



Couple Seeks Friendship

A Torquere Press Single Shot By Rob Knight

*2 GWM, drug-disease free, looking for third GM for friendship, companionship, possibly more.
No mind-games. No bullshit.*

The ad was small, innocuous, and in a valid underground newspaper with a good reputation. Which was why Kell had answered it as opposed to the hundred or more other similar ads he'd seen. One of the magazines he freelanced for had approached him, their one known gay writer, about doing a piece on the swinging scene, and he'd taken his own approach to it, looking to do an in depth interview with a committed couple.

Which was why he was there, sitting on a barstool in a small, neighborhood bar waiting for them to show up. He'd left a voicemail at the number listed, gotten a response, set up a date. And he'd been up front about what he wanted, too. But they were still willing, so what the Hell. He just wished he wasn't so unaccountably nervous.

"You Kell?" A gruff voice sounded from beside him and he half-turned to see a short, square man in jeans and a tight-tight t-shirt put a ten-spot on the bar. "One lager and a... what do you want, Ricky? Wine? Soda?"

The kid at the short one's shoulder was at least a head taller and skinny as a broom. "I'll have a coke, Just." The kid's voice was soft; he almost had to strain to hear it.

"Yeah. I mean, yes. I'm Kell. Kell Andrews. Thanks for taking the time." He wasn't sure if he should offer to shake hands or not, but he did, figuring at least it gave him something to do with the damned things.

Justin's hand was hot, strong, the shake firm. "Nice to meet you, Justin Gremillion. This here's Ricky."

Then Justin turned back to the bartender, "That was one lager and a coke, no ice. And watch the head on that beer, I'm not paying for foam, yeah?"

Justin hopped onto the barstool beside Kell, his partner sort of drifting behind him. "We didn't keep you waiting too long? There was a wee accident at the job site and then with traffic and showering and parking and shit, time sure flies, you know?"

"No, I'm good. I've just enough time to drink one beer and wonder what the heck I'm doing here." He gave Justin a wry smile and nodded at quiet one, Ricky? Who looked a little lost. "But I appreciate you meeting me."

"Eh, no stress." Justin looked over at Ricky and patted the long, thin hand gently. "Well, okay, a wee bit of stress, but nothing scary. You like being a reporter? Is it fun? To meet all the people and learn all about them, I mean? It seems a good job." The guy's eyes gathered up all the earth tones from the bar, made them shine, made them look interested and curious.

"It can be interesting sometimes, yeah. I meet a lot of weirdoes, too, though. And sometimes it's just boring, digging up facts and statistics." Kell shifted a little, trying not to look as uncomfortable as he felt. "So what about you two? What do you do?"

A look passed between Justin and his partner, and then Justin nodded, handing him a business card. "I'm a carpenter. Do some cabinets, some renovating, some contracting. My pop and me, we have a company, got a good reputation, good work ethic, you know?" Another gentle pat fell on that long hand. "Rick here is into scholarly type stuff -- books and such. Knows more about books than anybody I ever met."

"Really? Books as in Lit? Or as in non-fiction?" He addressed the question directly at Ricky, trying to draw him out, into the conversation. He'd have to have both of them talking to him if this was going to work.

"Anything, everything. Tracing the family roots at the moment." The blue eyes were big, the voice soft, and Ricky pressed close against Justin's shoulder. Ricky smiled and ducked his head. "I like reading."

"Yeah, me too. I wish I had more time to do it for pleasure." He paused, then figured it was time to broach the subject of why they were there. "Look, I hope you took my request to meet here at face value. I really am doing an article for a lifestyle magazine and your ad sounded like the kind of thing I was looking for. I want to make sure you guys know that before we really start talking."

Justin nodded. "What're you looking to do with your article? What're you looking to find?" The question was blunt, straight-forward, not aggressive, but definitely protective.

"Well, they originally approached me about doing an article about the multiples scene, a straight-forward exposé you know? But that seemed sleazy. I thought it would be much more interesting to approach it from the prospective of a committed couple." Kell leaned forward, warming to his topic like he always did when he was working. "I'm mainly looking for the whys and hows. Why would you look for something like that outside of the regular framework? How does it happen? Have you ever done it before, that sort of thing. And it doesn't have to be about sex, you know? Just... why an ad? What are you looking to get out of it?"

Justin and Ricky looked at each other, the kids squeezing Justin's hand. "I dreamed it."

Kell had to strain to hear the kid and he wasn't sure he'd heard it right, but Ricky ducked his head and repeated the words. "I dreamed it."

Pasting on a neutral expression, Kell looked at them, one to another. "You dreamed it."

The kid nodded, cheeks flushed and looked at Justin.

"Tell you what, let's get a table, somewhere we can have some privacy, yeah?" Justin stood, grabbing his beer and wrapping one arm around Ricky's waist. "Come on, Ricky. Let's grab us a booth."

"Back's empty, Just. We'll have plenty of privacy if we sit back there." Ricky grabbed his coke and slid his arm around Justin's shoulders, looking shyly at Kell as they moved ahead of him.

They were definitely a couple and obviously pretty well known at the small pub they were in, because no one looked at them twice. Kell followed them to the back and took a seat across from where they'd piled into a booth together.

"So, you were saying about the dream?"

Ricky opened his mouth and closed it again, turning once again to Justin. Then the kid nodded. "It wasn't just a regular dream it was lucid, almost real. I... I have those sometimes. Not premonitions or anything freaky like that just dreams that I know I need to pay attention to." The kid's mouth snapped shut like he suddenly realized what he was saying might sound a little crazy and big blue eyes were turned up to him.

"And you went along with it?" His voice was carefully neutral, professional, as he turned to Justin.

Justin grinned and nudged Rick with his shoulder. "Why not? What's the harm -- to find a friend or three, maybe find somebody to play with, maybe find more? I love him, straight up. If this is a dream, I'm behind it."

"That's... a really healthy attitude." And loony as Hell, but he kept that to himself. "So you're not looking so much for sex as companionship?"

Ricky looked like that blush might be permanent. "Both." The kid looked at Justin again and gave the man a smile that was full of love. "More, less, I don't know. It just... I dreamed it and it feels right."

"That's right." Justin looked across the table. "Look, it's odd, but that's why the ad was worded the way it was. We're looking for someone to hang out with, have a few beers. Make friends, you know? Without the baggage of 'are you queer, aren't you, blah, blah'." Justin shrugged. "I work hard and Ricky's cooped in the house a lot. We're sorta expediting things. Getting to the core of the question and seeing if the answer we come up with is cool, you know?"

"That makes sense. But don't you worry about someone answering your ad that's psycho? Or a basher? Are you taking any steps to check people out before you meet them? I mean, I left references you could call, but most people wouldn't."

Justin laughed, the sound hearty and warm and utterly normal. "Do you honestly think you're the only one who called? There were freaks and nutcases. The responses come into an anonymous voice mail. I called your references and wouldn't have called you back, if they hadn't checked out. Hell, what do you have besides my business card? A pre-paid cell phone number and my name."

The look he got was serious and sure. "I wouldn't risk my family for anything. We've spoken to three men, including you. One didn't work out and didn't even get a business card. The other is a nice boy and I wish him lots of luck and I helped him get a job, poor kid. The other was you."

Well, that was certainly more caution than he expected. Looked like Justin was a practical one, which was good.

"So this is the first ad you've placed?"

Justin nodded. "Yeah. We wanted to think about it, talk about it." The man gave his partner a slow, teasing smile. "*Really* think about it."

Well, doofus, you wanted intimate, Kell thought. Why that should make him squirm he didn't know. All Kell knew was that he was having a really hard time keeping this one objective. He wanted to yell at them for being stupid, which wasn't like him at all. It was none of his business what they did, anyway, except in the way it pertained to his article. "So what was the next step, then? How did you decide on where to place the ad?"

"I knew where we should place it when I brought it up to Justin. I've been reading the Observer since college, knew it was the right place for the ad to go." The kid took a drink of his coke.

"Knew how it should be worded 'cause..." The kid blushed again and looked at Justin. "Well that's how we met. SGM seeks SGM for friendship and possibly more."

"Oh." he paused to consider that. "So you could say you've had some previous success in that area. Did that make you more confident about this one?"

Justin nodded. "It makes it easier, takes a couple of the questions out. And this time Ricky's got me to filter the loonies."

"I have to admit, I think I would be too intimidated to do it that way. Took a lot just to call you for the interview some reason. And now, well, you seem like such a solid couple." Oh, way to go, Kell, he thought. Keep your own opinions out of it.

"We are. Solid, that is." Justin leaned back. "We're just looking for somebody to hang out with, make friends with. If shit happens, shit happens, yeah, baby?"

Ricky gave his lover a smoldering look. "With someone as sexy as you in the picture, Just, shit will *always* happen."

Wow. When the kid looked like that he was downright hot. Kell suddenly felt like the worst kind of peeping Tom. He hopped to his feet. "I'm going to go get another beer. Anyone want anything?" Maybe a trip to the bar would cool him off.

"No, we're okay." Justin's voice was full of laughter and soft passion. The man leaned over and whispered to his partner, making the thin face blush and grin.

Oh yeah, *that* was going well. Kell wished he could put a name to what bothered him the most about those two. He was doing a story. They were his subjects. He'd done stories on people that would make most people puke without batting an eye. So why did those two make him nervous and edgy and well, horny? And why did he feel the need to butt into their business and tell them

how nuts they were? By the time he got back to the table with his beer, Kell had talked himself back into work mode, determined to be professional.

"So, where were we? Right. Solid couple. So what kind of changes do you think it would make in your life if you found someone for more than just friendship?"

"Well more and different sex for one thing," Ricky said softly, giggling a little. Kell had to wonder if the red on the kid's cheeks was permanent. "But it's more than just that. What Justin and me have is great -- loving two guys like that, having two love me back. I think that would be really nice."

"You don't feel like that would be a pretty delicate balancing act? Seems that with three people involved, someone is always going to be left out."

"Why?" asked Ricky.

"Because that's human nature, isn't it? The reality is that two people will always get along better, and the other will feel like a third wheel."

"Human nature?" Justin arched an eyebrow, looking genuinely confused. "I got two arms, so does Rick, and we've both got enough time and fun and love to spread about, you know? It's not like if you care about somebody else, it gets *smaller*."

Talk about confused. Kell couldn't understand that attitude to save him. Stilling his hand, which he realized was tapping agitatedly on the table, he took a sip of beer to give him time to organize a reply.

Time to come at it from a different angle. "I'm sure you can't speak for anyone but yourselves but I'm interested in your opinion. Do you think other couples who look for this sort of thing are doing it for similar reasons? Or do you think it's purely sexual in motivation?"

"Other couples?" Ricky was frowning. "I don't know why they do it. I never asked anyone."

"I figure lots of them are in it for the sex." Justin grinned, eyes twinkling. "Sex is *fun*, you know? I imagine everybody brings in their own baggage, yeah?" Then those eyes flashed to Ricky. "You mean you don't wander the neighborhood and ask Mr. and Mrs. Bridgestone if they're swingers, baby?"

Ricky laughed, cheeks going bright red again. "They were my grandmother's friends, Just. I don't think they even know what swingers are."

Laughing in spite of himself, Kell nodded. "I doubt my folks would even know, let alone my grandparents."

God, that kid could blush. "We've kind of run through most of the questions I had for you. A lot of the ones I came up with aren't useful because you don't quite fit the profile I had geared myself up for. What I'd really like, though, is to talk to you again in a few weeks, maybe see if you've made any progress. Would that be okay?"

"Sure, if you think you can stand meeting us odd, over-sexed loonies again." Justin looked right at him. "We're not crazy, you know, Mr. Andrews. I know the idea of sharing seems a little off, but we're also looking to make some mutual friends. A scholar and a carpenter don't usually float in the same fishponds, you know?"

This time it was his own face that heated, and painfully at that. He was probably bright fucking red. "I'm sorry if I gave you the impression I thought you were crazy. I admit, I don't understand it, but my personal opinion doesn't really matter much, does it? I think you're both intelligent, likeable people, for what it's worth."

Justin nodded. "We are and we have a lot of fun. Ricky here plays a mean game of boggle and can hold his own on a pool table and I'm an old hand at any card game out there."

"Cards and boggle, huh? I'm a darts man, myself." Hoping he'd salvaged that one, Kell grinned. "So, if I'm not too abrasive can we set up a meet in a few weeks? My article is due in about a month. I'll be doing research on stats, writing up what I have already. You'll get to read it before I submit, of course."

Ricky looked over at Justin, a silent conversation passing between them and the kid nodded. "Maybe we can meet more casually next time? Over dinner or something? So we can show you we aren't nuts."

Taken somewhat aback, Kell stared for a minute before he pulled himself together to answer. He didn't want to examine too closely why he liked the sound of that so much. "Sure. That sounds good. Nice. I mean, that'll work fine."

Ricky smiled at him, the kid's whole face lighting up. "Cool."

"Sounds like a plan." Justin nodded, pulling a palm pilot out of his shirt pocket and clicking through. It was a peculiar sight, the rough, almost coarse hands holding the electronics. "Okay, I'm finishing the wiring in the Duvall house next week. We've got dinner over at Nana's next Saturday night for her birthday. We've got Thursday and Saturday open the week after, then we're going camping for a week. Either of those days work for you, Kell?"

Kell blinked at the incongruous sight and the fast rattle of dates, then pulled out his organizer and looked at his calendar. "I think Saturday would work best. Thursday I meet with editors. You don't want to be near me then."

"Excellent. You like beef or chicken?" Those eyes were twinkling again, laughing. "And don't go telling me you don't care, 'cause then I'll let Ricky decide and we'll be cooking pasta or some terrifying damned thing he found in one of his granny's recipe books."

"Beef. Should I bring wine?"

"Yeah. I'll even find matching plates." Justin looked at Ricky with a grin. "We got matching plates, baby?"

"Granny may roll in her grave if I bring out the good china, but at least then it'll be used." Ricky smiled at Justin and then turned the sweet smile on Kell. "I'm glad you're going to see us again, get a second impression."

"I'm really curious to see how this works out for you two." Kell pulled out one of his own business cards and handed it to Justin, smiling at both of them. "Give me a call if something changes and we can't get together. Oh, and I'll be calling to see what time I should come and to get directions. Is that okay?"

Justin took the card, then took his hand and shook it. "That'll be just fine. It's been good to meet you. Look forward to seeing you again."

"Definitely." Kell let them leave first, watching them walk out the door with a strange sense of loss and trying to sort out his jangling thoughts. It would be interesting to see what they came up with. So why was he hoping they wouldn't find anyone?

The house smelled like teriyaki sauce and saffron. Justin was marinating steaks and cooking up rice and tossing up a salad. Ricky was dessert and table setting. He'd made chocolate mousse because it looked really elegant and was easy to make and it was comfort food -- his grandmother had always made it when he was sad or sick.

Tonight he wasn't sad or sick, but he was nervous. Kell was the right guy, he'd known it when he first heard his voice on the phone. He'd told Justin so, had been so eager to meet the man, had

ignored Justin's words of caution. He'd been so sure that 'doing a story' was a cover, a layer of security. He'd been pretty upset to realize that Kell not only wasn't interested, but he thought they were nuts.

Tonight was their only chance to change the man's mind.

He glanced at the clock again, smoothed down his shirt again, readjusted the table settings again. Justin's whistle preceded him as he bustled in with the bread, towel tucked into his jeans, shirt... gone missing in the kitchen somewhere, along with his shoes.

And socks.

"Why aren't you dressed?"

"Huh?" Justin looked down at his bare chest and grinned, brushing some flour off his belly. "I was cooking, baby. That kitchen gets full-afternoon sun. I'm messy. I didn't want to ruin my shirt." He got a wink and a warm laugh. "Any of these reasons working for you, baby? Or should I find some more?"

"You should get dressed, he'd going to be here any second and you're almost naked! He's going to think we're setting him up or something." He pulled the towel out of Justin's jeans and tried to get rid of some of the flour.

"Okay, okay!" Justin grabbed the towel and then that callused, square hand cupped his jaw, laughing eyes still and serious. "You need to relax, Rick. I wouldn't parade out here half-dressed when your company showed. I'm just finishing the food and figured this old body's easier to clean than that shirt you ironed for me."

Justin stretched up for a kiss. "He'll either want to be with us or he won't, Rick, and there's no need worrying at it. I love you. Come finish tossing the salad and tell me which room we're going to tackle next. I finished the library on Thursday."

"You did?" Oh, he'd been waiting on the library. He had a thousand and one boxes full of books and -- the doorbell rang and he looked down at Justin, frozen.

"He's here!" he whispered.

"Then you should probably go answer the door. I'll go put my shirt on and fire up the grill." Justin smiled at him and nodded. "You can do this, Rick. Remember to breathe."

Then Justin patted his butt and disappeared back into the kitchen.

Breathe. Right.

He went to the front door and made himself take another breath before opening it.

Kell was standing there, looking a little nervous, shifting from foot to foot. "Hi." He thrust a bottle of wine through the open door. "I brought Merlot. It usually goes with beef. I hope that's okay?"

Kell looked wonderful. His eyes were brown. Ricky'd forgotten, couldn't remember if they were brown or hazel or green. He liked brown eyes. Brown eyes were usually warm. He liked warm -- he was cold a lot of the time, especially in the winter. Kell wasn't dressed up dressed up, but he was wearing something nice. Ricky wondered if he was nervous, too, if he knew that they all belonged together the way Ricky did or if he'd take off running or call the cops or something if Ricky said anything and -- breathe. Right.

He took a deep breath and took the wine. "Thanks. Come in."

"Thanks." Kell stopped just inside the door, sniffing deeply. "Smells good."

He nodded. It did. "Justin's even made bread -- pulled out all the stops..." Oh fuck. Now he'd done it. He shut his mouth and closed the door quickly, resisting the urge to lock it. "Gotta have homemade bread with steak."

Oh, yes, Ricky, doing good. That made a whole lot of sense. "Lets see if Justin's decent. I mean dressed. I mean... done in the kitchen," he finished faintly.

The smells got stronger and so did the music. Music? There hadn't been music when the doorbell rang... He pushed open the kitchen door and couldn't decide whether to grin or sigh or just give up altogether.

The back door was wide open, the steaks sizzling away. One of the little neighborhood girls was sitting on the deck next to a mostly dressed Justin, tears still staining her face. Her little radio was blaring and Justin was fixing the chain on her bike. Oiling it.

Oiling it and his hands and his blue jeans and his white shirt, which he was using to wipe off her cheeks.

"There you go, Katie. All fixed. No more tears. Get on now, before my steaks burn."

Ricky just stood there biting his lip, falling in love with Justin all over again, even as the man made him want to scream. Oh well, best Kell knew the truths about them from the start and one truth was that Justin would give the shirt off his back to help someone. Literally.

Even if it was inconvenient.

He went over to the steaks and turned the heat off. "These look done."

"Oh." Justin did have the sense to look ashamed, cheeks flaming. "Hey there, Kell. I... well..." He held out his hand to shake before looking down at the grease and pulling back. "Sorry, Katie's chain kept falling when she hit third gear. It was a quick fix, though. You have any problem finding the place?" Justin cleaned off his hands and slid the steaks onto a platter. "These'll keep warm in the oven long enough for my to run upstairs and get presentable before Rick hangs me by my balls from the balcony. Last time that happened they knocked against my knees for a week. Why don't you two pour the wine and I'll be back in two shakes..."

"No problem." Kell held up the bottle of wine. "Just point me to the corkscrew and you can go get covered. Cleaned up. Um."

Kell turned to Ricky, and he could see that Kell was blushing furiously, too. "Glasses?"

"No, I've got 20/20... oh. For the wine. Right." All of a sudden he started to giggle.

Oh, Kell was perfect, just perfect. It was there in the red on the man's cheeks, the red that matched his own, and poor Justin's, too.

"I'll get them," he said once he'd managed to stop laughing. "Corkscrew's in the top drawer by the oven."

Chuckling, and looking more relaxed, Kell rummaged until he found the corkscrew, expertly twisting it into the cork and popping it out neatly. "So have you two had any luck?" he asked.

He frowned at Kell. "Luck?"

"Yeah. With the ad? Any prospects?"

"Oh! Right. The ad. Right. Um... no." They'd stopped looking, in fact, after meeting with Kell, but he had a hunch that wasn't going to play well. "We... um... it..."

"It seemed silly to keep looking, given that we're about to go out of town for a few days. We got a couple of calls, one that interested us, but nothing sure." Justin looked, well, he looked damned good, the starched, stained shirt gone, a soft, almost-silky, tight, white knit shirt taking its place. The blue jeans were now khakis and Ricky figured he could forgive Just for still being barefoot.

Justin walked over, all relaxed and settled and right, leaning against the kitchen counter, accepting a glass of wine with a lazy smile. "How'd your research go?"

"Not bad, as research goes. There's a lot of stuff out there to sift through." Kell leaned on the counter opposite Justin and shrugged, sipping his wine. "A lot of it is crap, some of it is downright scary, but I got some good, solid stuff for the article. Maybe you can look at what I've written up after dinner."

"Do you still think we're nuts?" Ricky blurted out.

Blinking, Kell shook his head. "I never thought you were nuts. I just said I didn't really get it, which I didn't. Don't. Whatever. But, no, I don't think you're nuts."

"Oh. Okay. Good." He nodded. "Good."

He felt better. Not getting it was all right. He moved to stand next to Justin, sliding his hand over the collar of the silky shirt. Felt good. "We should eat now. The bread's gonna get cold. Besides, I'm starving!"

"Okay, baby. Grab the salad. You mind getting the steak, Kell? I'll bring the rice and the butter." Justin's cheek nuzzled his hand for a second, then his lover was off and moving. "Does anybody need steak sauce? I've got worcestershire and A-1, but there's teriyaki on the steaks."

"No, the teriyaki is great by itself." He caught just a glimpse of Kell staring at them almost wistfully before Kell turned away to pull the steaks out of the oven. "Everything smells and looks great."

He was almost bouncing as he made his way to the dining room. Kell was interested. Now if only he didn't screw it up. Luckily he had a secret weapon. No one could resist his Justin, not for long.

Juggling the steaks and his wineglass, Kell followed more slowly, like he was waiting for Ricky and Justin to get settled so he'd know where to sit. "This is a great house," he said. "Did you buy it together?"

"It was my grandmother's. Justin's renovating it -- room by room. He just finished the library which I still haven't had a chance to see yet." Ricky sat down, Justin sitting around the corner from him and he pointed at the chair where the last table setting sat, across from him. "Oh, I should have sat you down first, you're the guest and all. Granny'd say she taught me better than that."

"Oh, no problem." Carefully sliding the steak platter onto the table, Kell pulled out his chair and slouched into. He smiled at Ricky, genuine interest lighting his face. "You have a library? That's so cool. I've always wanted one. Or an old fashioned study, you know? Where I could work."

"Yeah, this is kind of a combination of both -- Just and I designed it ourselves. Well, I told him what my dream library would look like and he designed it. He can do anything with those hands."

"Oh, I've been doing construction forever, it feels like." Justin passed the rice to Kell, smiling and warm. "It's been a blast, fixing up the house. There are still rooms and rooms to go. Then I'll probably start landscaping that big old backyard."

Justin's fingers just barely nudged Kell's as the bowl changed hands.

"You must be pretty good at what you do." Kell bobbed the bowl, bringing his other hand up to steady it. His cheeks were pink, and the rice seemed to be fascinating to him all of a sudden. "To be able to fix the house up, I mean."

"It's easy to be good at doing what you love, Kell."

"Yeah." Kell cleared his throat. "I left the wine in the kitchen. The bottle. I'll be right back."

Ricky shot up before Kell could even move his chair back. "I'll get it -- you just sit."

He gave Justin a quick grin and then went back to the kitchen. It looked like Kell was more interested than he was letting on. He remembered Justin's advice and took a couple of breaths before he grabbed the wine bottle and went back out to the dining room.

Justin was leaning back in the chair, telling Kell one of his stories about the houses he'd fixed, hands waving, eyes dancing. Kell was laughing, loud and long, cheeks flushed and hands gripping the edge of the table.

"...and then, once we got the snake out of the hot tub, she jumped up, naked as the day she was born, and ran upstairs where my entire crew was working on her walk-in closet. I thought those boys would never recover."

"I bet. Sounds like it would have about killed me." Still laughing, Kell wiped his eyes and grinned at Ricky. "He tells a good story."

"He does." Ricky let his hand slide along Justin's shoulders as he walked by. "He does a lot of things well."

"Flatterer. Sit down and eat, baby, before you get picked up by a gust of wind and lost." Justin grinned and snatched the wine out of his hand. "You want some, Kell?"

"Yes. Please." The answer came a little too fast and a little too loud and he had to stifle a grin at how uncomfortable Kell looked. "So. Um. Are you going to place the ad again since you didn't get anyone really interesting the first time?"

He looked over at Justin and smiled. "I don't think so. I think we'll wait and see what falls out of the tree." He knew his color was high, but Justin was smiling at him and that gave him courage.

"The tree?" Justin filled Kell's glass and then his, the low chuckle sliding over the table. "Does that mean I need to start hanging some nets to catch falling bodies, or will we just have faith that the grass is so tall it'll cushion them?"

He laughed and let his hand slide over Justin's. Oh, he loved this man so much.

Something flickered in Kell's eyes for a moment, too fast to label it, then he went all poker-faced the way he had during their first interview. "So you're going to do it the old fashioned way? Just hang out, meet people that way?"

He looked at Justin and shrugged. He didn't know what to say.

"We're going to go camping. We're going to pick another room to renovate and Rick's going to beat me at Boggle nine times out of ten and pool down at the bar ten out of ten." Justin never tensed, never let on he saw that Kell was upset. "We'll make friends, drink some wine, share stories and shit. If something happens, cool. If not, cool."

"That sounds good." Looking wry, Kell shook his head. "Well, not from the point of view of my article, but for you two, anyway."

"Does that mean you're staying for dessert?" Justin winked. "I promise not to gush over Rick and to keep my shirt on, if you chill out again and just enjoy supper." Another quick, friendly grin was offered. "Hell, I haven't gotten to ask you if you've interviewed anybody famous or what your most interesting story was."

"My most interesting story was the one that got me fired. And what's dessert?"

"Fired? Oh, you can't leave us hanging there." Rick watched Kell.

"It was a political scandal... I didn't break the story. What I did was prove it to be falsified. The editor was supporting the other candidate. I got canned." Kell's voice was flat.

"That fucking blows, man." Justin's voice was sympathetic, edged with righteous anger. Always ready to defend the underdog, his Just.

Rick reached out, stopping just short of Kell's hand. "I'm sorry," he said softly. "I didn't mean to..."

"No. That's okay. I just still get mad... did you say dessert?"

Ricky nodded and let his fingers stroke across the top of Kell's hand. The man's skin was warm and soft. "Chocolate mousse."

"Oooh." Kell's expression melted into pure lust. "Chocolate mousse. Really? Oh, wow. I love chocolate mousse."

"Yeah, me too." He gave Kell a grin and then smiled smugly at Justin.

Justin rolled his eyes and stuck his tongue out. "You and your chocolate. I mean, the mousse is yummy, but it's not pineapple upside down cake, is it?"

"Pineapple upside down cake doesn't even come close and you know the rules, no sticking that out unless you plan to use it."

Justin arched an eyebrow. "Now, now, I promised our guest no gushing. I'm *sure* licking counts as gushing."

He blushed, the teasing having gone farther than he'd meant in front of Kell. "I'll... I'll get the mousse."

"No. No, I'll get it." Justin stood and grinned. "Why don't you head into the front room? I'll meet you in there."

They went to the front room and Kell wandered, touching this piece of woodwork, sliding his hand over that chair. Finally he looked up at Ricky. "Look, I'm sorry I'm so edgy tonight. I don't want to make you uncomfortable or anything. Or make you think you can't touch your boyfriend in front of me."

"What's wrong?" Ricky asked. "I mean -- you said you were edgy. If you don't want to talk about it, that's okay, I just... you know, if you wanted to talk about it then you could. With me -- us. You know."

"No. I mean, it's nothing, really. I just... ooh mousse. Looks wonderful."

Justin nodded, handing out good-sized bowls and settling the big bowl of mousse on the coffee table. "Yep. Goopy and sweet and handmade and guaranteed to give you a sugar rush. Eat up."

Ricky sat next to Justin, close, touching, and started dishing out the mousse. He handed Kell his bowl and licked some chocolate off his finger.

Kell looked down the minute he looked up, spooning up mousse with deep concentration. His cheeks were once again pink and he was squirming. He was silent until all of the mousse in his bowl was gone, then he glanced up from under his lashes, as if to make sure it was safe to look.

Rick smiled. He hadn't touched his mousse, but he felt high. Maybe, just maybe, Kell liked them after all. He decided it was time. Now or never. Do or die. All that cheesy crap. He looked over at Justin, who just smiled at him and stroked his hand. It was his decision.

He leaned across the table, let his hand touch Kell's this time, fingertips resting lightly against warm skin. It made him tingle all over, to be touching someone who wasn't Justin like this. His stomach was full of butterflies, or maybe that was just him trembling. He hadn't been this nervous since the night he first met Justin.

He waited until those brown eyes met his and then he just said it. "I want to kiss you. Can I, please?"

Kell made a face reminiscent of a landed fish, mouth opening and closing like he was gasping for air. "What? You want to what? Why?"

He leaned in closer, only inches away, and surely Kell could see his trembling now, and answered softly. "Because I like your eyes and your voice and I want to see what chocolate mousse tastes like in your mouth."

"Oh. But I. But you. That's... Okay."

"Oh... I was sure you were going to say no," he whispered, closing the final distance and bringing their mouths together.

He moved his lips softly against Kell's, taking his time, learning what this man felt like beneath his lips. He let his mouth open and slid his tongue across Kell's upper lip, lower lip, then pushed

gently between, asking for entrance. The lips beneath his trembled, then opened to him, letting him in. Teriyaki and mousse and the underlying flavor of something as hopeful as it was fearful.

Ricky let his eyes close as he deepened the kiss, concentrating on the feel and the flavor of Kell's mouth. Nothing moved outside of their lips and tongues, he knew he was holding his own breath, imagined Kell was, too. Oh, he could feel how right this was and it made him shake. Could Kell feel it, too?

Too soon, Kell pulled away. Not hurried, or angry. Dazed, Kell blinked at him, raising a hand to touch his own lips. He opened his mouth as if to say something, but closed it and shook his head, still staring, as if waiting for Rick to speak first.

"I'm glad you didn't say no. Thank you." He stroked Kell's hand again and then sat back, biting back his pleas for Kell to stay, to join them.

Justin smiled at him, eyes warm and soft, reaching for the bowls and the mousse. "I'm going to do dishes, Ricky. You two relax. Talk."

His lover stood, erection obvious, hard cock pushing against the zipper. Ricky smiled, Justin was interested, excited. It wasn't only him. It calmed him, knowing Justin wanted this too. Oh, they'd talked about it, he knew that Justin was with him in this, but now he *knew*. And so did Kell.

Although, Kell might not admit it as easily.

Relax Justin said. Kell looked anything but relaxed. Was starting to look a little panicky, actually. Talk. That was the second part of Justin's suggestion. Maybe he should do that before Kell bolted.

"Your lips are really soft, Kell. And you taste good. Thank you. Thank you so much for letting me kiss you."

"I... you're welcome? I still don't think I get why, though."

He took a deep breath and considered his words carefully. "Have you ever had a gut feeling, Kell?"

"Sure," Kell answered with a nod. "About sources, about story leads. Yeah."

"Never about your life?" He found that hard to believe. "Ever?"

"Once upon a time, yeah. It always led me wrong so I stopped listening. Figured my gut was well tuned to news, but not to life stuff."

"Well mine hasn't steered me wrong yet. When I get this feeling inside... it's kind of..." he laughed. "It's like butterflies, only they've got wings made of lead, you know? It's not easy to ignore."

"And your gut told you to kiss me?" Kell's eyebrows rose almost to his hairline. "That's. Whoa. Wait. If you think I'm the one you dreamed, you're. Well, that's not the way it works. No. Okay?"

"I'd never do anything without your permission! You said I could kiss you." He bit his lip again. Oh, this was all going wrong and he wasn't smart about people the way Justin was.

"I know. Okay? That's not what I mean. I'm not accusing you of anything. Oh, Hell. This is too weird." Kell looked both exasperated and earnest. Leaning forward, Kell covered one of Ricky's hands with his. "I just don't want you to get the wrong idea, okay? I'm not the guy you're looking for. You seem very nice, both you and your boyfriend. I'm sure you'll have plenty of luck finding someone."

He turned his hand over, linking their fingers loosely. "You're lonely. We could ease you. For a night, share... companionship. No strings."

Like he wasn't really thinking about it, Kell began to run his thumb along the side of Ricky's hand, and he could feel the little calluses that came with writing against his fingers. "That's quite an offer."

"He's quite a man." Justin's voice was so warm, made him feel better, made him feel strong and settled. His lover was leaning against the door frame, drying soap suds off his hands. "This doesn't have to be an ordeal, Kell. It could just be easy."

That lost, wistful look crossed Kell's features again, so quickly he might have missed it if he wasn't looking so closely. "Nothing's that easy. But tempting, yes. It is that."

"Ricky is tempting." Justin winked. "Look, can't we just relax, drink some coffee? Talk? Share dirty jokes?"

"I'll be good, I promise," Ricky said softly.

Nodding, Kell sat back, looking at their still joined hands in surprise. "Yeah. That sounds good. Coffee. Yeah, okay."

Ricky didn't let go and he smiled at Justin when Kell didn't either, just kept looking at their intertwined fingers.

Justin grinned and sat in one of the big armchairs, bare feet curling up beneath him. "Coffee's brewing. Tell me, Kell, what's your favorite movie?" Justin's eyes twinkled at Ricky, happy and laughing.

Oh, he remembered that question. He remembered how it was the first of a series that had relaxed *him* when they'd first met. He remembered where they'd wound up, too. He turned to look at Kell, waiting for his answer.

"Um." Kell blinked. "Lawrence of Arabia."

"Cool. Mine's the original Parent Trap. Justin's keeps changing -- something new every week." He grinned over at his lover. "What's it today, Just?"

Justin blushed. "Today? Big Trouble in Little China. Or maybe A Lion in Winter."

"Oh, that was a good one. I liked that one. Though it always makes me think of this obscure Sean Connery flick they used to play on TBS sometimes, The Wind and the Lion. Connery plays this desert sheik. It's kind of cool." Kell rattled to a halt, looking a little embarrassed.

"Oh, desert sheiks. That sounds pretty yummy. I haven't seen it, but I bet Justin has -- I think he's seen every movie ever made. Twice. You didn't tell me about any movies with Sean Connery playing a desert sheik, Just."

"That's because every time I mention Sean Connery we start talking about the third Indiana Jones movie and then Harrison Ford and then it's all over, baby."

"Oh yeah..." He shifted, trying to adjust himself without being too obvious about -- they'd promised Kell they'd be good.

"Oh, you didn't ask me what my favorite eye candy movie was. Hunt for Red October definitely."

"Oh, yes. Damned pretty." Justin leaned forward. "Or Rob Roy. Or... ooh! Excalibur!"

"First Knight," suggested Ricky. "That Heath Ledger's hot." He smiled over at Justin and blushed. "He reminds me of you, Just."

Justin blushed dark. "Flatterer."

Kell tilted his head and looked at Justin. "I can see it." He flushed, but didn't look away.

"You two keep it up and my head'll be so swollen it won't fit through the door." Justin's cheeks were flaming -- oh, it was charming.

All three of them sitting there red as beets. It was funny really. He figured he might as well go for broke. "Which head, Just?"

"Baby!" Justin looked at him with huge eyes and then they all started laughing, hard. Deep belly laughs filled the room, the house, Kell leaning back against him as Just doubled over.

Holding his ribs Kell struggled upright, still chuckling helplessly. "Oh God. I needed that." Kell grinned at Ricky, sharing the last of his laughter with him, face open and happy. "That was good. Or bad, depending on how you look at it."

A thrill went through him when Kell leaned forward, still smiling, and placed a soft kiss at the corner of his mouth. "Thanks."

He matched Kell's smile, accepted the kiss without trying to deepen it or try anything of his own. "My pleasure. You have a great laugh."

"No fair. I'm seriously behind on the kisses." Justin was still laughing, eyes dancing.

"Well come on over here, Just, I've got more'n enough to go around." He glanced at Kell from beneath his lashes, hoping like crazy the man would offer Justin one as well.

"Um. Yeah. I wouldn't want to keep you two from, well, you know." Kell moved away, laughter fading from his face, replaced once again by that blush that was so out of place with his cynical demeanor.

"We've got all our lives for ... you know. Justin was just teasing. Come sit back down here and tell us what kind of music you like."

"Oh. Okay. Is there coffee do you think? I like the old edgy rock, some punk stuff, some southern style rock. What about you? I mean, what kind of music do you like? Do you have the same tastes or do you have to fight over the CD player?"

"I like old rock. Ricky likes classical. We both like alternative stuff." Justin grinned. "We don't fight. We figured it out. Each stereo or boom box has a different style, depending on what we do in the room."

Justin leaned back, lounging again. "You know, classic rock in the wood shop. Rockabilly in the kitchen. Mozart in the parlor. Baroque in the library. Oh, you haven't *seen* the library to know that, have you, baby?"

He stood up and went over and grabbed Justin's hand, trying to tug him up. "No, I haven't. Oh, Kell, would you like a house-tour? Well, one room's worth, anyway?"

"Sure. That would be nice." Kell got up and stood next to him, smiling down at Justin. "You gonna show us your handiwork?"

"Hell, yes!" Justin bounced up, grinning ear to ear. "It's a kick-ass room. Just what Ricky asked for."

Justin led them through the house, up the stairs past their bedroom and into the odd, octagonal room that Grandmother had always used for storage. "Okay, baby, close your eyes. Kell, I'm going to turn on the lights, you bring him in, okay?"

"Gotcha." Kell moved up behind Ricky and put his arms around him, covering his eyes. "So you don't peek."

He chuckled, even while his heart started to pound. "Okay." He could feel Kell's warmth behind him, their bodies almost touching.

"Okay, bring him in!"

Kell led him into the room and, when the hands fell away from his eyes, he gasped. It was what he'd asked for -- floor to ceiling bookshelves on five walls, a sliding ladder that moved between them, one wall was glass, and on two walls... A desk. A beautiful, dark, huge desk with drawers and cabinets and little nooks and crannies.

There was a huge, overstuffed chair by the glass wall, it looked big enough for all three of them and he wished they could try it out together, and two more comfortable looking chairs in the middle of the room. Everything had been made by Justin's hands.

He wandered around the room, hands trailing over shelves and the desk and the chairs. He ran the ladder from one end to the other, exclaiming happily. Oh, it was perfect, absolutely perfect. He threw himself at Justin, kissing his lover for all he was worth.

Justin held him tight, kissing him back until Kell moved. Then Justin broke the kiss, grinning over at their guest. "Guess he likes it."

Kell was staring at them, wide-eyed. "Yeah. Looks like."

"I do!" He hugged Justin tight and gave him another quick kiss on the mouth and then grabbed Kell's hand. "You have to try out this chair with me! Justin made one for our bedroom and I had to have one for in here."

He sat down in the huge chair, pulling Kell down into his lap.

Kell went absolutely still, a soft noise coming from him, surprise or disbelief. The he squirmed, moving off to one side so he was more beside Ricky than on top of him. "It's really comfortable."

"Isn't it? Come on, Justin -- I can see you made it big enough for three."

"Yep. Nice and roomy." Justin settled beside them, one thigh snuggling against Kell's. "So, what do you think of my work, Kell? Does it look good?"

"Wow. I mean, yes. It looks great. Just like a library ought to."

Justin beamed. "Yeah. Ricky knew what he wanted. Now he needs to choose which room we're doing next. There's a few left to pick."

He nodded and then looked over at Justin for a long minute, telling him silently he loved him. Justin said it back, just as silently, eyes warm, nodding his head just a little.

"I'm sorry," Ricky said to Kell. "But I just have to have another taste." He slid his hand around the back of Kell's neck and brought their mouths together.

Kell moaned into the kiss, a tiny sound, and kissed him back, hot and sweet. Crowding him back against the arm of the chair, hands on his shoulders, Kell pushed into the kiss, making it something hard and needy. He kept one hand on the back of Kell's neck, stroking, the other he slid around Kell's waist, rubbing circles in the small of his back.

It amazed him how different Kell tasted compared to Justin.

Justin's fingers joined his, slid over Kell's shirt, over his skin. He knew it was right, that Kell was the right one. He could taste it in Kell's mouth, feel it line of Kell's spine. Knew that Just knew it, too, the way their fingers twined together against Kell's body. They all fit, just like they were

supposed to. Kell jumped under the added touch and broke away, gasping, to stare from one of them to the other.

"It's okay to be scared," he said softly. "When Justin and I first hooked up -- I was so scared, so nervous I was shaking. But I wanted it so badly; I could feel how good we were together. Can't you feel it, Kell? How good we are together?"

"I want to. I do. It's just... Kiss me again?"

"My turn, please." Justin's voice was soft and low, big hand cupping Kell's jaw as his lover brought their lips together. It was so beautiful, watching Justin taste Kell, bring him pleasure, that strong hand caressing Kell's face.

He was hard, balls aching. He could remember asking Justin if it would always feel like this and Justin telling him the nerves and excitement of the first time would fade but chemistry was chemistry. Justin had been right. He kind of felt like he had that night, everything new and enervating, scary but wonderful.

He slid his hand along Kell's back, stroking gently. The muscles under his hand were strung tight, shaking, and Kell was making low noises. He needed it so much, was so starved for affection. Lonely Kell. He was soaking up Just's kiss like just as he had Ricky's, looping his arms around Justin's neck. So pretty to watch.

Justin petted Kells's hair, giving and giving and Ricky *knew* how it felt, that happy, wanting kiss. Knew how it traveled all the way through his bones. Knew how the pleasure settled in his balls, in his balls, in *him*. In fact he could almost feel it now and his body was reacting as if Justin were actually kissing him.

He shifted, guiding Kell's legs so that Kell was straddling Justin's thighs and then he knelt between Justin's legs and pressed against Kell's back, hands roaming, searching for skin.

Between them, Kell was melting, boneless. He gave into the kiss so sweetly, sinking down on Justin's body, hands in Justin's hair. Only the thin fabric of Kell's shirt separated them and he could feel the heat of Kell's skin through it, almost feverish.

When Kell finally pushed away it was for air, pulling in a ragged gasp, then leaning his head back against Ricky, searching for another kiss, trading off between them. He bent his head, slowly tasting Kell this time, tongue exploring and enjoying now that he felt more confident that Kell wasn't going to bolt.

And it really didn't feel like Kell was going to bolt at all. Not the way he returned the kiss, tongue coming out to taste and touch. One hand slid up behind Ricky's head and Kell was stretched between them, still touching Justin, making little hitching noises deep in his throat. Disbelieving noises. Needy ones. Sexy ones. Noises that went straight to Randy's cock. If he hadn't already been harder than nails, he would be now.

He glanced up at Justin, meeting his lover's shining eyes. Justin was smiling, more-green-than-brown eyes watching and wanting and oh! Those wide, square hands were on Kell's belly, Kell's shoulder, touching and feeling and... Oh.

Moaning into the kiss, Kell moved his touch from Justin's neck to catch one of his roving hands in his and push it down between them. Breaking the connection of their mouths, Ricky looked over Kell's shoulder to see those joined hands rubbing against the hard bulge under Kell's zipper. The backs of Kell's fingers rubbed against Justin, too, making them both groan and rock.

Oh...

Oh...

He started to rub against Kell's back, pushing his own cock tight against Kell. They started moving, humping together. Making these low grunt and groans that filled the library together. Justin gave a soft cry, lifting his head to lick and suck and kiss along Kell's stretched throat, motion and pushing never stopping.

Kell shuddered, pushing his ass back against Ricky, rubbing hard, then moving forward into Just. The noises became a loud, ragged cry as he freed his mouth. He was so pretty, cheeks flushed with passion instead of embarrassment, eyes opening to look at both he and Just with amazement and wonder, body snapping back and forth with increasing urgency. Ricky didn't think they were going to manage to get any bare skin before Kell went off like a firecracker.

He let Kell's passion and urgency fill him and he started to moan and whimper as he rubbed back. It wouldn't be the first time he came in his pants and, though it was messy and sticky once it was over, he still hoped it wouldn't be the last either.

One of Justin's hands found his ass, holding on with a familiar, strong grip, encouraging his thrusts, his passion, connecting them in the circle of those strong, sure arms. He slid his lips away from Justin's to take Kell's mouth again and then moved back to Justin's. He kept switching back and forth, growing breathless and dizzy as their flavors blended in his mouth.

He wasn't sure how much time he would have to get to know Kell's voice, Kell's body, the feel of Kell's hair against his cheek. It might be just this once, so he tried to memorize the way Kell smelled and sounded and felt, blended with him and Just. It was good and sweet and just that slightest bit awkward like first times were.

"You taste good." Justin caught Kell's eyes and nodded, taking Kell's lips in a kiss that made Kell jerk, hand around Justin's neck opening convulsively. A shiver of excitement went through him. It was good sharing his Justin with someone, knowing that someone else would know how wonderful his lover was.

With a smothered moan, Kell came, hips snapping against them, Justin's kiss sending him over. Ricky knew that kiss, knew how hot it was, knew exactly how Kell felt. That thought combined with Justin's hand on his ass, Kell's back tight against his cock and the smell of Kell's pleasure, sent him over the edge and came, too, body shaking.

Justin held them both, close and easy, then Justin's soft, happy chuckle sounded. "We know the chair is made solid, eh?"

He laughed at that, loving Justin's sweet humor and loving Justin for breaking the post-orgasmic ice and just loving Justin.

Kell just snorted, settling against Justin, sighing. He had to be as sticky as Ricky himself was, but he looked ready to settle in and take a nap.

"Bed?" Ricky asked, looking at his lover.

Justin looked at Kell. "Interested in a nap?"

"Mmm. Yeah." Kell nodded. "Sleepy."

"Yeah." Justin tapped him gently and he got up, heading slowly for the bedroom, stopping in the bathroom for towels. Kell and Justin followed, Justin's hands moving slow and easy, staying close to Kell, letting him stay warm and half-asleep.

Kell just stumbled along, letting Justin take care of him, letting Ricky push him gently down on the bed. Whether Kell knew it or not, Ricky knew that when it got below the "shouldn't be" part of Kell's brain, Kell trusted them. Belonged with them. The pliant, easy way he followed their slightest movements and touches proved that.

He got himself and Kell naked, cleaned all three of them off with the towel and slid into bed on the other side of Kell. He reached for Justin, murmuring happily as their hands met on Kell's hip.

"Night," he whispered, more than half asleep himself.

Justin brought the blanket atop them, settling down with the soft little noises Ricky knew so well. "Night, baby. Sweet dreams."

"Don't need 'em," he said softly. "Got all my dreams right here."

Justin stretched and yawned, frowning when the cold butt beneath his hand didn't match the warm butt snuggled up to his crotch. He considered this for a minute. He wasn't sure which was the harder question -- why there were two temperatures or why there were two butts. Well, one way or the other, the butt that was cold didn't seem to belong to him and appeared to be cold, so he reached out and grabbed the spare quilt off the rocking chair to cover it.

He figured it would take both opening his eyes and quite possibly a shit-load of coffee to deal with the fact of the matter, and he wasn't awake enough for either.

"Mmmm, thanks Just, was getting cold."

"'s okay, baby." Okay, now that was odd... Ricky sounded distant. Distant. He could *do* this. He measured shit for work.

Work. Did he have to work today? No... No, it was Sunday 'cause last night was Saturday. Saturday. And they had dinner plans with...

He blinked his eyes open. Right. Kell.

Wow.

He looked next to him and, yep, Ricky had not grown two butts, but Kell's butt was... well, damned snuggly and really fucking warm and Ricky ought to sleep in the middle next time, 'cause the skinny, long-legged boy was perpetually cold.

Hence the blanket.

Christ, he needed coffee.

"Just? Want a kiss." Ricky sounded half asleep still.

Snorting, Kell sat up suddenly, giving Just an elbow in the belly and clunking Ricky right on the breastbone while he flailed around. He looked around, blinking, dark hair standing up every which way in agitated tufts. His gaze finally settled on Justin and his eyes widened almost comically.

"Bathroom?" Kell had a grumpy, croaky morning voice that would have made him laugh if he could breathe, but that elbow had knocked the wind right out of him.

"Across the hall -- am I going to get a kiss first?" Ricky asked plaintively.

Kell slapped his hands over his mouth. "Mornig breaf", he said and scrambled out of the bed over Ricky's legs. Justin did laugh at that because as Kell took off bare assed naked to the bathroom it looked like his problem was more morning wood than bad breath.

"Guess you'll have to settle with my kiss, baby." He opened his arms, grinning at his lover.

Ricky grinned back, blue eyes sleepy, happy, and pounced him, mouth covering his in a blatant disregard for what his breath might be like.

"Mm..." He chuckled and pulled Ricky atop him, holding him tight. "Good morning, baby. Sleep well?"

"Yeah, like a log. Or I would have woken you up, too." Ricky closed their mouths together again, rubbing against him.

The sound of Kell clearing his throat pulled them apart. He stood in the doorway, towel wrapped around his waist, covering an obvious erection. "Has anyone seen my clothes?" He looked a lot younger than he had the night before and a lot less confident.

Ricky bounded up and went right over to Kell, pulling him into the room. "You don't have to go anywhere yet, do you? I'm always horny in the morning -- aren't I, Just?"

"Well..." He grinned over, chuckling low. Bless, the sweet, dear thing for taking the initiative. "If you take off the 'in the morning'..."

Ricky blushed, sweet face going about as red as it usually did. "Oh, Just..." The kid giggled and then nodded. "He's right though."

Ricky tugged on Kell's arm. "Come on, Kell, only got a taste last night."

Kell followed, looking about as red as a beet himself. He wasn't resisting though and that was a good sign. Although, who could resist his Ricky? He was just so sincerely happy to be alive and there with them, and Kell could no more argue than Justin could.

"The bed's still warm and soft." He patted the mattress. "Come on, Kell, let's wake up together."

Kell wavered for a long moment, but he figured Rick's smile must have won out, because Kell nodded and slipped back into the bed, dropping the towel on the floor as he went. Tentatively, he moved close and wow it must be cold out there because his feet and hands were like ice.

"Good Lord! Get in here!"

Ricky slipped in on the other side of Kell. "Snug up against Just -- he's always nice and warm."

Justin pulled Kell close, rubbing along the chilly arms and legs, his hands meeting Ricky's every now and again. Kell's ass fit nicely right up against him, just like when they were sleeping.

"There. That's better. You're starting to warm right up."

"Yeah." Kell's voice cracked. "Am I the only one who thinks this is a little weird?"

"Well, it's never happened here before, but it's not too bad." He leaned forward and kissed Kell's shoulder. "You still taste good."

"Is it okay if I'm kinda freaked? Not in a bad way, necessarily, just a ...ooh that feels good."

"It's different," said Ricky. "But you like this, right?" He wasn't sure exactly what the kid was doing, but Kell moaned a little, so it had to be good.

"I. Oh. Yeah, I like that. But I didn't, I mean when I came here last night. Oh, don't stop." Yeah. Definitely had to be good the way Kell was moving against him. Backing that tight little butt right up against him and rubbing like crazy.

"Oh..." He reached around, holding Kell's hip. "God, no. Don't stop. It's good."

"Mmmm." Kell made one of those noises, the kind he'd made the night before, sharp and needy. He arched back against Just, offering his neck for further kisses, and encouraged Ricky with ragged words.

Justin leaned up, kissing that sweet neck and taking a look at the action at the same time. Ricky had both their cocks in one of those long-fingered hands, pulling with nice long, strokes. With his other hand, Ricky was tugging on Kell's nipples.

"Oh, shit. So sexy." He shuddered, fastened his lips beneath Kell's ear, pulling hard. With his free hand, he helped Ricky's, tugging and teasing those hard little nipples.

He caught his lover's eyes and winked, loving the pleasure and desire in them. Ricky beamed at him and leaned forward, pressing their mouths together in a long, deep kiss.

"Oh God." Kell whimpered, his hands scrabbling against both of them as if trying to find something solid to hold on to. Kell wiggled and squirmed until Justin's cock lay along the crack of his ass, humping furiously into Ricky's hand. Parts of him may not be sure about all of this, but Just figured Kell's body knew exactly what it wanted.

Justin started moving, sliding his cock along that sweet crack. He gasped as Ricky's lips left his. "Oh, fuck, Kell. You feel so good. So good."

"Yeah. Feels good. God. You still want that kiss?" Kell had turned his head to look at Ricky.

Justin had to hand it to his boy, Ricky never missed an opportunity for a good thing if it was place right in front of him. Ricky was nodding, mouth covering Kell's just like that. Kell went into the kiss eagerly, and Justin was close enough to see his tongue come out and catch at Ricky's. It was damned hot, watching his lover take that kiss, meet it head on. One of Kell's hand slid back along his hip, keeping them all connected, keeping the circle closed.

"Oh..." He moved, sliding against Kell's ass, twining his fingers with Kell's. "Fuck. You two are going to make me come."

"Mmm." Kell nodded, not breaking the kiss with Ricky, and pressed back harder against him. Kell brought their joined hand around between his body and Ricky's, so he could feel Ricky's hand moving, could feel the combined heat and wetness of their cocks.

Ricky made a whimpering sound and wet heat spread over all their hands.

Oh, shit. Justin gasped, arching into Kell, shaking hard. "Kell. Ricky..."

Kell moaned, low and deep so that it vibrated against Justin's chest, shaking as he came into their combined hands.

He came hard, thrusting steadily against Kell's ass, groaning and gripping Rick and Kell's fingers. "Oh God, so good. Thank you."

"Yeah," gasped Ricky, fingers still moving slowly on his own and Kell's cocks. "Thank you."

Kell relaxed so profoundly that Justin thought he was asleep. But he wasn't because he wiggled all of the sudden and sighed. "No. Thank you for including me."

"You're welcome," whispered Ricky. "I'm glad you decided to stay."

Kell relaxed between them, settling into a light doze, a warm, heavy weight. The man could fall asleep after sex like no one Justin had ever seen.

Justin chuckled. "You staying up here and snuggling, baby? 'Cause the coffee pot's calling me."

"I don't think we should leave him alone, do you, Just? It's not nice waking up on your own in a strange place."

"Okay, baby. I'll go make breakfast -- I got those good muffins from the store and bring it up with the coffee and some juice and the paper, okay?" He was all for snuggling, but it was already nine and he was *hungry*.

Ricky was already curled up around Kell, stealing the man's body heat. "Sounds good, Just. 'm hungry."

He was almost at the door when he heard Kell's stomach rumble and a plaintive, "Food? You have food?"

"Muffins and coffee." Justin came back, leaned forward and chuckled, nuzzling Kell's nape. "Want?"

"Mmmhmm. For some reason I'm starved." Kell gave a huge yawn and rubbed his cheek against Ricky's shoulder. "I have no idea why."

Ricky giggled and rubbed his fingers along Kell's belly.

Justin chuckled. "Okay, then. Coffee and muffins shortly. You two don't do anything I wouldn't do."

"Is there anything he wouldn't do?" he heard Kell ask as he left the room.

Ricky's laughter followed him downstairs.

Snuggling was good. But so was food. Muffins. He and Ricky had snuggled and listened to stomachs growling and it devolved into a laughing, tickling mess. He still couldn't quite believe he was there and that he wasn't freaking out like he knew he should be. Even when they were all

down in the kitchen together, fighting over the newspaper and licking muffin crumbs off each other's fingers, he didn't feel the panic.

He should, really, really should. Because he knew all the arguments about why it was a really bad idea for him to do anything this dumb, but when Justin laughed like that and Ricky smiled at him just that way it was hard to care. Not to mention just hard in other places. Which was weird, because he's already come more in the last twenty-four hours than he had in weeks before that.

He could feel his face heat, and looked at his shredded muffin, trying not to be obvious about it.

Justin stole a piece of his muffin with a playful grin. "Something more substantial for lunch, yeah? Bacon cheeseburgers with onions and pickles and *huge* steak fries."

"That sounds good." Which led him to the I'm planning to be here for lunch stage. Ack.

"Are onions a good idea, Just?" Ricky blushed and ducked his head, one hand sliding along Kell's leg. "Gotta admit, we'll need the protein though."

The hand on his leg made him jump, a little guilty, because he'd been thinking some pretty energetic thoughts about steak fries and that snapped him out of it.

"Protein?" he asked, feeling a little stupid for losing the thread of the conversation.

Ricky's face was close, smile on his face, fingers walking along his leg. "To keep our energy up?"

"Oh." His voice came out faint, and he cleared his throat. "Right. The way I feel now I think I'll need it."

"You and me, both. Ricky's a wanton." Justin teased, leaning against him, rustling the paper.
"Ooh, the Drafthouse's having a Scorsese double feature next weekend!"

Ricky was red and gasping, staring open-mouthed at his lover. "I'm a wanton?"

"Yep. You." Justin was chuckling, stealing another bite of his muffin.

Ricky suddenly giggled, hand slipping right up along his thigh, cupping his cock. "Just is right."

Kell gasped, cock jumping under Ricky's hand. "Well, you did kiss me first."

Justin laughed softly, turning his head to nuzzle against his jaw. "Yep. Can't blame him though, you taste good."

Ricky nodded, hand sliding and grasping. "And you'd just eaten chocolate -- so you tasted even better than good."

"Oh. Oh, God." Kell arched into the touch, amazed at himself, amazed at how easily the simple touch of Ricky's hand and the warmth of Justin's smile made him hard and shaking, ready to go again. "So did you. Taste good, I mean."

"So no onions," Ricky said, looking at Justin.

"No onions, baby." Justin's voice was low, husky, sliding down his neck, fingers sliding up to tease his nipples. "But if you two don't be careful, we'll be ordering burgers in because we'll spending the rest of our morning naked in bed."

Kell slid an arm around Justin, letting it rest just below his ass on his thighs. "That sounds as good as the burgers. Better. But I need a shower. I stink."

"Oh! A shower!" Ricky sounded excited. "Did you notice how big the shower was? The bathroom was the first room Justin renovated."

"No. I didn't notice. But you could show me."

Ricky straightened, almost bouncing. "Big enough for three!"

Justin grinned. "Big enough for five."

Kell mourned the loss of the touch on his cock, but stood up, sliding his arm up Justin's body and kissing him lightly where his jaw met his neck. "You coming with us?"

"Wouldn't miss it." Justin stood, taking a long, slow kiss flavored with coffee and cinnamon and laughter.

His knees were a little shaky when the kiss was over and Kell held out a hand to Ricky. "Lead the way then and show me this amazing bathroom."

Ricky grabbed his hand and Justin's and pulled them both along, enthusiasm catching. "It's got black tile and glass doors and two shower heads. *Pulsating* shower heads." Ricky wagged his eyebrows comically.

"Was gonna put a garden tub in, but Ricky wanted a bigger shower and a Jacuzzi downstairs in the sun room instead." Justin's hand was hot on his ass, eyes smiling. "But there's a little seat and everything."

"It's a great house." He wanted to stop and kiss someone, was having trouble walking in fact, but Ricky was so happy dragging them along that he went with it.

"It is. It's Ricky's house and when I'm done making it the way he wants it, it's going to be stunning." Justin's voice was sure, happy, and not a little bit horny.

"And when you're done making it the way I want it -- it's going to be *our* house, Justin." Ricky sounded even hornier and he was hurrying them now.

"Told you. Wanton." Justin's laugh filled the stairwell.

Kell was breathless when they reached the bathroom and torn as to who he wanted to kiss more. Ricky, with his bright smile or Justin with his warm laughter. It was decided for him when he stumbled over the bathroom threshold, right into Ricky. He laughed himself, and kissed Ricky, deep and thorough.

Ricky's hands slid up to cup his cheeks, long fingers moving through his hair. Soft, happy humming filled his mouth. It filled other parts of him too, parts that had been empty too long, and he moved into the kiss, pushing Ricky back until they hit something solid and he could get the angle he wanted, get a deeper taste of that mouth.

Ricky's humming turned into moans, the long, lean body hard, parts of it harder than others, against him. It felt so good, would feel better without their shorts between them, and Kell moved his hands to Ricky's ass, peeling the thin layer of fabric down as far as he could.

He gave a frustrated sound when the fabric hung up between them, and he gave up, not willing to break the kiss. He settled for cupping Ricky's ass in his hands and squeezing.

Justin's hands slid around his waist, sliding off his shorts, then... oh, what a very good man Justin was, pulling Ricky's clothes away, giving him all that skin to touch, to grab, to rub against. He did, too, sliding his fingers over every bit of skin he could reach. He rubbed against Ricky, loving the feel of him. He broke away with one hand, reaching out for Justin, wanting even more skin to touch.

Justin pushed close, arm wrapping around his waist. Kell gasped as Justin's tongue slid into his and Ricky's kiss, sharing their flavors, bringing them together. Ricky whimpered, body jerking against his own, pushing him hard into Justin.

It was too much and it was not enough. They had shared the taste of each other the night before, but not like this. Not without someone left out, waiting. It was beautiful, *they* were beautiful, and he couldn't get enough of them.

Justin's hand found his head, buried in his hair, pulling him and Ricky down, closer into his hungry, needy kiss. It went on and on, the skin beneath his hands growing slick with sweat, Ricky's cock hard against his, Justin's burning where is pressed against them each in turn.

He finally pulled away, sagging a little, hoping they could hold him up. "Shower or bed?" was all he could get out.

"Shower's closer," Ricky grunted, breathless, moving against him urgently.

"Shower then." It was all he could do to move, all he could do to pull back enough to get them all moving. But he did, pulling and tugging with single-minded intensity.

Justin followed, hand sliding down over his back. "Want you. God, it's good. Water. Baby, turn on the water..."

Ricky's heat and need disappeared, water suddenly spraying over him from two directions.

He felt bereft and turned to Justin, pressing him back against the shower wall and kissing him hard, just completely unable to keep himself from touching one of them. Desperate. Justin wrapped those heavy arms around him, rubbing slow and steady, cock hard and hot against his thigh.

Oh, yeah. That felt so good. He rubbed back, savoring the taste of the kiss, the feel of that compact, solid body against him. It could be even better, he knew and when they broke the kiss to gasp for air he turned his head, searching for Ricky. "Please. Need you both."

Ricky pressed up against his back, passing a tube of lube to Justin. "What do you want, Kell? How do you want us?"

"Anything. Any way you want. Please. So good."

He could feel the look that Ricky and Justin shared, could feel the intensity of it.

"I... I want to know how you feel inside me, Kell. And I want Justin to have you while you have me."

Kell thought he might just pass out. It had been so long since he'd done that, so very long. But it sounded so good. So right. "Yes. Please. Oh, God."

Justin nodded, taking his lips in a long, almost fierce kiss. "Here or in the bed, baby?"

"Here, standing, water slick, hot and good." Ricky was panting, gasping the words out between low breaths.

"How do we... I mean, do you have anything?" Kell felt horribly awkward all of a sudden. He wanted to. Oh, did he. But he was vaguely worried about things like condoms and lube and hurting people and he was starting to feel self-conscious.

"Yeah. In the vanity drawer, baby. There ought to be a couple." Justin's lips found his again, tongue pushing deep. He was barely aware of Ricky leaving the shower, Justin's mouth keeping him occupied. It didn't seem like any time at all before Ricky was back.

"I've got everything we need."

"Come here, then. Get warmed back up, baby, and let's play." Justin reached out for Ricky, tugging them all together with a groan.

Oh, that was better. It was hard to think with all of that hot, wet, skin pressed against him. Harder to think with Justin's mouth back on his and Ricky's hand on his ass and, oh, there. Right there. He just let himself get lost in it, let them push and pull and tug him around until they were all ready to do it just the way Ricky wanted. Ricky was leaning against the wall, bent slightly, ass full of Justin's fingers, just like his own was.

It was too much, but not enough, and he moaned. "Now. Can't wait anymore. Gotta do it now."

"Yeah. God, yeah. You're so sexy, both of you, riding my fingers." Justin's voice was raw, desperate. "The rubbers, baby?"

"Huh?"

Justin's laugh was warm, filling the shower. "Rubbers? Condoms? French letters? Sheepskins? Cock covers?"

"Oh! Oh, fuck, yeah." Ricky reached back, two packets clutched in his hands. "I can't think while you're doing that, Just."

He took one, his groan harmonizing with Ricky's as Justin's fingers slid free.

"Okay, baby, let's do this thing."

His hands were shaking. God, how long had it been since he'd wanted anything this bad? It took everything he had to steady them enough to roll the condom on and fumble for the lube and hope

he wasn't looking the idiot like he was feeling it. And Ricky was just there waiting for him, just like that and he was amazed. "God, you're hot. You'll tell me, if I do something wrong, or hurt you, or something. Right?"

Ricky nodded. "Uh-huh. Please, Kell, need it. Need you."

He stroked a hand down Ricky's back and moved into place behind him, feeling Justin move to stand behind him. Ricky was open and ready for him, glistening from the work of Justin's busy fingers and the rush of blood to his cock left him light-headed.

"Tell me if you need me to stop." The words were strangled, because he was pushing against the tight opening of Ricky's ass, working his way in, and he thought he might die from the sweet pleasure of it.

"Don't stop!" Ricky told him, pushing back, trying to get him in. "Don't tease, Kell -- not this time."

"Not. Not teasing. Oh, God. Fuck. you feel good." In, pushing harder and harder until he was in all the way, and the water pounded down on them, making his skin tingle. All he could do for a minute was breathe, rest up against Ricky's back and fucking breathe. "so good."

Ricky shuddered and made a sweet noise.

"Yeah. Yeah. Oh, Just, he feels good."

"Yes." Just's lips brushed over his shoulder. "You going to let me find out how you feel, too?"

"Yes. I... yes, please." Kell knew he wasn't too coherent, but just the thought made his hips twist, made him push against Ricky. To feel them both that way, oh. "Yes."

"Yes." Justin touched his hip, lips on his skin, and Kell felt a thick heat pressing against him.

Really thick. Whoa. It had been even longer than he thought, the way that felt. But there was no way he was going to tell Justin to stop because it felt good, too. Made him feel real for the first time in a long time. Wanted and needed, cradled between the two of them.

"He's big," he whispered against Ricky's ear. "Feels so good."

"Yeah, he's awesome. You feel good, too Kell. Gotta move now. Please?"

"Yeah. Now." Kell rolled his hips, feeling it move from him to Ricky and back again, into Justin. They all groaned and Justin pushed in harder behind him, rocking them all.

"Oh yeah..." Ricky was gasping and clawing at the tile, pushing his ass back to meet the next thrust.

Justin held onto him, letting him ride that thick cock, not pushing yet, just staying still and easy. "Fuck, so sexy. You're both so goddamned sexy."

The sound Kell made was entirely too whimper-like for his own taste, but who could blame him? Tight, hot, hard, it made his head spin. He couldn't keep the slow pace, had to move faster, just had to. Planting kisses and apologies on Ricky's neck Kell pumped his hips, looking for the friction he desperately needed.

The sound Ricky made was definitely a whimper and it sounded good, hot and needy and the thin hips were pushing back, meeting him thrust for thrust.

"Oh, oh God!" The cry was broken, wild and Justin started moving, pressing deep inside him. They found a rhythm -- pushing and pulling and rocking and moaning and the water kept falling around them, cooler than their skin.

Even with Kell between them it was like Ricky could sense Justin's need, because he pushed back against Kell, moaning, and Kell had never seen anything quite as beautiful as that. The thought would amaze him later, but just then he didn't care. Couldn't. All he could do was move, caught between one fucking perfect sensation and another.

Justin had one hand around his waist, the other sliding around to stroke Ricky's side, fingers short and thick and oddly right as they moved up Ricky's body to settle where their bodies' met. Ricky just kind of convulsed, skin rippling. He could feel it around his cock, could feel how good that touch made Ricky feel.

"Harder, Kell. Touch me, please."

Yeah. That was it. Justin's hand on them, his own on Ricky, reaching around to grasp his cock, hard and needy for them both. Too good. Far too good for him, but that didn't matter now. Just their pleasure and his, and he was just ready to explode, holding off only because he didn't want it to end, wanted to feel this way as long as he could.

He pumped Ricky hard, stroking and squeezing as Justin thrust into him, and he could feel his orgasm rising along his spine. Ricky beat him to it, a high pitched moan echoing off the walls and the water. The tight heat that held his cock spasmed, milked him hard as Ricky shot against the tile.

That was all it took for him, unable to hold back in the wake of Ricky's body tightening around him. He came hard enough to see stars, shaking and moaning and trying to stay upright with the tile slick beneath his feet. The pleasure was astonishing.

"Oh, fuck." The whisper was almost lost, but there was no way to miss the shuddering jerks into his body, Justin groaning against his back.

That took every last bit of Kell's energy and he rested against Ricky's back.

They stayed that way, slumped together against the wall of the shower, until the water became uncomfortably cold. Kell shivered. "Mmmf. Bed?"

"Yeah." Justin grunted, sighing as he pulled away and turned off the water and stumbled out of the stall. "Towels. Dry. Come on."

Kell resisted the urge to giggle at primal-male-just-had-sex Justin and pulled away from Ricky as carefully as he could. "You okay?" he asked, helping Ricky stand up straight.

He got a beaming smile from Ricky, eyelids at half mast. "Yeah, Kell."

Ricky leaned forward, kissing him sloppily. "What about you? Is Justin the best or what?"

He kissed back, trying to ignore the tightness in his chest. "You both are. You're amazing. C'mon, let's get warm and dry."

Ricky was leaning on him a little, letting him support the lanky frame. He wobbled, hoping they wouldn't end up on the floor, but then Justin was there with towels and they made it to the bed, tumbling down on it in a pile of arms and legs and wet skin.

Justin pulled them both close, one heavy arm wrapping around and holding on, lax and unmoving. Ricky's mouth found his, warm and soft and still sloppy as heck. The kid was half asleep. "Thanks, Kell."

"Mmmmm. Sleep. You can thank me later."

Ricky settled back against Justin, one hand sliding across the thick muscles to curl with his own. "You'll stay?"

"Yeah. I'll stay." And he would, as long as they would let him.

End.

Couple Seeks Friendship

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