut again, fingers hovering over it without touching. "I'm sorry," he said again. "I didn't mean to."

Feder shook his head again and the move was so much like the stallion's it was spooky. "I ran into the fence."

"I didn't want you to get away." This was crazy. Crazy. Casey sat down suddenly, happy that the chair was right under his ass.

Of course that put him pretty much eye level with the tip of that large, still full cock and he could make out the pretty shape of it, the fact that it wasn't cut, that the tip was glistening with moisture.

"The ones who harmed me are the ones who brought me here, who would have taken my balls." Feder waved toward his cock and there was a harshness in his voice, anger.

"Th-they're just doing what they always do. They didn't mean it personal." That was just. Well, Casey loved a pretty cock. He touched it, closing his eyes and moaning at how soft the skin was, at how it throbbed against his palm.

Feder gasped, the sound almost a whinny. Feder's hips pushed the thick prick through the tunnel of his hand, sliding and hot.

"Oh. Oh, man. This is not a good idea." That was still him not letting go. Really. He stroked a little, testing the heat and strength. Lord, that was a pretty, pretty dick.

"Why not?" Now Feder's voice was low, husky, the tone sending shivers down his back.

"Because. You're a horse?" Wasn't he? Was he? Casey figured he must be losing his mind.

"Horses. Oh, lord. I need to get the mares in."

They'd been grazing all day, though. So he really didn't. Not if he put Abbey out to watch for coyotes.

"I am not a horse right now, Caseyman and your mares will be quite happy to spend the night under the stars. It will be good for them." Feder moved his hips, sending that heat sliding through his hand again and then again, the scent of the man sharp, earthy.

"Okay."

If he was well and truly cracked it wouldn't matter if he leaned a little bit and put his mouth to the tip of Feder's cock. And if he wasn't, then he would probably go to hell, but it was a fine way to go. His lips wrapped around the head, pushing down around it softly.

Feder screamed, the sound not unlike the sound the stallion had made as he'd hit the gate. The hands that fell onto his head, wrapping in his hair and holding him there, told him this scream hadn't been from pain. But fuck, that sound sent chills up and down his spine, making him shiver. Casey reached up, put his hands on Feder's lean hips and sucked harder, pushing his mouth down.

Feder moaned and whimpered, hips jerking in his hands. "Caseyman, oh."

"Mmmhmm." Yep. Super Caseyman, able to suck big stallions in a single slurp. He almost laughed, but swallowed instead, moving down even more, trying to take Feder all the way in.

The hands in his hair tightened, Feder's cock throbbing in his mouth, warning him Feder was getting ready to blow.

Yeah, and he wanted to taste. So Casey pulled back, pulled all the way off, bringing his hand up to pull the foreskin back and lick around the sensitive head before pushing back down. His lips met his hand at the base and Casey turned them in opposite directions, really giving Feder some friction.

Feder's thick cock throbbed in his mouth, shooting sharp saltwater heat over his tongue. The braying sound that came out of Feder was all pleasure.

Good. Really good. Casey swallowed Feder down, savoring the flavor and very deliberately not thinking about how unsafe he'd just been. Nope. He was gonna think about his cock instead. His cock that was poking out of his sweats, begging for some attention.

Feder was staring down at him, brown eyes just huge, nostrils flaring, body quivering. The hands in his hair began to pet. "That was... I never... Oh."

"Never?" One hand stayed on Feder's hip but Casey let the other drop to his lap, stroking away at his cock. "Now that's a shame. 'Cause that feels too good to not do it."

Feder nodded vigorously, one hand reaching toward Casey's cock. "It felt most good, Caseyman. For you, too?"

"Unnhh." Feder's hand closed around him and Casey's hips jerked up, ass lifting up off the chair. "Oh. Oh, please."

"Like this?" Feder's hand performed a passing imitation of what his own had been doing. "Or with my... mouth?" Feder looked a little confused.

"This is good. Harder." He wrapped his own hand around Feder's, squeezing down, stroking fast and hard. His belly muscles went rock hard, his nipples tingling.

Feder's eyes were watching their hands on his cock, and a pink tongue coming out to lick at his lips. God, he hadn't kissed this man yet, hadn't even really had a proper introduction and how do you do, but here they were sucking and jacking and shit, that felt too good to worry on it just at the moment.

"I think I'm gonna. Oh!" Fuck, he just lost it, just like that, coming over their joined hands in short, hot bursts.

Feder bent to sniff and then lick, head jerking slightly before settling back to the task at hand -- licking him clean.

He groaned, petting Feder's wild hair. "That was. Wow."

Feder nuzzled into his touches, leaning into him. "I did not know that men could do such things together. It was good, Caseyman."

"Yes. Good." And weird and freaky and warm and, well, he thought he might just pass out now. "I need to let Abbey out."

Feder backed away, just like the damned stallion had, slightly skittish. Those eyes... those were the stallion's, too, there was no denying that, the brown dark, warm.

Casey smiled, lowered his voice to that instinctive croon. "S'okay. She just needs to go out to keep the coyotes away. And then I need to eat some more. And." And then what? Had Feder even ever slept in a bed? How did you ask a horse-man to spend the night?

"Feder is hungry, too." Feder came closer again. "More apples? Oats?" Feder frowned. "Not caged again, Caseyman."

"Caged? Oh. Uh. You can stay in here if you want?" He got up, patting Feder's hip as he passed, trying not to trip on his sweats as they fell off. "I'll make you some oatmeal. With fruit. And me too. That sounds yummy."

"I have no practice at being as a man. But I like you." Feder sounded surprised by that.

"Oh, good." Any minute, he decided, he was going to start gibbering. He was in his kitchen, wearing nothing but a t-shirt, making oatmeal for a man who was also a horse.

Right.

"I like you, too."

Feder nodded. "I know. You are kind to horses."

His naked guest came to stand next to him, watching with curious eyes as he got the oatmeal going.

Water, oats, gas on the range, lalala. The oats were quick cooking so he stirred and stirred, grabbing the brown sugar out of the cabinet. "Could you, uh, put the shelf back in the box?"

Feder nodded and put the top shelf back inside the fridge. He opened and closed the door several times, watching, Casey thought, the light go on and off again.

The oats cooked right up, so he sprinkled them with brown sugar and poured them into two bowls, grinning as he nudged Feder aside and got milk and apples and blueberries. "C'mon and sit and eat, Feder."

"Sit. I am not accustomed to sitting." Feder sat gingerly on the edge of the table. "Like this?"

"No. Like this." Casey sat in own chair and pushed another one out with his foot.

Feder hopped off the table and sat in the chair. "Humans have many rules. I remember my mother telling me so."

"Your mother?" Why had he assumed Feder had sort of just hatched? Damn, that oatmeal tasted good.

"Yes, my mother -- my dam." Feder watched him for a moment and then picked up his spoon. Feder ate the first few bites awkwardly, but he soon had the hang of the utensil and was eating quickly.

"Good?" He smiled at how Feder handled a spoon, but it looked like the oatmeal was a hit.

"Better than what you feed your horses!" Feder grinned, looking quite feral with his white hair all wild around his head.

"Hey! They wouldn't eat this and you know it." Casey spooned up a blueberry. "I give them apples."

Feder's fingers snatched away his blueberry before he could get it to his mouth, quick as could be.

Blinking, he stared for a minute, then started laughing, tossing another at Feder's head. "You like those, hmm?"

Feder smiled and nodded, stealing another out of his bowl. "Sweet."

"They are." Lord, that real smile, the softer one, was just as sweet, making his belly hot deep down.

Feder ate until his bowl was nearly empty and then he picked it up and licked it clean.

"I ever take you out in polite company, you'll have to promise me you won't do that."

Feder looked up at him from over the bowl's edge. "Do what? Eat?"

"No. Lick the bowl. Eating is good." He winked, patting Feder's hand without even thinking, a gesture of comfort. "But I'm glad you liked it."

"You don't want me to lick the bowl? But what about the stuff the spoon can't reach." Feder looked over at his bowl. "Are you going to leave that?"

Shaking his head, he handed it over. "Well, that's all good and well at home, but folks don't do that out at restaurants."

"Restaurants?" Feder asked, licking his bowl clean, too. There was a spot of oatmeal on Feder's nose and he was licking his lips enthusiastically.

Gracious. Feder ate like a horse. Casey chuckled, the small sound growing into a full-blown laugh. Before he knew it he was laughing so hard his stomach hurt, tears chasing each other down his face.

Feder watched him, looking concerned and one hand reached for him, gently touching the wet on his cheeks. "Something is wrong with the caseyman?"

He wheezed, trying to shake his head. Damn it, he needed to get a grip. So he did, only the grip was on Feder as Casey grabbed those wide shoulders and all but crawled into Feder's lap, hiccupping something fierce.

Feder's eyes widened, strong arms wrapping around him. "What is wrong?"

"I do-don't know. I'm tired." And freaked out and seeking comfort from the very feller that freaked him out. He was a head case. "Did I turn the stove off?"

Feder's hands petted his back. "I don't know."

"Is there still blue fire on the top?" He had to get his shit together. Had to.

Feder looked over and shook his head. "No fire, Caseyman." Those brown eyes came back to him. "I am upsetting you. I should go back to your barn and take my true form."

"No!" No, if there was anything he knew he didn't want it was that. "Come. Come to bed with me."

Feder nodded. "If that is what you want."

"It is." And he was ready, nearly shaking again, this time from exhaustion. He'd do double the chores tomorrow, get up with the birds. Casey stood, legs wobbly as a colt's. "Come on."

Feder stood as well, standing close, offering the man's strength.

He turned off lights as they went, heading for his little bedroom with the queen size oak bedstead and his momma's quilts and the bathroom. Oh, good idea. He left Feder sort of standing there as he headed to pee and brush his teeth. When he came back out he nodded.

"Do you need to?"

Feder nodded, looking suddenly stricken. "I have only ever outside, Caseyman."

"I. Oh. Do you need help?" That made sense, that a man who was a horse most of the time would never have seen a toilet. Now was as good a time as any to teach him, though. "I can show you how."

"Thank you." Feder went into the bathroom with him, looking about with curious eyes.

"Here." Casey pointed, then sort of nudged Feder into place. It wasn't the easiest thing he'd ever done, but he had nephews, right? Okay, so a grown man was a little different, but they managed it.

He showed Feder how to brush his teeth, too. And wash up.

It was kinda bizarre and kinda comforting.

Finally they were done and in the bedroom, Feder watching him climb onto the bed and lie down. Feder followed his example, lying stiffly next to him. "It is soft!"

"Yeah. Is that bad?" Hell, Feder usually slept standing up. This might be too much for him. Casey sort of rolled close, putting an arm around Feder's waist, easing with his touch.

"Strange, but not bad, Caseyman. I have never slept as a man." Feder shifted, moving a little closer, seeming to take comfort from him.

"I think you'll like it." Nuzzling in made him relax, too and Casey yawned on his next sentence, having no idea what it was he tried to say as he sank down into sleep, just like that.

They'd just have to talk about that whole horse thing tomorrow.

Feder woke suddenly, not sure where he was, not understanding that he was a man. He struggled to stand, the ground soft and unsteady under his feet. He fell to his knees with a soft gasp, looking at his hands and the rest of his body. Oh yes, man. He had slept as a man with the caseyman, on this soft thing.

The caseyman was there, too, snorting and turning so his bare bottom was in the air, making deep, rumbly noises.

Feder smiled, the sight of Caseyman's rump making him happy. Making him very happy and he remembered the things they had done before. Seeing Caseyman's rump though put thoughts of how he mated as the horse in his mind.

"Mmpfh. Gnnng." Caseyman snorted, hands moving like he was swimming, rump wiggling.

Feder wasn't sure if that was a good sign or not, but he followed his instincts, settling behind Caseyman and exploring the fine rump with his hands. Oh, warm and firm. It made his cock go nice and hard, eager to ride.

"Mmm." Oh, he took that as a good sign, that Caseyman spread his legs and lifted up, the round, furry balls exposed.

He bent to explore them, smelling and licking, learning the scent of the man.

"Nhuh?" Caseyman snorted again, this time rising up on his elbows and looking back at him. "Oh. Morning, Feder."

He beamed. "It is morning, Caseyman. I wish to ride you and it smells as if you wish it, too." The Caseyman smelled of rich, male musk.

"Casey. My name is Casey." There was no yes or no, nothing but the slow grind of Casey's body up against him.

"Casey. I will ride you now."

He used his hand to line himself up with Casey's rear, enjoying the novelty of having hands -- it was a gentler way to mount his mate.

"No! Damn, Feder. I mean, I want you to, but you gotta get me ready or it will hurt like a sumbitch." Casey tightened up, trying to scramble away.

Feder backed up fast, managing to fall off the end of the bed in his haste. Get the caseyman ready? He did not understand. They both wanted, were they not ready? He blinked up cautiously over the edge of the bed, rubbing his knee.

Casey peered down at him, frowning. "Sorry, buddy. I just need to get stretched. I ain't a mare." One large, rough hand stretched out to pull him up.

"You're not mad? You wish to ride with me?" He reached up tentatively, putting his hand in Casey's. His own hand was solid, but Casey's was larger, warm and sure.

"Yeah. Get up here, dork." Pulling, Casey smiled at him, leaning to put warm, damp lips against his mouth.

Oh. It felt good, this meeting of mouths. Casey's lips moved against his and he jerked back, startled.

"Oh!" It had felt so different, so good, like little tickles inside him.

"Mmm. Yeah. I been meaning to do that." That strong hand slid up his arm to sit at the back of his neck, pulling him close again to share touches.

He quickly followed Casey's lead, moving his mouth, their lips sliding together, resulting in the most wonderful gentle sensations. Then Casey's tongue slid out to touch his lips, tracing the seam where they closed together. He gasped, mouth opening and Casey's tongue slid right in. Suddenly the gentleness became more urgent and his own tongue touched Casey's, his cock throbbing.

A soft sound came as Casey crowded him, pushing him down on the bed to make the kiss deeper, harder, his lips burning. He opened his mouth wide, hands reaching to hold, letting Casey take the lead, be the stallion.

They rubbed together, their skin hot and sweat damp, sliding as Casey straddled him, pressing into his mouth.

"Mmm. Taste good."

"It feels incredible Caseyman -- Casey."

"See? You can take it easy sometimes. Make it last." Casey touched him, hands sliding on his throat, down to his chest to touch his nipples.

His whole body bucked at the way that felt. He had never mated as a man, only as a horse and mounting was all there was. "So different..."

"Is it? Would you like me to make it a little more familiar?" With that Casey bent and bit him, right where his neck joined his shoulder, just like he would bite a mare.

He cried out, body bucking again, pushing up against Casey. The wound in his chest pulled, but he ignored it in favor of the other sensations. Casey had his head swimming, his body churning with need and heat.

"Shhh. Shh. Soon. Don't hurt yourself. Let me get the... Yeah." Casey leaned away from him, grabbing a bottle that sat on the wood beside the big soft thing.

"Now I'll show you how to get me ready."

"You use a bottle first?" he asked, confused as to why Casey would want the bottle inside before Feder's cock.

Casey just laughed right out loud, "No, Feder. Watch."

The bottle tipped, thick white liquid spilling out on Casey's fingers. Then Casey raised up and reached behind himself. Only Feder could not see what he did.

He slid out from under Casey and went around behind, eyes widening in amazement to see Casey's fingers inside himself.

"Like that. See? That's, oh, that's what I need to get ready." That so soft, crooning voice sounded harsh now. Needing.

He wanted to feel, so he pushed one of his fingers inside with Casey's. "Oh! Hot. Tight."

"Fuck!" Whole body arching, Casey tightened down on their fingers, squeezing. "Hold still. Please, just hold still."

He froze, spirits sinking as it seemed he'd messed up once again.

"Yeah. Like that. I just need a minute to get used to it." That blonde head fell back, and suddenly Casey relaxed around him, taking their fingers in easily. "Yeah. Yeah, that's it."

"It's okay?" He moved his finger in the motion Casey had been using earlier, in and out.

"It's good. Better than okay." Yes, he could tell now, could see it and feel it. Casey moved on their fingers, hips rising and falling.

"How many can you take?" Feder asked, fascinated by the pleasure he could see on Casey's face.

"That'll do." Slick, hot, Casey went up, then down again. He did not know how long they stayed like that, but finally Casey pulled free, bending and presenting like a mare in heat. "Now, Feder."

This was where they had started, but now he had Casey's own words that he wanted this, that he was ready and Feder did not need to be told again. He took his position and once again guided himself to Casey's entrance.

This was very familiar, the push, the heat blooming around his cock. He moaned as Casey took him in.

"Oh, damn. Feder." Bracing, Casey pushed back against him, muscles straining.

"It's okay?" He did not want to mess up again.

"Good." Nodding, hair tossing almost like a mane, Casey pushed again, forcing him to move.

He found the rhythm easily enough, body knowing what it needed, this just like he was used to, though the sensations were different, the pleasure more intense somehow.

Groans came steadily from Casey, that strong back arching before him, over and over. Casey reached down with one hand, arm moving in time with Feder's thrusts and it occurred to him suddenly that Casey must be touching himself. He reached with one of his hands, adding his own touch to Casey's.

Yes. That almost sounded like a scream. Casey rocked back and forth between his cock and his hand, moaning, panting. So pretty. With his free hand, he stroked Casey's back, Casey's body so tight around his cock, so good.

"Need to. God, Feder. Need to come." Casey's body squeezed down around him, on him, making him buck.

He jerked into Casey as much as he could, his own pleasure like the sound of hoofbeats inside him, insistent and heavy.

"Oh!" Casey shot into their moving hands, panting, cursing, still moving with jerky motions.

He screamed as the tight heat of Casey's body clamped down on his cock, making him buck with the pleasure.

"Feder. Damn." Casey slumped forward, back heaving with his breath.

Feder slipped out and collapsed onto his back beside Casey, looking into the man's face. "It was good, yes, Casey?"

"Yes. Oh, yes it was good."

He smiled. "Yes, for me, too. So different from what I'm used to."

"Mmmhmm." Casey looked over at him, brow furrowing a bit. "Yeah. I bet."

Blue eyes widened as Casey looked past him. "Oh, shit! It's almost eight! I gotta feed. And poor Abbey, she's been out all night."

He touched Casey's shoulder. "I could help?"

"You. You want to?" He got a blinding smile. "I think you might fit in my clothes."

"Clothes? Why would I need to fit your clothes?"

"Lord." Grinning, Casey patted him. "Because working like I do? You could finish what that capture crew tried to do with nothing to protect your dangly parts."

He swallowed, hands going to protect his balls. "Oh. Then I will wear your clothes, Casey."

"I figured you might." Casey gave him a quick kiss, lips and tongue on his. "Thank you, Feder."

"For what?"

"For helping? It's been a long couple of days."

That smile was so bright. So good. It was worth putting on man clothes. "I am here. I like you. I will help."

He leaned in and pressed their lips together for another kiss. Sweet. Casey tasted almost sweet. It was... odd. He pushed his tongue in deeper, wanting more of the flavor of Casey.

"Mmm. Gotta eat, Feder. Gotta get food, then feed the horses."

"Oatmeal!" He nodded. He was hungry and it would not do to let the mares go hungry.

"Yeah. Oatmeal. Or maybe even Cheerios."

Feder watched Casey roll out of the bed and pad to the bathing room, rump twitching. He followed, taken by that bottom -- prettier than any mare's he'd ever seen.

He liked Casey, and for more than just his rump. Perhaps the horrible flying machines hadn't been the worst thing to ever happen to him after all.

Lord, lord. What a long assed couple of days.

Today had gone... well, not like clockwork, but it had gone better. He'd had to show Feder a lot, okay everything, but work always went better with two, even if one wasn't sure what they were doing. And even if sometimes Feder just didn't get why they were doing something.

Still, he was glad when it was over and he was back in the house after sundown, watching Feder strip off those confining clothes while he debated supper.

He still really hadn't taken time to dwell on the whole horse not in the barn while Feder was around thing.

"Hey." A thought occurred to him. "You don't eat meat, do you?"

"I don't know," Feder told him, coming close as soon as he was naked. "I do not often eat as a man."

It was turning into all food and, well, yeah. "Well, we'll start with something simple. Eggs. Yeah? And I'll make some baked apples."

Yeah. He'd ease Feder into his food.

"Mmm. Apples." Feder beamed at him. "Can I help, Casey?" The words were increasingly familiar, Feder apparently eager to lend a hand, no matter the task.

Casey reached out, stroked Feder's rough hair. "You can. Sit here and I'll show you how to core an apple."

Feder leaned into his touch, smiling at him. Then Feder sat and petted the table. "Show me what you want me to do."

"Here." He stood behind Feder, holding an apple and a paring knife. "Hold the apple here, and the knife here. Then it's just a quick few cuts. But carefully. I don't want you to cut yourself."

Feder leaned back against him, rubbing a little, face turning up to smile at him. "You're very good at doctoring though, Casey."

"Am I?" He'd have to look at Feder's chest, though just from looking down from this angle, he'd say his horse-man healed with remarkable quickness. The cut looked much better. "Hard to doctor a cut off finger though."

Kissing the top of Feder's head, he went to get a shallow pan and the brown sugar for the apples. He could feel Feder watching him and when he looked over, sure enough those brown eyes were gazing at him.

"Aren't you supposed to be cutting apples?" He winked, coming back with the pan.

"Sorry. I like watching you, seeing how you move. It is fascinating."

"It is?" Again he just sorta didn't know what to say. He was just Casey. The apples went into the pan as he and Feder finished them up, and he stuffed brown sugar down in, bouncing back up when he remembered he had some raisins left. He'd bet Feder would like baked raisins.

When he came back, Feder stroked his hand. "Thank you. It has been a good day."

"It has." Deep in his bones he knew it was one of the best days he'd had in a bit. Which just made him scared stiff. He didn't understand any of it. Not one bit. "Now, we put these in the oven."

Feder laughed. "You have a strange habit of making everything to eat hot."

"I like my food hot. There's some stuff that if you don't cook it, it makes you sick." He guessed there was a lot more variety to his diet than there was to Feder's. "We could have some carrots."

"Oh, no, I want to eat your kind of food, Caseyman."

"Casey," he corrected automatically. "Just Casey."

Apples in the oven, eggs broken in a bowl, and yeah, Feder still watching him. It was as weird as it was sexy.

One of Feder's fingers slid through the eggs in the bowl and then popped into his mouth. Feder made a face. "Maybe this one tastes better hot?"

"Oh, man. That's nasty. Yeah, they taste way better hot, I promise." That just tickled him to death, the look on Feder's face.

"I will try your hot eggs, Casey." Feder leaned against him, head on his shoulder.

"Kay." He leaned back a minute, turning to kiss Feder's cheek. It was amazing how easy they were. Maybe it was because Feder was a horse. He'd always been better with them than people.

Feder turned his face and brought their mouths together. "Your kissing turned out very good, so I think your hot eggs will be good, too."

"You think so?" Lord, this one made him laugh. "I like the kissing, too. But I need food before we can do much more." He beat the hell out of the eggs, adding in some salt and pepper.

"What is that?" Feder asked, pointing to the spices.

"Salt." Salt would be a familiar thing to Feder, he'd bet. He wet his finger and rubbed it against the salt shaker, holding it to Feder's lips.

Feder's lips closed over his finger, those brown eyes widening. Feder's lips tightened, the sucking growing harder. Damn. That sent sensation zinging right down to his cock, and Casey gasped, pulling away. Stove. Oven. Eggs.

"Th-the pepper is not nearly as tasty on its own."

"Are you okay, Casey?"

"Yeah. I-I'm fine. I'll just cook the eggs." He spilled the eggs into the pan, watching them bead up around the edges, and turned the heat down a bit.

Feder divided his attention between the eggs and Casey, staying very close.

When they were fluffy and light, Casey slid them off onto a plate, popping some bread in the toaster real quick while he got some juice. "Smells good, huh?"

"Not as good as you," Feder told him. "I like the smell of you, Casey. It makes me want to stay a man so I can mate with you."

"Oh." The plate clunked down on the counter, his fingers suddenly kinda nerveless. "Yeah? I mean. It's really distracting that you're naked, Feder."

"I find your clothes distracting, Casey."

"Oh." The toast popped and he jumped. Buttering it sort of took his attention away from Feder's more than half-erect cock, though, so that was good. "Uh. Here. Lemme get the apples out and they can cool while we eat."

"Okay." Feder smiled and sat, watching him use his fork before picking the utensil up. Feder was cautious in his first taste, but a smile soon crossed his face. "Oh, they are better hot."

"See, I told you. I like 'em with a bit of salsa, too. Maybe some cheese. Oh, I bet you'll like cheese." It was like having some weird foreigner in your house, one who'd never seen most of the stuff you did or ate.

"I will try anything you like, Casey. So far it has been good. The Cheerios this morning were fun!"

"There might be some stuff you don't like," he warned. "Heck there's some I don't."

"Then why would you eat it?"

"Well I don't know until I try it. And then it's like, oh. Ick." He grinned. "Man, those apples smell amazing. Let's have one, huh?"

Feder nodded eagerly. "I want to try one of your hot apples."

He laughed, biting off a crude comment. Feder wasn't one of the local cowpokes. He showed Feder how to cut in, how to blow on it to cool it off a little. Oh. Sweet and tart, the raisins just plump and melty.

Feder took a bite and started making noises of enjoyment. Noises that went straight to Casey's cock. They sounded for all the world like sex noises. Not that Casey didn't get that, because that apple was good. But damn. He adjusted himself.

Feder ate the lion's share, licking his lips, his fingers, and then, yes, the bowl.

"That was sexy as hell." And he just said that out loud.

Feder put down the bowl and gave him a smile. "That's good, isn't it?"

"Yes. I'm just not used to blurting shit out like that. Now? I'm gonna show you how to do the dishes."

"Oh. I was hoping you were going to show me how to do that mouth on shaft thing again."

"Dishes first. We always get the chores done first, babe." Because if they didn't, they'd never get done. He'd found that out last night.

Feder sighed. "Yes, Casey."

Grinning, he stroked Feder's hair again in praise before showing him how the dishes were cleaned, getting all of the goo off.

"See? That didn't take long."

"It would have been easier to lick them all clean." Feder looked at him, eyes twinkling.

"But then you get things like dysentery. It's kind of like colic." He moved close finally, allowing himself the pleasure of pressing up against Feder's body.

"Oh, colic is no good!" Feder shivered, pressed closer, hands going to his shoulders.

"Mmmhmm. So we wash." He kissed Feder's mouth, just loving on him.

Feder nodded. "I do not wish for you to have colic. But now we can do the fun stuff."

"Now we can." Oh! Now they could have a shower. He was steady on his feet. "Why don't we have a bath?"

Feder made a face, wild hair bouncing as he shook his head. "Fun stuff, Casey! Fun stuff!"

"This? Is fun. Trust me." Teasing a little, he wandered toward the bathroom, stripping off clothes as he went.

"Oh, finally! You are too fond of your clothes, Casey." Feder followed him, hands touching his skin as it was bared.

"Mmm." He hummed, wiggling a little. They got to the bathroom and he bent to strip off his jeans and boots last, ass to Feder.

"Casey..." Feder's hands slid over his ass, squeezed. Feder's cock slid along his crack.

"Uhn." He twitched, almost toppling over. "Feder. Yeah."

"You need the fingers first, Casey?"

"Uh. Yeah. There's uh... lotion. On the sink." He pointed, hoping like hell Feder didn't get the soft soap.

Feder pushed a bottle into his hand. "Is this right?"

"Uh huh. Yeah. Here, like this." He held out his hand for Feder's before squirting some on. "Just one at a time, okay?"

"I saw this morning, Casey." He could hear the grin in Feder's words. "You should not present such a pretty rump if you don't want me to use it."

Feder bent and kissed his ass before pushing in a finger.

"Oh! Fuck." That just made his cheeks heat and his heart pound. Uhn. Good.

"You are better than any filly." The whisper came with another finger pushing into him.

"Thanks?" He grinned, swishing his ass from side to side a little, laughing.

Feder bent and bit his ass, also laughing. Then he was licked. "Oh, Casey, please now. I want you."

"Okay. Yeah. Okay, Feder." He reached back and spread himself, letting Feder see him open and wanting.

Feder made a noise, much like the one he'd made while eating the apples, only more intense, deeper and lower. Then the heat of Feder's cock pushed against him.

Casey took a deep breath and let it out as Feder pushed into him, opening his body. He could still feel the sting from the night before. It had been a long damn time.

Feder moaned and whimpered, pushing in all the way and then staying there, hands on his waist. "So different, Casey."

"S'good. Hot. Fuck, you're big, Feder." Wide and long and so hot it was like a brand. Casey moaned, reaching out to grab the edge of the tub to brace on.

"A stallion!" Feder laughed softly, the sound almost a whinny and then Feder began to move, sliding in and out of him.

Oh. Oh, yeah. Casey moved right back, thrusting his ass at Feder, wanting more. Always more.

"Yes, Casey. Yes, so good." Feder moved faster, harder, hands tight on his waist, holding him hard enough to leave bruises.

Damn. He was gonna hurt tomorrow when he had to go out and ride fence, but it was worth it right here and now. Feder just opened him wide, speared him like no one else ever had. After a few minutes of the spine tingling thrusts, one of Feder's hands slid away from his hip, around to his cock.

"Yeah. Yeah, Feder. Just like that." He'd shown Feder that, and he got a rush of pride from that, that he was the one to teach this amazing creature about the pleasure two men could find.

Feder's hand worked in tandem with his cock, both driving Casey, sending him hurtling toward the finish line. He wasn't gonna last, couldn't last, and he didn't try, just thrusting into Feder's hand a few more times and shooting so hard he saw stars.

"Feder..."

That scream came again, Feder's cock pushing into him several more times before heat pushed deep into him.

His arms tried to buckle but he caught himself, shivering and panting, blowing like a damned mare that had just been covered. Really, he was gonna have to do Feder soon or he was gonna feel like part of the harem.

Feder leaned over him, lips soft as they nibbled at his neck, hands stroking his sides.

"Mmm. Not a mare, Feder." Not that it didn't feel good. But yeah.

Feder backed off immediately. "It wasn't good, Casey?"

"Oh, no! No, it was good." His back protested mightily as he straightened and turned, his poor ass on fire. Grabbing Feder before he could get away, Casey brought him close for a kiss.

"Better than good. I was just thinking how I need to show *you* how it feels."

Feder's head tilted, another kiss offered. "You wish to mount me, Casey?"

"I do. Not right now, because I'm not even sure I can stand up much longer. But yeah." He laughed into the kiss, just shaking his head at the whole situation. "You'll like it."

"I am not sure, but I have liked everything else you told me I would." Feder's arms went around his waist, holding him. "I will help you stand."

"Kay." Strong as a horse, his Feder. Casey giggled before clapping a hand over his mouth. Lord he got silly after sex.

Feder gave him one of those honest, beaming smiles. "Does your not being able to stand mean we can skip the bathing?"

"No." Silly boy. "You'll like the shower. I promise."

Feder pouted. "I will try the shower. For you."

"Cool." All he had to do was get his Jell-O arms going, and he did that, turning the shower on and closing the curtain while the water warmed up.

Feder's cock was rising again, his eyes shining. "I do like the way you present your rump, Casey."

Oh, Lord. "Come on, you. Get in." Casey stepped in carefully, holding a hand out. "Careful."

Feder took his hand, holding tightly. "Oh! It's warm!"

"Uh huh. And you'll love how it feels when I wash you." Yeah. He got his washcloth and the soap, lathering up. He was going to enjoy the hell out of it, too.

Feder watched him as he always did, brown eyes curious, trust complete.

"Come on, honey. Get over here." He motioned, watching Feder carefully move toward him, then reached out and started scrubbing Feder's chest, careful of the wound.

Feder beamed at him. "Oh, yes. Touching. I like this."

"I thought you might." He worked up over Feder's nipples to his underarms, rubbing away at the sensitive skin. Feder made soft noises, arms lifting for him, pushing into his hands.

"Like that, huh?" Hell, why not? He did. Man, had it been that long? He guessed it had. Maybe a year and a half since his last trip to the big city.

"Feels good, Casey." Feder turned, shoulders pushing back into his hands, soft groans and moans coming from Feder at each rub.

"Mmmhmm. You're awfully pretty, Feder. Yeah. Just like that." Without even thinking he dropped into a croon, rubbing and pushing and soothing. He'd bet those muscles were kinda sore, unused to being used as they were.

Feder leaned back against him, smiling up at him. "You think I'm a pretty horse or a pretty human?"

"Both." Kissing Feder's neck, he chuckled, blowing against one wet shoulder. "I thought you were gorgeous the minute I saw you."

Feder laughed and turned, arms looping around his neck, soapy body rubbing against his. "I am a beautiful stallion."

"You are. Magnificent." He grinned back, soaping Feder all the way down to his ass, cupping those tight cheeks.

Feder moaned and pushed back into his hands and then forward again. "And you are a magnificent man."

"Thank you." Uhn. Their cocks rubbed together, making him grunt.

"I like the way you bathe, Casey."

"See? I told you." He gave both of their cocks a little rub-a-dub, just pulling the washcloth across their pressed-together lengths.

Feder's nostrils flared, his eyes going wide. "Casey -- I thought you were tired."

"I was. You're inspiring." And horny. Lord, that boy was horny.

Feder beamed at him and brought their mouths together. "I just want to know all the ways of loving men can do -- there's so much more like this than the stallion knows."

"There is. But then, the stallion doesn't have to deal with all of the drama people make." That was for damned sure. He leaned a little, closing his eyes and just humming.

"Drama?" Feder licked at his lips, slipped his tongue inside. "When you can feel like this, why have drama?"

"Because people are made that way." He opened right up, letting Feder soothe him for a while. Not thinking was a good thing.

Feder seemed content with his answer, pushing close, tongue exploring his mouth.

He just touched and felt, loving the heat of Feder's cock, the slickness of his skin. Feder had hot muscles, rippling under his skin, a lot heavier than his own lean frame, though it didn't make him look bulky.

Feder's hands slid over him, not quite mimicking his own touches. Each kiss was slow and deep, Feder's eyes holding his. Every touch told him that Feder was learning, soaking in every detail. It made him feel sexy as hell. He slid around to touch Feder's ass again, finger sliding down the crack.

Feder rippled, sides quivering.

"Shh. S'okay. I promise. I haven't led you wrong yet, have I?" He wouldn't, either. He touched the very soft skin around Feder's hole, teasing.

Feder quivered again, moaning softly. "Only when you put me in the barn."

"Hey! It was better than being a gelding." He grinned, feeling the shiver of something other than pleasure that went through Feder at that. Gently, so easy, he pushed the tip of his finger inside Feder's body.

"Oh!" Feder's eyes went wide, fingers wrapping tightly around his arms.

"Breathe, Feder. Relax some. Come on, it's good." Yeah. Good. Hot and tight as anything he'd ever touched.

Feder breathed exaggeratedly a couple of times and then leaned against him, legs spreading some.

"Good. Good." He used his free hand to stroke Feder's back, humming as he pushed his finger all the way in.

"Casey..." Feder's mouth opened on his shoulder, breath warm as the water against his skin.

"Let me in, honey. Like that." He starting sliding his finger in and out. "You're so hot. So tight. I love it."

"It's good? I'm good?" Feder's face turned back up, mouth searching for his.

"So good." He gave the kiss Feder asked for, opening him up and kissing, pushing his tongue in and out with the same rhythm as his finger.

Feder whimpered, body moving with him, slowly becoming eager. He knew it would work, knew Feder would like it. So sensual. He worked that one finger for a long while, the hot water falling around them. Then he slowly but surely added another.

Feder shivered again. "So big, Casey."

"I know, honey. I know it feels like a lot." So easy, so carefully, he moved his fingers in and out, curling them and searching... Feder suddenly gave that little scream of his, body going tight around his fingers, eyes wide with pleasure and surprise.

Hoo yeah. He'd hit the spot. Casey grinned, feeling like a million bucks. Then he hit it again. Just because he could.

Feder whimpered, mouth open, breath panting from him.

"Feels good, doesn't it, honey. Feels so good you think your head's gonna come off." He knew that feeling, could remember the first time, the way he came and came.

Feder nodded, body pushing back now, riding his fingers. Those hands still held onto him like Feder wasn't ever going to let go.

"Soon, Feder. Soon I'm gonna put my cock in you, gonna love all over you. Right now just feel how good it is." He pushed and twisted, giving Feder more sensation now, knowing he could take it.

Feder's head fell back, cry after cry pushing from his mouth.

"Come on, Feder, come for me, honey." He wanted to see it, wanted to feel it.

He pushed his fingers in hard again and Feder jerked, screaming again, heat splashing between them.

"Yeah, honey. Yeah." He nuzzled, just grooving on the waves of pleasure he felt coming off Feder.

Feder's hands relaxed, sliding around his neck again. "I've never. It. So good, Casey."

"Mmm." He kissed Feder, sweet and happy. "Yeah. You're a natural."

"A natural?" Feder was all over him, melted and boneless.

"You're good at this sex thing." He chuckled. Looked like he was good at it, too. Who knew?
"Come on, hon. Water's getting cold."

"And cold water makes the bathing not so good." Feder smiled, hands sliding on him as Feder stepped out of the shower.

"You know it." He turned off the water and caught Feder before he could wander off, grabbing a towel and rubbing him with it.

Feder watched and then returned the favor, hands lingering on Casey's body.

"Mmm. God that feels good. You about ready to go to bed?"

"Oh, yes. I like your soft place to sleep. And do other things."

"I bet. So do I." Yeah.

So they started the new ritual of tooth brushing and bathroom visits and all, finally settling into bed together.

"Will you show me more, Casey?" Feder asked him, pushing close.

"What would you like?" Man, he was feeling mellow and dozy and more than happy to let Feder take the lead.

"I would like you to tell me how to do the mouth thing."

"Mmm. I can do that." He rolled to his back, resting one hand on his belly. "You want to do it to me, yeah?"

"I could do it to myself?"

"Well, who knows. Some guys can. But I meant you didn't want me to do it to you." That was an odd thought. He didn't think he wanted to go there.

"You already did it to me, Casey. I want to make you feel good this time." Feder climbed onto him.

"You do." Hell, his cock was finally taking interest again, and that had to be some sort of a record. He grinned and rubbed up. "Kiss me."

"On the lips?" Oh, those brown eyes were just dancing.

"To begin with, yeah." He cupped Feder's ass, squeezing a little.

Feder wriggled against him, ass pushing into his hand as their lips came together. Feder's kiss was eager and wet, tongue pushing into his mouth. Casey opened up, letting Feder lead, letting him feel how heady it was to be the one making someone else squirm.

Feder sucked first on his top lip and then his bottom one, teeth nibbling, tasting him. Hell, he didn't need to show Feder anything. He really was a natural, just following his instincts.

"What next?" Feder asked, tongue touching his nose.

"How about my throat? I like it right where the pulse beats." He liked it a lot. It made him harder.

Feder's nose slid along the skin of his neck, moving slowly. Then he licked Casey's pulse point, mouth opening over it, sucking.

"Oh. Hell yes. Feder." Shit, that just felt so good. So good.

Feder's teeth scrapped across his skin, followed by his tongue. He shivered, goose bumps popping up. God. His hands moved up, burying right into Feder's hair, letting the wet strands slide through his fingers. He'd have to brush that hair soon.

Feder kept sucking and scraping and licking, pulling up a mark, he was sure.

"What next?"

"Mmm. Next go for the chest. Anywhere you can put your hands? You can put your mouth. I promise." Lord. So eager.

"Good." Feder dropped another kiss on his mouth and a lick on his pulse point and then fingers and lips chased each other across his chest, soft flicks brushing over his nipples, followed by licks and sucks.

"There. Damn, there." He arched, breath catching in his throat.

"Here?" Feder asked, mouth sliding to lick at his armpit, fingers moving to the other pit to tease.

He moaned, twisting and pushing, trying to get more. Feder had a real knack for it, that was for sure. Feder continued to tease him, nibbling at the hairy skin of his pits, at the base of his ribs, his navel. Every now and then lips or fingers would dance close to his nipples, but never across them.

"Feder. Please." He scrabbled at Feder's shoulders, trying to move that hot mouth where he needed it so bad.

"Am I doing something wrong, Casey?" Feder asked, brown eyes dancing.

"Teasing. Teasing is mean, Feder." He took the sting out of that with a laugh, pushing Feder toward his left nipple, demanding.

"Oh. Oh, I didn't know it was mean." Feder bent and bit his nipple.

"Oh! Yeah. Yeah, honey." He seemed to be stuck on yeah. But that was what he was feeling. Just hoo yeah, more of this and that and that, too.

Feder's lips wrapped around his nipple and sucked, fingers sliding again and again over the other one. "You taste good, Casey."

"You feel good." That was the biggest understatement. Feder felt incredible. Good enough for him to just push aside all of his doubts.

Feder beamed up at him and started moving downward. "What next, Caseyman?"

"Belly. Just... uhn. Just follow the trail of hair."

Feder laughed softly, blowing a raspberry against the side of his belly.

Tickled! Man that made him laugh, poking Feder's shoulder. "Smart ass."

Feder shook his head and did it again. "Not an ass! Horse!"

"Stop it." He wiggled, laughing his ass off. Damn. How could he be so horny and so amused?

"You don't want me to use my mouth on you, Casey?" Feder bent and licked where he'd blown.

"Yeah. Just not like that. That tickles too much." Stroking Feder's hair, he smiled. "Now lower."

Feder turned and nibbled at his fingers before sliding down further and settling to nuzzle his cock.

That was what he needed, what he'd been wanting. He groaned, the sound low and rough. His legs spread open, giving Feder better access.

"I like making you make those noises." Brown eyes looked up at him and Feder smiled then went back to kissing and licking his cock.

"You're gonna... oh. You're gonna get a lot of them." Especially if he kept on like that.

Feder's lips nibbled along his cock, all the way down to his balls.

"Good." His voice cracked on the word, his cock just throbbing. "So good."

He could feel Feder sniffing, exploring his balls with nose and lips and tongue. Then suddenly, Feder's mouth was on his cock, taking him in. So soft. Those lips were so soft. Shaking, he stroked Feder's hair, Feder's shoulders and back. Casey's hips rose and fell, pushing his cock in.

Feder's head bobbed, the movements jerky for a moment, and then suddenly they had a rhythm going. Casey just kept moving, finally bracing his hands on the bed so he could get better leverage. The feel off Feder's mouth just sent sensation zinging up his spine like crazy.

"Am I doing it right?" Feder asked suddenly.

"You're doing it so right I can't believe." Panting, Casey looked at Feder's swollen mouth, moaning at the sight. Fuck, he was gonna go nuts.

"Oh, good." Feder gave him one of those beaming smiles and then went back to sucking his cock.

Casey's head tipped back, mouth open as he tried to catch his breath. Feder kept sucking, working him with enthusiasm.

"Honey. Touch me. I need your hands, too. All of it. I need it all." He arched, back bowing, his whole body screaming.

Feder's fingers stuttered over his nipples and his chest, kind of distractedly. That was it. That was all he needed to set him off, and he tried to tell Feder, tried to pull him off. All Casey could do was let out a strangled shout, humping Feder's mouth as he shot.

Feder's head popped off his cock, the last of the stream hitting Feder in the face. Those brown eyes were wide with surprise.

"Feder." Clearing his throat he tried again. "Sorry, honey. I didn't mean to..."

Feder licked his lips. "You surprised me."

"I know. I was trying." Just like he was trying to talk now and just not making sense. He patted Feder clumsily.

Feder rubbed against him and settled, head on his shoulder.

"Mmm." His eyelids were so damned heavy. "So you learn anything?"

"That you are ticklish and baths are good."

"You got that right." He sighed happily, poking Feder to turn out the light. "I think you learned how to give really good head, too."

Feder poked him back, obviously not getting the message about the light, but he was beaming, too, obviously getting the message about the blow job. "I wanted to make you feel so good."

"You did. Really." He yawned hugely. "Now how about we turn out the light and get some shut eye? Tomorrow's gonna be a long day."

"It is? Are you going to show me more fun stuff?"

"I am. After we do the work." The word work ended on another yawn, his jaw popping.

"You work too hard, Casey." Feder rubbed against him and cuddled closer.

"It has to get done, honey. And I like it. Sometimes I just get tired is all." He sighed, wiggling away from Feder and turning off the light before getting glomped again.

"I will help you, Caseyman, so you are not so tired."

"Thanks, honey. You're a heck of a stallion." He kissed somewhere in the vicinity of Feder's neck.

Feder rippled against him, and he could imagine it as a horsish preen but in man's skin. "Your stallion, Casey."

"Yeah, Feder. Mine."

He had a feeling that was gonna be both a good and a bad thing.

But never boring for a minute.

Feder wandered around the kitchen as Casey cooked something called sausage and biscuits.

It smelled... good if a little strange.

Which was how Feder felt. Good, but strange.

He'd never stayed as a man this long before and he felt... twitchy, his muscles urging him to change, to stretch and run and buck and celebrate the sky and the earth and the sun.

He turned and smiled at Casey, wearing only a pair of blue jeans as he cooked. Feder wasn't wearing anything yet -- Casey had said he could leave the clothes off inside -- and his prick showed immediately one reason why he was still in man form. Casey was lovely and made him feel good, made him want to be a man for just a little longer.

Casey smiled back, flipping something in the pan. "Smells good, huh?"

"Smells... interesting. A little like burning flesh." He was trying to ignore that though.

"Well. It kinda is." Casey grinned. "But I bet you'll like it as a man. Not so much as a horse."

He nodded and wandered over to the door and then back again, circling the table.

"What's wrong, Feder?" The plates hit the table, Casey pushing what was in the pan down on them.

He shook his head and sat in the chair that was becoming 'his'.

"I have not run for two days."

"Oh. Do you want to? I... I don't mind." The "biscuits" came next, Casey pulling them out of the oven.

"I would like to run later if I could." He sniffed at the food, it made his tummy growl.

"Of course you can." Not quite meeting his eyes, Casey showed him how to put the sausage inside his biscuit.

He frowned. "Something is wrong, Casey?"

"No." Looking up, Casey nodded at his food. "Eat up. Nothing's wrong, Feder."

He smiled and waited for Casey to start eating first so he would know how to do it. Oh, hands! Wonderful! He picked up his sausage biscuit and bit into it.

He took several bites and then nodded. "It is good."

"It is. One of my favorites. Someday we'll go into town and get one from McDonalds."

"Who is McDonalds?"

Casey gave him a look, but then laughed and laughed. "Lord. I don't know if I should introduce you to the evils of fast food or not."

"Fast food? It runs from you?" The world of men was very very strange.

"No, honey. It means it gets fixed fast." Casey slapped another biscuit together.

He tilted his head. "You fix food pretty fast, is it not fast enough?"

"Uh. It's a term, is all. Here. Eat." Casey ate his, too, licking up crumbs off his fingers.

Feder laughed and ate, happily licking his plate when he was done.

"See? Good stuff. Will you need to, uh. Eat as a horse, too? Before you run?"

"I don't know. I have never stayed so long as a man."

"Oh." Tracing circles on the tablecloth, Casey shrugged. "It's still hard to believe sometimes."

"It bothers you," he said, suddenly putting it together, how Casey seemed... different whenever he talked about being the horse.

"A little. Okay, sometimes a lot." Looking guilty, Casey held out a hand, offering his touch. "I just... up until last week I would have said it was impossible."

He took Casey's hand, fingers squeezing. "I am real though."

"You are. And I'm glad you're here." The snort he got sounded almost like a horse. "And intact."

He laughed. "Oh, me, too, Caseyman. Me, too." He nodded, hand going down to stroke his cock, his balls.

"Yeah. That's been a good thing." A blush stained Casey's cheeks, but he didn't look away.

"Yes. A very good thing. A we should do it again thing," he suggested.

Laughing, Casey got up to clean the dishes. "When the work is done, Feder."

"You work too hard," he told Casey, coming up behind the man at the sink and rubbing against him.

"So you say... Feder." His Caseyman did not seem to be saying no.

He slid his hands around to feel Casey's front. His fingers played with the small nipples, tugging on them, making them pucker and harden. His cock rubbed against Casey's ass, the jeans material rough against his heat.

"Mmm." Pushing back, Casey rubbed on him, humming.

"You feel good," he noted, fingers stroking downward, sliding on Casey's belly.

"So do you. But man." Casey turned, arms sliding around him. "I got a lot to do today."

He tilted his head up to put a soft kiss on Casey's mouth. "I will help you."

"Thank you, Feder. You're a prize." Patting his rump, Casey moved past him, stretching then stopping and frowning, going to look out the window. "Damn. Who is that?"

He went with Casey, peeking around his arm. "It is a truck."

"I know that, dork. I mean. Oh. Oh, crap. It's old man Hardy. I bet he heard I had a new stallion. He's always sniffing around my stock."

"Your horses let him sniff them?" He would not let a man sniff him. Well. Unless that man was Casey.

"No. It's a figure of speech. Feder you need to be a horse. Like soon."

Feder looked around. He had just enough room, if that was what Casey wanted.

"Outside, honey. Right out the back." Casey pushed him urgently.

Feder let himself be pushed, hands moving on Casey's skin.

Once they were outside -- a back door to match the front, how wonderful -- he gave Casey a quick kiss and turned, closing his eyes. He thought about being a horse, about how it felt in his muscles and bones. A moment later and he was snorting, shaking his head and stamping on the ground. Oh yes! Now he needed to run.

"Come on. Come on, Feder. You need to be in the pasture." He had no halter or lead, so Casey pushed him a little again, toward the gate he had run into.

Feder neighed to let Casey know he understood and then he trotted on out to the gate, shaking his head at Casey. He could not open it as he was. Casey ran to open it, latching it behind him and pelting back toward the house at a run.

Feder snorted and kicked out a bit with his legs. Men were very silly sometimes. He took advantage of the opportunity he had and took off toward the other end of the pasture, running full out, giving himself a lot of room for a wide turn.

Then he headed back toward the gate, slowing as he saw Casey with a strange man. The man was pointing at him. Casey had put a shirt on, which was sad because he liked Casey's chest. Casey was also shaking his head very hard.

He trotted up to the gate, snorting and neighing, saying hello to Casey and eyeing the stranger warily.

Casey walked over to pat his nose, fingers stroking carefully on the soft skin. "Sorry, Tom. He's not for sale."

His nostrils flared and he tossed his head, stamping his feet for emphasis. No, he was *not* for sale.

"But he's not really what you need, Casey." The man had a rough voice. Rough like sand. "You need something more of a mustang. This guy is a domestic breed of some sort."

Domestic breed?

Him?

Feder snorted again and bucked at the fence and took off at top speed. He did not like this man that came to see Casey. Not at all.

He ran and ran and ran and when he finally began to feel it in his muscles, he slowly made his way back toward the gate, hoping the stranger with the rough voice was gone. He wasn't. But Casey was trying to make him go.

"Tom, look, I'm glad you dropped by, but I gotta get to the chores. I've been lazy today, was just finishing up breakfast when you came."

He neighed. Go away, bad man. Go away.

Casey grinned, scratching his nose to cover it so the man would not see, he thought. "Anyhoo, Tom. See you later, okay?" And finally Casey was leading the man back to his truck, making him leave.

Feder ran along the fence line, back and forth, snorting and bucking now and then. Come on, come on. He wanted to be with Casey.

The truck rattled away, out of sight over the hill, and Casey came back to him, leaning on the gate. He moved right over to Casey and started nosing the man's neck, tasting the salt on Casey's skin.

"You're something else, Feder." Casey scratched his neck, right under the mane, right where it felt so good.

He nodded his head and snorted. Of course he was. He moved from nibbling the salt from Casey's skin to searching for a carrot or apple.

"Silly. I didn't bring anything. If you want I can go get some treats before I go let the girls out."

He shook his head and kicked at the gate, wanting Casey to come into the field with him. They could run together.

"I gotta get the work done, Feder. You run a bit." The Caseyman looked sad, but did not stay, turning to walk back to the house.

He hit at the gate with his feet again. He could help!

Of course he could get out himself if he changed, so he did. With his human hands, he could undo the gate and let himself out and chase Casey down so he could help.

He tried not to be too sad that Casey liked him as a man more than as a horse.

Casey watched Feder work at pulling hay down to put in the clean stalls. Bless his heart, he was working his fine ass off for Casey. It kinda made him feel bad, because he knew Feder didn't really get the idea of work. He was just doing it to help Casey, because he liked to please.

Still. The mares were out. The stalls were clean. He didn't need to put pellets out for the cattle today. What he really needed to do was ride fence.

"Feder? Honey, I think we're done. You wanna do something fun?" Hell, he figured he could ride Chance or Bess and Feder could come along as a horse.

Feder wiped his hands and came over, all but bouncing. "Fun? I like fun with Casey."

He laughed. "Not quite that kind of fun. I still have a lot to do. But I need to ride fence. I thought you might like to come along, get to spend some time as a stallion."

"Why would you want to ride the fence? Would it not make more sense to ride a horse? Fences don't move."

Well shoot. He stared a minute before just hooting. "No, honey. I have to ride along the side of the fence and make sure there's no breaks in it. We call that riding fence."

Feder stuck his tongue out. "I would call that riding beside the fence." Then Feder grew quiet and looked at him, bit his lip. "Would you like to ride me, Casey?"

Would he? That might be... "I don't want you to think you have to Feder."

"If you don't want to that's fine, Casey. I know you are uncomfortable with me as the stallion." Those brown eyes wouldn't quite look at him.

He sighed. "Come on up to the house. Let's take a little break and get some iced tea." They needed to talk about this.

"Iced tea? Is it like apples or eggs? Or maybe meat?" Feder followed along beside him.

"Well, it's a drink. But we could have some lunch, too. Before we set out."

"Okay."

As soon as they got inside, Feder shed his overalls, looking happier now that he was naked again.

Shaking his head and grinning, Casey went and got tea, pouring them both a glass before getting out the fixings for sandwiches.

"It's not that I don't like you as a horse, Feder. I think you're special, you know that. I brought you home with me as a horse, didn't I?"

Feder sat and nodded, watching his hands work. "But now that you know I'm a man, too, it bothers you when I am the horse."

"Well, I guess it's kinda weird. Not bad. Just... it's easier to talk to you like this." He couldn't help it. It was just fucking strange. To think that he was doing it with a horse. Even kinda.

Feder nodded again. "Well, yes, I cannot talk as a horse."

"And it's... well. A lot of folks would think it's wrong, even if you're a man when we. You know." He blushed, his cheeks heating until they hurt.

Feder tilted his head, a small frown on his face. "No, I do not know, Caseyman. I do not understand."

"Well. You're a horse part of the time, Feder. And most men are raised not to, uh. Play the way we do with other men, let alone horses. It's just hard to put that aside." Not that he didn't want to. But sometimes it just got to him.

"It seems very silly, Casey. And it would be awkward, to love as one man and one horse, but I don't understand why it is so wrong with two men. Do we not fit perfectly together?"

"We do." Well, damn. He didn't think Feder would ever understand. "Never mind. So, do you want to go out with me today?"

"Of course. I love being with you, Casey." Feder reached out and touched his hand, stroking for a moment. "But I do not wish to make you uncomfortable."

"I know." He had to smile, because he knew that, deep down. Poor Feder. He wasn't getting a prize with Casey, for sure. "It's not your fault."

Feder petted his hand again and then began to eat. "So do you wish to ride me?" Feder asked after his first bite.

"If you want to. I don't want to make *you* uncomfortable, honey. Of course, I could ride you bareback, 'cause you'd not buck me off." It was still weird to even think on, but not distasteful or anything.

"Bareback? Oh! You mean without a saddle." Feder nodded enthusiastically. "I would not allow you to put a saddle on me, Casey. It would be a prison."

"Yeah? I always thought it was easier on the horse. Sure is easier on my ass." He grinned, biting into the sandwich.

Feder grinned back at him. "I will enjoy having your ass rubbing on me, Casey."

Oh, now see? That was what made it weird. He shifted a little, cheeks hot again. "Uh. Yeah."

Feder's smile faded. "It will not make you happy, too?"

"Oh, honey." He shoved his sandwich aside and took Feder's hand. "It's not supposed to make me happy that way. I mean, I know it's you, but it's not you. If that makes any sense."

Feder shook his head, but didn't pull his hand away, which Casey had to take as a good sign. "I am a beautiful stallion, Caseyman. And it is me, it is. I am not mindless when I am the horse, I am... me."

"I know. I mean, I knew that when you were running at me that second day I think. But I shouldn't *want* you when you're a horse." He stroked Feder's fingers, one after the other. "It's not natural."

"No, that is where you are wrong. Are you not a part of nature? Am I not? The feelings come from inside you and me -- so they are natural."

Well, if you put it like that... he was still going crazy. But he really didn't want to argue about it. He'd deal with it or not. Hell, he might end up in the booby hatch, but it would be worth it. "All right then. Let's finish lunch. 'Cause Lord knows you've seen what happens when I don't eat." He popped his pill with his tea, drinking deep.

Feder finished his sandwich and picked up his tea, sniffing it suspiciously before taking a sip.

Whereupon he made a face and put the glass down. "Could I have some water, Caseyman?"

"Sure. You know how to get it from the sink now, right?" He'd shown Feder that the first night.

Feder nodded. "What should I do with this... this."

"Oh, give it to me. I'll drink it." He grinned, grabbing the glass and pulling it over. "You can get a new cup."

"Okay. But I am only washing one cup, Caseymen." Grinning, Feder turned on the water and then his face lit up further and he bent, drinking straight from the faucet. "Now I do not have to clean any cups!"

Oh, Lord. He held back his laughter, though, figuring it would just hurt Feder's feelings. "Yeah. But you can't do that when you're not at home, okay?"

Feder rolled his eyes. "So many things I cannot do when we're not at home. Why does anyone leave their home?"

"Because we have to?" How could he explain human life? It was too much all of a sudden. "Come on, honey. We need to get crackin'."

"Cracking?"

"It means moving. Working." Dishes in the sink, light turned off. He got a big bottle of water and a couple of snacks. "Need to get out and check those fences."

"Okay, lets crack." Feder's hip bumped against his and then he put his overalls back on and headed out.

He grabbed the overall straps. "Honey, if you're going to be a horse you won't need these."

Feder giggled. "You are right, Casey. They would not fit."

"Nope. So take 'em off before you do your thing." He went on out, waiting for Feder to decide what to do.

Feder came out a moment later, naked. "Do you wish to turn away while I change?"

"No." That didn't bother him. That wasn't it at all. "I don't mind, honey."

Feder leaned up to press a soft kiss on his lips and then stood back, giving himself plenty of room.

Feder seemed to stretch as he watched, face elongating, torso and arms thrown forward and suddenly there was a horse in front of him. It had happened so fast. He wondered if it hurt. Casey knew it took a lot more out of the man than it did the horse, as Feder was always a little shaky when he changed to two legs. He patted Feder's neck.

"You still want me to ride you, honey?"

Feder nodded his head, foot stamping with impatience.

"Well come on over here next to the fence, then." He couldn't get on bareback as easily as he did on a saddle mount. He slung the fancy little sack with the water and snacks in it over his back and resettled his hat, climbing up on the bottom rung of the fence so he could slip right onto Feder's back.

Feder came up and held still for him, mouth reaching over to nuzzle the side of his face briefly.

He grinned, hauling himself up on Feder's back and getting his balance, taking a moment to figure out the muscles and bones and where his butt should go so it didn't hurt. Yeah. Then he grabbed Feder's mane and sort of tugged, stopping just short of digging his heels in like he normally would.

"That way, honey."

Feder's head bobbed and off they went at a gentle trot.

Not bad. Feder had a nice rolling gait, just like a rocking chair. That was pretty damned rare, maybe one in five ponies had it. Maybe. He settled in, just guiding Feder nice and easy along the fence, letting the sun and motion lull him.

Every now and then Feder would give a little hopskip, his way of saying he was happy, Casey guessed. He hoped, anyway. He patted Feder's neck, sitting right and tight up on top of that rangy body. Good thing he felt like he could do this all day.

Feder didn't seem at all bothered by his weight and they made their way around the fields, riding the fence in the bright afternoon sun.

"Hold up, Feder." He didn't have his damned tools with him, because he usually put those in his saddle bags, but he had his gloves, so he could pull that loose wire up until he could get his pliers and hammer.

Feder stopped, head turning back, a soft snort sounding.

"I need to get down a minute." Sliding right off, he landed soft, taking a drink of water before grabbing the barbed wire and yanking it. It proved stubborn and Feder's head nudged his shoulder, a neigh sounding.

"Yeah. I need my wire bender and my pliers." He smiled, patting some more.

Feder's mouth worked its way carefully around a section and he yanked, pulling the wire right up.

Damn. "Watch those barbs, honey." He wrapped the wire around the old hook. It would still need to be replaced, but it would hold for days this way.

Feder let it go and shook his head, snorting, coming in to nuzzle him again.

"Yeah. I bet that tastes bad." He grinned, hopping back up on Feder's back again. "Come on, this way."

Feder followed his direction, the big body moving rhythmically beneath him.

They rode for a long time, and it was nice, a little warmer than usual without his saddle. Maybe a little sexy, but he tamped right down on that. It wasn't easy though, not with the sun beating down and making him easy in his bones, not with the way Feder seemed to sway and roll beneath him, almost like the stallion was moving like that on purpose to rub up against him.

His breath caught and he shifted a little, trying to ease the pressure. He just couldn't do that. Could he? Of course Feder seemed to think he could, the rolling seeming to increase, soft whinnies sounding.

"Shh. Hush, you. We still have a lot of fence to ride, Feder." He couldn't do that.

Feder pranced for a few steps, head tossing.

He had to squeeze with his legs to stay on and keep his balance, and damned if that didn't rub the seam of his jeans against his cock, making him moan a little. "Feder."

Feder's head tossed, a laughing neigh sounding.

"Oh, that's not fair." Darn it. He shifted again, trying to ease the ache.

Feder kept moving, his body rubbing against the horse. He was gonna go crazy. Just melt. Damn it anyway. He was gonna freak out about it later, too.

Feder's feet picked up the pace, the rubbing getting faster, more intense.

Damn. Oh, damn. Sweat beaded and ran on his face. "Feder, I don't wanna ride home with my pants all wet."

Feder neighed and kept trotting along, picking up his legs.

No no. No. He pulled at Feder's mane, trying to get him to stop. Casey just figured he was gonna bust, and he wanted solid ground under him. He gave a particularly sharp tug and Feder stopped, head tossing, snorting.

Casey slid to the ground, his legs trying to give, and tore his jeans open. He pulled his cock out and leaned against the nearest fence post, stroking like crazy. Feder turned his head, velvety lips nibbling at his hand, touching his cock.

He jumped about a foot, hands covering his crotch. "Feder, no! That's just... no."

Feder's head butted him and he got what he thought was likely a reproachful look. Another hit to his shoulder and Feder turned, hooves thundering as he took off across the field.

"Great. Leave me here..." Sighing, he looked down at his deflated cock. "With nothing to do."

Getting his boots under him, Casey stood up, tucking his cock away and finding his hat, jamming it back on his head. He walked along the fence line, scanning it for breaks and trying not to think. He didn't figure that thinking was his strong point.

He'd been walking about a half hour when Feder came trotting back up, head low.

Hands in his pockets and shoulders hunched, he glanced over, trying not to smile. "Well. Do you feel better?"

Feder snorted and nudged his shoulder with his long nose.

Yeah, yeah. He patted Feder's muzzle. "I'm sorry, honey. I just kinda freaked out, okay?"

Feder's lips nibbled on his fingers, those big brown eyes looking at him.

"I know. You don't get it. I wish I could explain in. Am I gonna have to walk home?"

Feder shook his head and went to the fence, stopping next to it.

"Cool." He hopped up on the fence and got on Feder's back, hands digging into Feder's mane. "It's getting late. We ought to head on home."

Feder neighed and his head nodded and he took off like a shot, galloping hard. Shit! Casey almost went ass over teakettle, losing his purchase and clinging. His ass bounced, a good six inches of daylight between it and Feder's back. He mighta squeaked.

Feder made a noise that he swore was laughter.

Oh, yeah, that was going to be funny when he busted his tailbone or his back. He held on for dear life, the breath just whooshing out of him. It was way harder without the saddle. Feder slowed as they came to the first gate, prancing around a bit before stopping to let him lean down and open the gate.

"Thanks, honey." He patted, his ass just aching as he leaned down and opened it up, so tired he was hurting.

Feder took the rest of the return trip at a more sedate rate, and finally they were back at the fence behind the house.

"Oh. Home." He slid down, all of the muscles he wasn't used to using protesting. "I'll walk in from here, honey."

Feder nodded and fell in behind him as he started walking.

Moments later, Feder the man caught up to him, arm going around his waist. "What is wrong, Casey?"

"I'm kinda sore." He grinned, perking up now that he had someone who could answer him back. Sliding an arm around Feder in return, he headed up to the house. They'd need overalls if Feder was gonna help him put the girls up and all.

"I thought you rode a lot?"

"Not bareback. It uses all different muscles." Water, snack. Yeah. He peered in the freezer, trying to think what to make for supper.

"But you liked it," Feder told him, coming to peer over his shoulder into the freezer.

"Well, sure I did. But I was kinda tired on the way home." How was he supposed to explain? "You'd best get your overalls on."

"Okay, Casey." Feder pressed close for a moment, a kiss landing somewhere near his ear.

"Mmm. That's nice, honey." It was. Much better than... horse parts. Lord. He blushed. "Come on. I'll get this chicken thawing in the sink and we can go do the nightly chores and then we can play some."

Feder's eyes lit up. "Oh, I like playing, Caseyman."

"Yeah." He knew that for sure. Grinning, he kissed Feder's nose. "Come on. Work first."

Feder sighed. "Always work first."

"That's what it takes to run a place like this, honey." Work and sweat and more time than he'd been putting in of late.

"You need to have more fun," Feder insisted, pulling on his overalls. "And wear less clothes."

"After I cook supper? I promise I'll get naked with you." Out the door and off to do chores, his bruises pulling as he fed and stabled and watered and brushed.

Feder worked with him, only getting distracted a few times, stopping to play with the mares and again to climb up to the loft just to see what was up there.

Casey just smiled and shook his head. Feder really could be a big help, so how could he get mad? He just had to chuckle. The work seemed to take forever tonight, though, so he was damned happy when it was done.

"Ready to go do supper?"

"I would rather do you first, Casey." And considering the way Feder's overalls were tenting around his crotch, Feder wasn't lying.

"Uh." His ears went hot. "Here? In front of the mares?"

"You think they will get jealous?"

"I think I would feel really weird, Feder." This whole thing was just gonna make him crazy.

"We can go in first if you like, Caseyman. But you should know that I want you."

"I know." He grabbed Feder's hand, pulling him out of the barn. "I know, honey. I want you, too."

Feder trotted along beside him, almost skipping. "I like the nights the best."

He turned, grabbing Feder and kissing him, rewarding him for working so hard. Feder had the softest lips he'd ever kissed. "I like them, too, honey. I do."

Feder beamed at him and took another kiss, tongue pushing into his mouth. It felt odd being out in the open, the late day sun still beating down hot and good on his back, the bare skin of Feder's arms slick with sweat under his fingers.

Feder's arms wrapped around his neck, the muscled body pushing against him, rubbing.

"Mmm." Yeah. Okay, so it would be something he would have never thought of before now. Before Feder. But suddenly he wanted to do it right there, sore ass and bright light and all. Right in the dust and the grass.

Feder was certainly game, the kiss going deep and flowing into another just as deep and then into another, sweet whimpers pushing into him. He cupped Feder's ass, toes curling in his boots as he rubbed right back. He danced them over to the fence so he could lean, stroking the back of Feder's neck.

Feder pressed him into the fence, breaking the kiss to look up at him. "Out here? Really?" Oh, those brown eyes could be bright.

"Yeah. Yeah, honey. Out here." In front of God and well... not everybody. Lord he hoped there was no one for miles and miles. His cock pressed against his jeans and all he could see was Feder, that happy smile just filling his line of sight.

Feder's fingers started working on his clothes, fumbling with his buttons and tearing at the material.

"Hey now. I don't have too many clothes." He helped, getting his shirt undone and flinging it over the fence.

Feder laughed, the sound almost a neigh, fingers sliding on his skin, mouth latching onto the skin of his shoulder. Gasping, he rocked back, the rough wooden slat of the fence threatening to leave splinters. He scrabbled at the little button latch thingies on Feder's overalls, wanting more of that skin. More. Now.

Feder wasn't helping, hands and mouth moving on his body, eager and wanton. Finally he struggled out of his jeans and got Feder out of those overalls, moaning as they slid together. Feder humped against him, moaning and whimpering, touching him all over.

"Slow down, honey." God, Feder's muscles just shivered under his skin and Casey touched them all, every one he could reach. Feder had a nice deep chest and good legs as a stallion. As a man? He was stunning.

"I need, Casey. I need you." Feder's mouth met his again.

"I know. I know. But we can do stuff." Stuff besides rubbing off. If they just slowed down...

"Okay, Casey. Show me what you want to do." Mind you, Feder was still rubbing against him.

"I want you to do me, Feder. Want you in me." That he could do. Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Feder nodded. "Yes, Casey. I like that. A lot."

"I know. Me, too." The understatement of the century. "So. You'll have to get me ready without the slick stuff, Feder."

Feder frowned for a moment and then his face lit up. "My tongue!"

"Smart boy. Come on, honey. Come and get me." He kissed Feder's cheek before turning, presenting his ass.

Feder's teeth closed over the skin of one ass-cheek, biting, nipping. Then Feder focused, tongue dragging along his crack.

"Oh. Fuck." That just felt like heaven. Or Pure D sin. There wasn't anything else that felt like that. Nothing.

Feder took to the task with enthusiasm, licking and stabbing at his hole. He squirmed and moaned and pushed back, even when Feder got a little rough. Enthusiasm was a good thing. Uhn. It was even better when Feder pushed a finger in. Yeah.

That finger became two, stretching, spreading him.

"Casey? Now?"

"Uh huh. Please, Feder. Need." He needed something bigger, hotter. More.

"Yes." Feder stood and pushed into him, chest hot against his back.

Casey pushed back, just loving how Feder felt against him. Some things might just be wrong. This wasn't one of them.

"Oh, Casey." Feder's words were little more than a breath against his spine, the slim hips pushing that thick cock into him in a rhythm as old as time that had him just panting.

"Yes." That felt good. Right. Hot as Hell. Casey met Feder's rhythm, pushing back with his hips, loving it.

Feder's strong fingers slid over his sides, explored his belly and his chest. His nipples were found and rubbed, pinched. Gasping, he rode back and forth, trying not to beg. God. Bracing against the fence held him up, helped him get purchase so he could reach for his own cock.

One of Feder's hands met his there, exploring while he jacked himself off.

"Uhn. Feder. Good." His skin was gonna burn right off. He just knew it. God, he was hot.

"Yes, Casey. Yes." Feder moved faster, harder, free hand wrapping around his hips and holding on as the thrusts grew wild.

Panting, sweat rolling, he moved back, grunting. Rutting. Yeah, that was what it was. Rutting. He moved, pushing his cock into their joined hands. The sounds coming from Feder were wild, feral, not quite the sounds a stallion would make.

"Come on, Feder. Come on. I need it. I don't think I can wait..."

"Harder?" Feder asked, grunting. And harder it became, damn near sending him crashing into the fence, but it was good too and he could feel Feder's cock swelling and then he was filled with heat deep inside him.

His legs shook, his belly and balls going so tight before he shot, his vision blacking out as he tried to breathe. Feder's arms held him up, held him close to that hot body as he damned near passed out.

His hands scrabbled uselessly at the fence rail, his chest heaving. "Feder..."

A sloppy, wet kiss slid over his spine. "It is good, Casey?"

"Very... but I need. Honey, I don't think I can stand up." He was just swimmy-headed as all get out. In a good way.

Feder slid out of him, and come dripped down the inside of his thighs, but his lover grabbed him around the waist and supported him. "To the house?"

"Yeah. I just need to lie down a little..." Blinking against the setting sun and the sting of sweat in his eyes, Casey straightened, let Feder manhandle him on in.

"And food? The Caseyman has to eat a lot. See? I remember."

It was cooler inside, out of the sun, and Feder put him in a chair and went to the fridge, opening it and pulling out juice, handing the carton to him.

Casey sucked down a good third of it, just moaning. When it tasted that good... He grinned up at Feder, stroking his free hand down Feder's thigh. "You're good to me, honey."

Feder nodded happily and petted his cheek. "Food? Apples? Oats?"

"Oh. An apple sounds good. Then I'll get up and make the chicken." He was naked. Well, Hell.

"Okay."

Feder put the juice back in the fridge and bent to pull the apples out of the bottom crisper, affording him an excellent view of that lovely ass. He chuckled, fighting the urge to pat it like a horse. Even though Feder was one. Just not right now.

Feder popped back up, a pair of apples in his hand. One was given to him, the other happily munched as Feder sat with him. "All the work is done for the day, Casey?"

"Pretty much, yeah." If it wasn't it would get done tomorrow. He was past thinking for today.

Feder beamed. "Good."

His hand was taken, held, Feder eating his apple quickly.

"Yeah. You like it when the work is over, huh?" Casey liked the work. Liked the routine.

Feder nodded eagerly. "I like touching with you, Casey. Playing."

"I know, honey. I know." Grinning, he got up and got the chicken out, fixin' to coat it with corn flakes and bake it. Though he might oughta put some pants on.

Feder derailed that thought though, coming up behind him and rubbing, arms around his waist. "Will there be time for more fun while this gets hot?"

"Uh. No?" He had no idea how long it would take. He couldn't think.

"No? Are you sure, Caseyman?" Feder's fingers slid over his belly and down to stroke his cock.

"I don't... Feder, I don't want to waste the food."

Lord.

Feder stepped away. "I am sorry."

Casey hung his head, arms straight against the counter. "Oh, honey. You don't have to apologize. I just get overwhelmed."

"I should go back to the field maybe? Let the overwhelmed go away?"

He shook his head, turning to wrap his arms around Feder. "I don't know honey. I don't know what to do."

Feder cuddled against him, hands petting him. "I have made you unhappy."

"You make me happy, too. I'm just confused." Really gut-churning confused.

Feder stood with him, holding him, chin on his shoulder, those big brown eyes looking sadly at him.

Stroking the small of Feder's back, he explained. "It's like you. You like the nights, but the chores make you unhappy.

"You work too hard, Casey."

"I like the work." It made him feel good. Accomplished. His place, his hard work and sweat.

"But you like the not work, too, right? And now it's time for not work?"

"Yes. It's time for the not work. But we need to have supper. Maybe sit a bit. Okay?" Maybe have a beer. He hadn't done that in what seemed like ages.

"Okay. Whatever you want, Casey." Feder gave him a little kiss and went to sit at the table.

A beer. That was grain, right? He got two out of the fridge, popping the top for Feder. "Here. Try one."

Feder sniffed at it. "It smells like it has gone bad, Casey."

"Just try it, Feder. Trust me." He grinned, waiting to see what Feder thought.

Feder took a cautious sip, his nose wrinkling. Then he took another sip. "It is surprisingly tasty."

"It is. It's fermented grain." Now that Feder liked it he could explain. "With other stuff."

"That is a strange thing to do to grain, but it tastes nice."

"Just wait. It feels good, too." He grinned, sipping his own. Yeah. Beer good.

"Feels good? Are you okay, Caseyman?"

"Of course I am." He was. Just sitting, relaxing. It was good. He sipped some more beer.

Feder watched him for a moment and then shrugged, drinking more of his beer.

After a few more sips, Feder sat up straight and looked at him. "It is making my belly warm!"

"It'll make your skin tingle, too. In your face." Lord. That was cute. Casey chuckled, getting up to get them some peanuts. "Eat something, honey."

"I had the apple," Feder reminded him, sniffing carefully at the peanuts and then munching on them. "Oh, salty."

"Mmmhmm. And you need more in you than an apple or you'll get wasted."

"Wasted?"

"It's a figure of speech. It means drunk... uh. Like eating too many apples off the ground." Or was that colic with horses?

Feder giggled. "That does not sound like fun, this wasted."

"Oh, it's amusing honey." Real amusing if done right. "But I'm not sure it's for you."

"Is it like work?" Feder asked, smiling broadly, if a touch lopsidedly.

"No. It's like playing, but you're kinda not aware of your own strength sometimes..." Yeah, if Feder got out of control. Damn.

Feder tilted his head. "Maybe this is one of those strange human things I do not understand?"

"I think it is, honey." He'd leave it at that and drink his beer.

Feder finished his beer and blinked slowly. "It is making me very warm, Caseyman."

"Yeah, it'll do that." He chuckled a little at Feder's woozy look. Oh, he was a cheap date.

Feder hiccupped, eyes going wide and he started to giggle again.

"Yeah. I think that's enough." That was just the cutest thing ever. Lord Lord. Casey finished off his beer, too, tossing the empty. Ah. Yeah.

Feder watched and then took his empty and tossed it into the trash can, giggling again as he missed the garbage. "Everything feels strange."

"Strange how, honey?" He hoped like hell that didn't mean pukey strange.

"Like... like if I run too far and everything is swimmy."

"Oh. Come on, honey. We'll sit on the couch." He didn't want poor Feder getting sick as a dog. No sir. He got up and held down a hand, hoisting Feder up slowly.

Feder leaned against him, giggling slightly. "Oh, you're warm, Caseyman."

"Uh huh. So are you." Cheeks all flushed, Feder wandered on him all the way to the couch, finally plopping down and cuddling with him.

"So it is okay if we take a break, Casey? While your chicken cooks?" Feder didn't wait for an answer, half climbing into his lap and kissing him enthusiastically.

Since the chicken was still sitting in the pan on top of the stove he said a mental fuck it and kissed right back, tasting hops and yeast. Mmm.

Feder's hands fumbled along his body, warm and wet and eager. He grinned into the kiss, cupping Feder's butt and pulling them together. They started rocking, Feder making happy little noises that made him laugh even as they turned him on.

"It feels like it does when I ride you," Feder told him.

"Uh huh." He rubbed up, just grinning. So he made Feder swimmy headed, huh? Cool.

Feder ground down against him, moving faster, mouth finding one of his nipples and nibbling.

Uhn. Fuck he was sensitive. "Yeah, Feder. Oh, honey. Yeah."

Feder hummed, sucking now, tugging his nipple between hot lips, body still moving with his, rocking, sliding them together. He just loved it, wanted more. He spread his legs, spreading Feder's as well, reaching for the long cock poking his belly.

Feder shuddered, bit down on his nipple.

"Oh! Fuck..." He just shook, his cock throbbing, his hand tightening down. "Gonna come."

"Good. Good." Feder pushed against him, big brown eyes looking up at him.

"It is. Come on, honey." He pulled harder, his balls like rocks, his cock so hard a cat couldn't scratch it. He needed Feder to come. Bad.

"Yes, Casey." Feder nodded and shuddered, coming all over his hand and belly.

Shit, yeah. He came like a ton of bricks, his hips just snapping as he hollered, voice gone hoarse.

Feder moaned and cuddled against him, rubbing slowly.

"Mmm. Better than chicken." Even if his stomach was growling. Maybe a peanut butter sandwich.

Feder laughed. "See!"

"I still need food, honey. The chicken won't be safe now. How about a sandwich?" Lord, all he did was eat and fuck. The thought made him grin.

"Not safe? Isn't it dead?"

"If it's not cooked right away it might get germs." No way was he going to explain salmonella to Feder. "It's icky."

"Okay, Casey. I will eat whatever you eat. Do you put apples in these sandwiches?"

"We can if you want." Peanut butter and apples were good. Or honey. Ooh. Honey.

Feder beamed and kissed him, bouncing up off his lap. Intriguing jiggle there. Casey got up and headed back to the kitchen. He'd slice an apple for the peanut butter.

And then maybe they'd do the other thing again.

Might as well not break a good pattern when you had one going.

Feder did the dishes, trying very hard not to slam them into the drying rack.

Stupid chores.

Every day it was the same thing. Day after day for at least fourteen days!

Wake up early, eat, and then work. And work and work and work. Casey never stopped.

It was crazy. And boring. And there was never any time to run, to laugh and have fun. Never until after the supper dishes were done.

"There," he said as he tossed the forks in the rack. "It is all finished, Caseyman. Can we go have fun now?"

"Huh?" Casey looked up, fingers hovering over the little machine that added up numbers. "I'm almost done, honey."

Feder went and draped himself over Casey's back. "You are wearing too many clothes." He still couldn't figure out why Casey liked his clothes so much.

"If I took them all off I'd never get work done." Casey grinned over his shoulder at him. "Just gimme five more minutes and I'll get naked. Promise."

He sighed and pouted. There was always something. Feder just didn't understand why Casey didn't stop to run, stop and have fun.

He went to the fridge and bent to get a couple of apples.

"Mmm. Pretty. Okay, honey. I'm done." The chair scraped the floor behind him, the sound of cloth hitting the floor loud.

He popped back up, apples forgotten. "Time to play, Casey?"

"Yeah." Oh, yes. The shirt had gone and the pants were half down, Casey bending to pull at his boots. Definitely time to play.

He went over to Casey, rubbing against him.

"You work too hard." Feder said that a lot.

"I like what I do." He felt more than heard Casey sigh. Casey said that a lot, too. "Come on, honey. Let's go to bed."

"Okay, Casey." He liked the going to bed parts best. The bed was soft and comfy, warm and skin on skin with Casey was so good.

They tumbled on it together, the soft giving under them, cushioning them. Casey wrapped around him, kissing him easily, hands rough on his skin. He opened his mouth, tongue sliding against Casey's, his own hands finding all that warm skin.

"Mmm." He liked how Casey made good food noises when they kissed. It was also good how Casey's cock rubbed his. He rubbed Casey's head, the short hair sliding through his fingers.

Casey hummed, nuzzling him. "I want to do you, Feder."

Feder nodded and rubbed. "I want to do you, too, Casey."

"Uh huh. But I mean I want to have you, Feder. What do you call it? Mount you." Casey smiled at him, eyes so dark.

"Oh." He thought about it for a moment -- it made sense, Casey was a male, a stallion like him, he would want to mount his lover. And the fingers in the shower that time had been good.

"Okay, Caseyman."

"Cool." Casey kissed him hard, rolling them on their sides so they could touch and rub, one arm heavy across him as Casey reached for the little tube on the table next to the bed.

He concentrated on the kissing and touching because they felt good and were things he liked. Casey's lips were swollen under his, and the hands that touched him were hot and eager. He felt the sting of Casey's teeth just as Casey touched his rump, slipping into his crease with one finger.

The teeth distracted him, kept him from tensing up. It was different like this, lying down instead of standing together in the shower.

"Mmm. Yeah. Hot, Feder." The fingers against him were slick. He hadn't even noticed Casey opening the smooth cream, but he knew how it felt on fingers, and now on his other skin. Casey pushed one finger harder against him, circling.

His body tightened, automatically rejecting the touch, the coming invasion.

"Shhh. Hey, it's okay." That voice soothed him. It always did when Casey crooned like that. Made it easier to let Casey touch him.

Sort of.

He closed his eyes and nuzzled into Casey's neck, breathing in the familiar, warm scent of the man, let that voice wash over him, calm him. He pushed against Casey, moaning.

"That's better. Feels good, huh?" Pushing harder, Casey put one finger inside him.

He kept his head buried in Casey's neck, sort of nodded. It wasn't bad. Really. It felt good like it had in the shower. Casey panted against his cheek, hips moving already like they were mounted, cock hard against him. One finger pulled out, and two pushed in.

The stretch scared him a little and he bucked a bit, gasping as his cock rubbed against Casey's. Oh, oh, yes, this was good. He pushed his cock against Casey's again.

"Hot. Fucking hot." Those fingers moved in him, pushing and pressing, finding that certain spot and curling against it.

His whole body lit up and he screamed. His eyes met Casey's, wide and surprised. Had it been that good the other time? He couldn't remember.

"Hoo yeah. That feels amazing, huh?" He knew Casey knew what he was doing, because that smile was wide and happy. Naughty.

He laughed softly, relieved that it was so good, that he was enjoying this now. It was good, he was going to like this. Casey made everything so good.

Casey took a long time, working him, preparing him, but finally Casey rolled him on his back and pushed his legs wide, fingers slipping free. He saw Casey working slick stuff against his cock, getting it ready, too. He licked his lips, watching every movement, trying not to tense back up again.

Casey wanted this and so far, it had been good. Very good. Surely Casey's cock would feel good, just like his fingers. He touched Casey's cheek wanting to see those eyes.

"You okay?" Pausing, Casey kissed his fingers, staring at him. "It'll be good, honey."

"Okay." He nodded, stroking Casey's face. "Okay."

"Mmmhmm." He got a smile, this one sweet, before Casey moved between his legs, the wet head of Casey's thick cock pushing and poking.

He swallowed, shifted, legs closing a little.

"Feder?" Now Casey frowned. He did not look angry. Just... worried.

"Are you sure, Casey?" he asked.

"Sure what? I want you, honey." There it was again, the rub, as Casey stroked his thighs, trying to relax him.

"Okay." He nodded again. This was important to Casey and Casey was a fine stallion, for a man. He remembered how good Casey's fingers had felt, especially across that place inside him. He remembered how he'd come in the shower with those fingers. That felt like a very long time ago.

Casey kissed his lips, soft and sweet, petting his belly and chest. Then Casey's hips moved again, pressing forward, the very head of his cock inside.

Casey was inside him. Another stallion was mounting him. And he was allowing it. Enjoying it?

He whimpered and twisted, breath suddenly tight in his chest. He was a stallion, how could he let another mount him? Wrong, it was wrong. He couldn't.

He pushed at Casey, whimpering again. He couldn't! Then he bucked. "No! No!"

"Whoa. Crap." Pulling back, Casey let go of him, kneeling back between his thighs. "It's okay, honey. It's okay. I'm sorry."

He sat up and scrambled to the top of the bed, sitting with his back to the wall, his legs closed, crossed.

He shook his head. "I cannot, Casey. I cannot let another stallion mount me."

"Okay. Okay. It's okay." Casey stroked him like he was the horse, not the man, hand moving rhythmically on his stomach. "It's okay."

He pushed into the touch, the sound of Casey's voice so soothing. "I am sorry, Caseyman."

"Hush now. It's all right." Moving off to his side, Casey cuddled against him, still petting and stroking. "It's just fine, honey. It is."

He leaned against Casey, looking up into his eyes. "You aren't mad?"

"No." No, he could see much in those pretty eyes. Worry. Affection. Maybe hurt. But not anger. "No, Feder, I ain't mad. If you can't, you can't."

"I would like to -- for you, but I cannot." He was sad that he had made Casey hurt. He pressed close. "I can still make you feel good, Casey."

"That's... no, it's all right, honey. Let's just snuggle some, okay?" Yes, Casey was a good snuggler.

"If you are sure." He leaned up to give Casey a kiss and cuddled in.

"I am. Don't even worry on it." Slow but sure, Casey relaxed against him, hand still moving slowly on his skin.

He closed his eyes and let Casey's touches and smells relax him. He enjoyed the Caseyman so much, maybe they could try again later... The thought of Casey's cock inside him brought such panic that he froze, not even able to breathe for a moment.

No, he did not have to, Casey had said so, had said he didn't mind.

Feder relaxed again.

"You okay now, honey? Can you sleep?"

Feder nodded. Yes. Casey made it easy to be all right. "You are okay, too, right, Casey?"

"I am, honey. I am." Casey's breath evened out, muscles relaxed under his cheek. "We'll be just fine. I promise."

He let his eyes close and melted against Casey's heat. If Casey said they would be fine, then they would be. He was not a human who lied.

It wasn't going to work. Another week into it Casey could see that as plain as the nose on his face. Plainer, really, as you only ever saw the tip of your nose, now didn't you? That was an odd expression.

He sighed, watching Feder toss and turn. It wasn't really about the sex. He could understand why Feder didn't like to bottom. There was a deep seated taboo there. Thousands of years of instinct. Casey got that.

No, it was about nights like tonight, when Feder loved the bed until he fell asleep, then rolled back and forth like a whirling dervish, unable to find comfort when he dozed. Or maybe it was about days like yesterday when old man Handy came over, and Feder had to be the stallion. When Feder would run back and forth in the paddock and Casey would be afraid to open the gate because Feder might just run. And keep on running.

He could see it in Feder's eyes sometimes, during the endless chores of feeding and mucking and brushing. Casey felt it in the way Feder's muscles bunched under him sometimes when Casey rode out on him to mend fences.

It wasn't no way for either of them to live. Not when he got pissy and Feder got his feelings hurt, because Casey'd exploded at him for just not getting why all that work *had* to be done.

Wasn't either of their faults. It just was, and he'd been thinking on it a lot in the last couple of days. Figuring he knew what he had to do.

Slipping out of the bed, Casey went to the window. The moon was high and bright, the fields just milk-colored in the night. It was perfect. No sense waiting any more.

Feder had spread out to take up all of the available space, and Casey grinned, leaning down to kiss Feder's soft lips. "Hey, honey. Wake up. Let's go for a ride."

Feder pushed up for another kiss, eyes blinking open at him, almost black in the moonlight. "Riding now, Casey?"

"Mmmhmm. It's a pretty night and I have a hankering to go for a moonlight gallop."

Feder beamed up at him, pushing for another kiss before getting up. "Will you ride bare, Casey?"

"You mean me? Naked?" Lord. "I'll wear my sweats. And that's it."

"Okay." Feder moved to press close.

Chuckling, Casey took a nice, hard kiss, petting Feder a minute before moving away. "Come on, honey. I want to ride first."

Feder followed him eagerly, and he could hear footsteps turning into hoofsteps as soon as they got outside. A moment later Feder's large, soft-tipped nose nuzzled at his shoulder.

That still made him jump, every time. Especially when he had no shirt on. He had lube though, in the little pocket in his sweats. They went on over to the fence so he could hop up on Feder's back, tightening his legs to get a good trot going.

Feder trotted, head tossing happily as he ran. Yeah. This was Feder's favorite thing. Maybe even more than sex...maybe not. Maybe it was equal.

Feder knew his land well now and ran along the fence line, moving faster and faster.

Casey hung on, just laughing at the moon, feeling a little crazy. And sad. But this was the way, he knew it. "Come on, Feder, faster."

Pulling at Feder's mane, he pushed them toward the gate that would open into BLM land. Feder followed his direction easily, obviously happy just to be out and running with him.

The moon made it almost as bright as day, plenty bright enough to make sure Feder didn't step in a hole and break anything. It was exhilarating. And arousing. His cock got hard, rubbing Feder's back. Feder noticed, gait changing to a rolling walk, rubbing up against him with each step.

Man, that just had to be wrong. He still thought it, but it felt so good he didn't protest. They were almost there. They'd been riding nearly a half hour, just romping. The gate was in sight, in fact, when he pulled up.

"Whoa, Feder. Whoa. Let me off."

Feder pulled up, head tossing.

Sliding to the ground, Casey leaned against Feder for a moment, taking in the scent of him, the feel of the rough hair under his cheek. He'd spent hours one night brushing Feder down, listening to the stallion breathe. Feder whinnied, head coming back, lips nibbling at him.

"Uh huh. Hey, I wanna play now, Feder." He stepped back, careful of his feet with just flip flops on, and shucked his sweats, right there in front of god and everyone.

Feder's head tossed, a happy whinny sounding. Then, as he watched, Feder shifted, shrunk and changed, becoming the man.

The transformation amazed him every time. Every damned time. As if to reassure himself it wasn't a mirage, Casey reached out and touched Feder's cheek. Very human, right down to the night stubble. Feder nuzzled into his hand, much as the stallion might and then stepped toward him, reaching for him.

"Mmm. Yeah. C'mere, honey." Casey reached for Feder, too, bringing him close to kiss him, love on him.

Feder's mouth opened, tongue pushing into his, body rubbing.

Yeah. Yeah, he needed that. Grabbing Feder's ass, Casey pushed against all of that hot, smooth skin, letting his cock settle against Feder's hip. Feder's fingers slid on him, rough and eager. The trail of hair on Feder's belly was so soft, so different from the thick, rough coat of the horse. Stroking it made goosebumps pop up on Feder's skin, made those sweet nipples draw up.

Feder moaned, rocking against him. The solid fingers found his nipples, tugging them. His back arched, his hips rocking. Fuck, that was good. He kissed Feder harder, storing up how everything tasted and felt. Feder bit and nibbled at his lips. There was no doubt that he was wanted.

The wanting wasn't the problem. Pushing the thought aside, Casey nipped Feder hard, let him feel it right back. Feder moaned, and pushed, almost pushing him over.

He groped for his sweats and urged Feder down on top of them. He wanted to touch without worrying about balance. Feder went down with him, hands sliding on him, finding his ass and grabbing hold. They stayed like that for a moment, him luxuriating in the feel of Feder's cheek against his, of their cocks together. Then Casey pushed Feder down on his back. Casey wanted another kind of ride.

"Caseyman?" Feder blinked up at him.

"S'okay, Feder. I just want to be where I can get to your pretty cock." He bent down, gave it a bit of a lick.

Feder moaned, hips jerking at the touch of his tongue. "Okay, Casey."

"Mmmhmm." He licked again, nuzzling his cheek against the hot, soft flesh. God, Feder smelled all male, strong in his nose. Feder's hands slid over his head, soft moans and whimpers coming from him.

He tasted it all, from head to base and beneath, licking the wrinkled balls. His eyes slid closed and Casey rested his head on Feder's thigh, petting.

Feder shifted restlessly, hands on his head. "Casey?"

"Hmm?" He tugged lightly at Feder's balls, smiling.

"Is everything good?"

"Uh huh. It's fine, honey." He sank his teeth into Feder's thigh before sitting up. "I was just loving on you is all."

"Under the stars." Feder smiled up at him. "You surprise me, Caseyman."

"Ain't nobody gonna see." Not at two am. He hoped. And if they did, well so be it. He reached between Feder's thighs, stroking that sweet prick. "Gonna ride you again now, honey."

Feder nodded, pushing up into his hand and moaning. "Yes, Casey. I like being inside you."

"I know, honey." He grinned, searching for the lube under his left knee. Ah ha. Popping it open, he got his fingers good and slick, reaching behind himself to slide two in.

Feder's hands slid on his thighs, cupped his balls and moved on his cock as he prepared himself.

His skin tingled, his chest and face feeling flushed, hot. His cock was beyond hot, just throbbing and wanting, jerking every time Feder touched it. Moaning, Casey arched his back, fucking himself with his own fingers.

"You are beautiful," Feder murmured, stroking his belly.

"Oh. Honey. I...damn." Feder was the pretty one, eyes like holes in the snow in the moonlight, lips open to show that pink tongue.

Feder licked his lips and arched, moaning softly. "Don't be long, Casey."

"Not. Not gonna." Yeah. He needed to hurry. His fingers moved, in and out, stretching. Finally he just growled and pulled them free, slicking Feder's cock quickly and straddling those narrow hips. "Ready?"

Feder nodded, hands sliding over his thighs to his waist. "Please."

His head bobbed, kind of like Feder's in horse mode, and he rose up, putting Feder's cock right at his hole. Then he sank down, gritting his teeth and pushing.

Moaning, Feder bucked up, cock going deep.

"God!" So thick and heavy, and hot enough to burn, Feder's cock spread him, opened him until he cried out, body jerking, trying to get just the right angle.

Feder's hips pushed and bucked, restless and urgent. His own need tore at him as well, the muscles in his belly like rock, his head falling back. He reached for his cock, stroked it hard, gasping and panting. Feder's hand closed over his, helping.

"Oh. Oh, honey. Gonna." He couldn't hold it, even though he wanted this to last forever. Casey put his hands on Feder's chest, leaning down to take a kiss as he shot against Feder's palm.

His ass squeezed tight around Feder's cock and his stallion bucked up into him, crying out as he came.

Good. So good, to have the heat filling him. Casey plopped down against Feder, nuzzling in close. Scenting. Feder's hands petted him, warm on his skin.

"I like doing this under the stars."

"Yeah. You're good at it, too." If his voice broke a little at that, well. There it was. The big fence between them that they'd never climb over.

Feder beamed at him, and brought their mouths together, tongue pushing into his mouth. They kissed long and hard, Casey holding Feder's head, holding them together for just a bit longer. Feder was content to keep kissing, hands sliding on his skin, moving to cup his ass.

He laid his head on Feder's chest, listening to the thumpthump of Feder's heart. Soon. Soon he'd be strong enough to do this.

"Are we sleeping here tonight, Casey?"

"No, honey. No. We're." Casey sighed, levering himself up and taking one last kiss. "We're gonna have to go."

Feder stood and kissed him again. "You'll ride me back?"

"You should. I mean." Damn. His sweats were a bit worse for wear, but he put them on, finding his flip flops, too. "Come on."

Casey led the way, but not toward home. Right to the gate that led off his land.

To freedom for Feder. Like it was meant to be.

Feder changed, the stallion prancing along beside him, nibbling at his hair, his shoulders.

They reached the gate and he worked the lock, glad it was a combination dealie. That little sweats pocket would never have held a key *and* the lube. Then Casey just...opened it and stepped back.

Feder snorted and tossed his head, moving to the fence as he would if Casey was going to ride him.

"No." He waved through the gate. "You belong out there, Feder. Where there ain't no chores."

Feder tossed his head again, coming over to him, nosing him.

"I know." Oh, now. He was gonna just break down in a minute. "I know, honey, but you're getting restless. And me, well. I need my routine." He patted Feder's neck, scratching under the mane.

"The nights, though. Well, if you ever want to come around for your favorite part of the day, I'll be there."

Feder nibbled at his hair, whinnied softly, leaning into him.

Casey leaned right back, glad Feder didn't try to change back, didn't try to talk. "I love you dearly, honey. But you need to run. And I need to stay. Now go on."

He stepped back, whacking Feder hard on the rump, counting on instinct to send him kicking and running.

Feder bucked up with a whinny and then ran out, stopping just the other side of the gate and coming back around.

Feder reared up, nibbled on his ear and then took off, running through the gate and beyond.

Casey stood and watched, just watched until Feder disappeared over the horizon. "Yeah, honey," he said as he locked up and turned to start the long trek home. "You, too."

Lord, he was late getting the chores done. It was long past sundown when Casey put a hand to the small of his back and stretched, the last of the grooming and feeding done.

The helicopters had sounded loud as they flew over his place early that morning, just like they did every year, and right about supper time Casey had oh so casually taken the guys a bucket of fried chicken and looked over their stock. No Feder. Thank God.

He had two mares pregnant now from his new breeding stock, and he'd sold his first three year old to a bucking horse outfit out of Cheyenne. The ranch was going well enough that he could hire some help, and he had, but right now it was just daytime help, no one staying on the ranch. He hadn't built a bunkhouse because, well...because the nights were his.

Even when he hadn't needed them for nigh on, oh, six months.

He checked the last of the stalls to make sure they were latched good and tight, hooking his thumbs in his belt loops as he wandered up toward the house. The moon rose high, full and sweet, and he smiled at it, wondering at how spring could make up for the bitter winter in this part of the world.

Casey had just about made it around the bend in the path that led to the house when he saw something off in the distance. Just a speck on the horizon, but moving fast. As it got closer his heart set up a pounding that matched the drum of hoofbeats on hard ground. That stallion looked as wild and free as the open land that Casey loved, mane and tail flowing in the wind. Just took his breath right away.

As he watched, the figure slowed, shivered, became smaller and paler, practically glowing. Casey smiled. A few years back that might have struck him as odd.

Now he just opened his arms and let the night give him whatever it would.

end