

Single Shots



Boys of Summer: Sharing Spaces
by Stephanie Vaughan

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"DJ?"

"Yeah, I'm DJ. You must be Joe."

"Yeah. Joe D'Alessandro. How ya doin'?"

DJ was so stunned, staring into the biggest, brownest eyes he'd ever seen, that it took him a moment to realize the guy standing at his door had stuck out his hand to shake.

Belatedly offering his own, DJ hesitated a second before clasping the outstretched hand and shaking briefly. It was a little old school, but for a face like that he could deal with it.

"DJ Abbot. Come on in and take a look around."

"This is nice. I had no idea this place was back here." Olive-toned skin and thick black hair contrasted nicely with a smile that would have looked right at home in a toothpaste ad. DJ stepped back to let the guy enter, and took a discreet peek at the high, rounded backside encased so attractively in denim painter's pants.

Dimples.

He'd bet the next month's rent that there were dimples on the sides of what looked to be a truly stellar ass.

"Makes ya wonder, huh?" DJ had a few more seconds to admire the view while Joe took a slow visual survey of the room. It didn't take long, though, and DJ made sure there was a polite, disinterested look on his face when Joe turned back.

"Sure does. The bedrooms are upstairs?"

So caught up in ogling his prospective roommate's butt, DJ just then noticed the visored black helmet that dangled from two tanned fingers. "You ride a bike?"

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The eighteenth person to answer the ad DJ had placed in the university's newspaper, Joe already rated well on a number of levels. Polite and well-mannered—hell, he'd even shown up at the time they'd agreed on. After interviewing numbers one through seventeen, DJ could testify to exactly how rare each of those qualities was individually. But together? Off the scale. Virtually unknown.

"Yeah. I bought it thinking I'd save money on gas. Didn't realize I'd more than make up for it in maintenance."

There was that smile again. Nice. Friendly. Like he didn't take anything too seriously, least of all himself.

"What kind?"

"Are you into bikes?"

Man liked his ride, that was for sure, the way his face lit up and his eyes sparkled, either that or ... or DJ didn't know what else. "Not really."

"Don't worry about it—you've probably never heard of it, then. It's a Buell Lightning. It's okay. Not exactly a Ducati, but it'll do for now."

DJ tried to look thoughtful, like he knew what a Ducati was. "Why don't you put your stuff down and I'll show you the rest of the place?"

Still looking around at the high ceiling and multi-level layout of the place, Joe absently dropped the helmet on the couch DJ had indicated and shrugged out of the heavy-looking black leather jacket that had seen better days.

Whoa.

Those were some seriously nice shoulders under that snug black T-shirt. And arms ... Either Joe worked out or he'd been blessed with a fine, *fine* natural build.

"What's down there?" Joe glanced toward the short staircase leading down off the living room.

"Laundry room and garage. Bedrooms are up this way." DJ led the way, climbing the steep, narrow stairs that led up to the uppermost level. Conscious of Joe following a few steps back, DJ wondered if Joe was watching *his* ass and speculating like DJ was.

When he reached the top, DJ turned and waited for Joe. From this angle Joe's eyelashes were highlighted perfectly, ridiculously long and curly.

"This is the only shower and tub in the place. There's another half-bath downstairs next to the laundry room, but it's just a toilet and a sink, so you'd have to share this one. If you want to shower, that is. How much of a slob are you?"

Joe stepped past DJ, poking his head into the bathroom. "Not too bad. I pick up after myself, if that's what you mean. I hate doing dishes, though, so I eat out a lot."

"Yeah? Me, too. Sandwiches and scrambled eggs are about as much as I can handle. The view's not bad from this room."

Moving past DJ, Joe had stepped into the reason he was there: a room for rent. Not close enough to the beach to actually see it, there was just a suggestion of salt air that was noticeable when the wind was right. Although proximity to the ocean was the ostensible reason for the high cost of the rental price, about the only tangible sign of it were the seagulls that congregated in any empty parking lot.

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Not much to see in an empty room, Joe nevertheless moved through the place, checking out the inside of the closet and the view of the neighboring condo complex from the room's only window. Shoving his hands into his back pockets, he stared out the window for several seconds before turning to face DJ.

"It's all fine. The price is still the same as what was stated in the ad?"

"Uh-huh. That, plus half the utilities. The hot water's shared by the whole building, so that's built into the price of the rent. Sometimes the electric bill gets up there in the summer because of the A.C., but most of the time it's pretty reasonable."

"No, that's great. Look ... can I ask you a question?"
Gorgeous shoulders hunched, Joe looked from his feet up to DJ's face and then away, gazing casually out the window.

"Sure. Now's the time. I wish more people asked questions up front."

"DJ ... you're gay, right?"

Sighing, DJ knew what was coming next. He wished he had a dollar for every time he'd heard it. "Yeah. That's why I put the ad in *Out on Campus*. Is that a problem?"

"No, no, not at all. I am, too. It's just..."

"Yeah?"

"It's just, I would never have known. You're maybe the straightest-looking gay guy I've ever met."

"Yeah, I know. I get that a lot."

* * * *

"David, stop. I told you."

The hand unzipping Joe's fly hesitated for a moment, then finished the job, reaching inside for Joe's dick.

"C'mon, Joe. It's been a long time. You know you like how I take care of you."

Joe grabbed the wrist attached to the hand attached to his cock, and carefully removed it from his pants. Behind a fringe of blonde hair, David's eyes reflected hurt. Goddammit, this was exactly why he'd hesitated so long before asking for help from an ex. As much as he would like to stay friends after the romance was over, David always made things so difficult. But he was the only person Joe knew with a truck and Joe needed the help moving. So, against his better judgment, he'd called.

"Look, you promised. I told you I needed help moving and that was all. You said you were okay with it."

"I know. But..." David looked deep into Joe's eyes and tucked a bit of hair behind Joe's ear. "Giovanni ... *ragazzo bello*."

"David, stop it." For the second time in just over a minute Joe removed David's hand from some part of his anatomy.

"Look, this was a mistake. I'm sorry—I shouldn't have asked you. I appreciate your help, but I've got to go. I've still got a lot of unpacking to do."

"Let me help you unpack, then. I could—"

"Thanks, but I don't think that's a good idea." Joe opened the door of David's truck and slid half-way out, touching one foot to the ground. "Thanks again for all the help."

"Any time. I'll call you."

Climbing out of David's truck, Joe cast one last guilty glance in David's direction and bit back the "Please don't" he'd nearly blurted out. Nodding briefly in David's direction, he shut the truck's door, trying not to slam it, and headed for his new place.

God, he was such an asshole.

What a lame-ass, stupid idea that had been. He'd known David was still into him but, in his own defense, Joe hadn't realized quite how much. It had been the suffocating, bordering on stalker-like behavior, that had driven Joe away in the first place. He should have known better than to ask David's help for anything. He'd just given the man renewed hope and now Joe knew he'd be screening his calls for another month, at least.

Joe slid his key into the lock and opened the door of the neat little townhome. Talk about a find. Located midway between work and school, quiet and within his budget.

Stepping through the door, the sounds of NCAA basketball and the aroma of pizza both greeted him immediately upon entering. DJ must have ordered the pizza while Joe had been making his last trip to his old apartment and Joe could have kissed him. It was like a wall of normal going up between them and the world

"Hey." DJ flicked Joe a quick glance before going back to his pizza and the game.

"Hey. So, who's winning?"

"Gonzaga." This time DJ didn't bother to look up.

"Oh. Big fan?"

"Huh?"

"I asked if you were a big fan."

"Not really. But Indiana's got this shooting guard that's incredible. Just fucking gorgeous. Check out number twelve."

Joe cracked up and followed DJ's gaze to the TV. "Okay, so consider your queer street cred established. Oh, yeah. That *is* nice. Mind if I sit down?"

"Nah, go ahead. Have some pizza."

"Only if I can give you some money for it."

The game went to a commercial and DJ's gaze finally broke free of the television. "Don't worry about it. I don't need to eat it all, so you'd be doing me a favor. If you're really concerned, you can buy next time."

"Thanks. Ah, that's good. Man, I am so beat, I can't tell you." Joe took another bite of the pizza and settled into the big chair adjacent to the sofa DJ sat slouched on. Feet up, diet soda in hand, DJ looked the opposite of how Joe felt: relaxed, uncomplicated, satisfied with himself and his life. After dealing with David all day, it was like breathing fresh air after an evening in a smoky nightclub.

DJ took a drink from his soda shot Joe a commiserating glance. "I hear you. I hate moving with a passion."

Joe chewed his pizza and scrubbed a hand over his tired eyes. "Yeah, moving definitely sucks. The company didn't help."

Maybe it was Joe's imagination, but DJ's expression seemed to close down a bit.

"Your friend seemed a little, um ... intense."

"I'm such an idiot." It didn't help to acknowledge his idiocy. What did a normal guy like DJ—not a care in the

world—know about psycho exes who didn't know when to say when? "I should have just sucked it up and rented a truck. I forgot just how 'intense' David can be. God knows, I've tried."

DJ shifted uncomfortably in his seat and switched his gaze back to the basketball game, conveniently now back from commercial break.

Great.

Not even living in the new place a full week and already he'd shown DJ what an effed up personal life he had.

Perfect.

Just to make things that little bit worse, Joe realized he was developing a semi-serious jones for his new roommate. Which was odd, when he thought about it. Since when did he go for the all-American, boy-next-door type? Big-eyed Jake Gyllenhaal types with a little Matt Damon thrown in didn't usually flip his switch. Slim, blond and artistic was more his type. Which described David perfectly, hence his problems.

God. He was even beginning to depress himself now.

Something about DJ's open face and 'the whole world's my friend' manner drew him in, though. Thick and muscular didn't ordinarily do it for him—unless you were talking dicks, of course. Joe let his gaze wander over DJ's body as DJ sat, so caught up in the game that Joe could look his fill. Too bad about The Rule. Otherwise he might find himself looking for opportunities to explore that muscular, athletic body a little more closely.

Interrupting Joe's speculation just then by flashing a quick grin in his direction, DJ gestured at the screen. "Did you see that?"

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"No. What happened?" Oh, well. DJ would find out soon enough that he was a big fake when it came to sports.

"Did you see how, when they took twelve out of the game, how all the other guys patted his ass? I knew it. I *knew* he was gay. Had to be."

"You are so dreaming, pal." At least DJ was talking to him again.

* * * *

DJ hitched the bag of groceries he carried up on his hip while unlocked the front door. He hated himself for even having the thought, but he halfway hoped Joe wouldn't be home tonight.

He liked his new roommate. A lot. But how long did he have to give it before he could admit that things weren't working out and not look like a jerk?

As DJ set the bag on the low bar separating the kitchen from the entry hall, a door closed softly upstairs and realized his wish hadn't been granted. What else was new? He separated the things that belonged in the refrigerator from what went in the cabinet and rededicated himself to no repeats of this morning's fiasco.

He and Joe had worked out a schedule for the shower in the morning. Since Joe's bank job started earlier than DJ's job as a sports injury therapist, Joe got the first shower. The schedule had worked well enough for the first ten days or so, but this morning it had unraveled badly. Like a squadron of Blue Angels, it only took a slight deviation to produce disaster. Instead of exiting the bathroom promptly and

finishing his grooming in the privacy of his bedroom, Joe had spent an extra five minutes using the room's multiple mirrors to get his thick, black hair just the way he liked it.

Which wouldn't have made a lick of difference if he hadn't been doing it nude.

Miles of lovely olive skin covering chiseled muscles an underwear model would envy and DJ had been able to confirm the presence of just the kind of high, rounded butt he would love to worship—complete to the divots in the sides and two perfect dimples at the base of Joe's spine.

DJ sighed.

How high school was it to lust after your roommate?

Extremely.

He was an adult—pretty much. He could share living space with someone and not fuck them. It wasn't like DJ needed to prove anything. He'd done it repeatedly, four times at least in the past three years.

But, half-awake and slurping coffee, he'd nearly scalded himself when he'd pushed open the bathroom door and realized the room was still occupied. He'd stood there frozen, his brain unable to keep up with his roving eyes, forgetting to swallow the burning hot liquid in his mouth.

Maybe it had only seemed like forever that he'd remained there, motionless except for his eyeballs, taking in broad shoulders, trim waist, and—*holy shit*—a long, pretty cock resting quietly between two hairy muscular thighs. He'd been just awake enough to notice that Joe must trim down there though because, despite wonderfully hairy legs and chest, the hair surrounding his personal package was only modest.

In retrospect maybe it was a good thing he'd been paralyzed after all, otherwise he might have gotten down on his hands and knees to examine everything in minute detail. DJ paused in mid-stretch as he stacked soup cans, knowing he shouldn't be allowing himself to think about Joe's dick and what he'd like to do with it, but unable to resist.

He'd start by touching his tongue to the very tip and feel the soft skin there as he breathed in the scents of sex and skin. Run his tongue around the head, tasting any stray drops of pre-come that might have leaked out. Next, he'd pull just the head in with his lips, suction and the seal he'd make with them keeping it inside. DJ would slowly, ever so slowly, take the rest of the shaft into his mouth where he'd begin—

"Hey, how you doin'?"

DJ nearly jumped out of his skin when Joe came around the corner and into the kitchen, looking tired but amazing in nothing but a pair of worn jeans.

"Shit! You startled me." Setting down the soup, DJ concentrated on not meeting Joe's gaze, just in case his thoughts were somehow visible behind his eyes. As if on auto-pilot though, DJ's gaze went immediately to Joe's crotch, the root of his dick just detectable behind a zipper that looked only barely attempted.

His view was cut off as Joe passed behind DJ, opened the fridge and took out two bottles of water. Joe edged by, heading back out of the narrow kitchen, and the heat of his body registered on DJ's subconscious.

A thump sounded somewhere upstairs, and they both paused and looked up.

His gaze falling to meet DJ's, Joe shrugged and smiled softly, his dark eyes unreadable beneath two slashes of even darker brow. "Sorry."

Joe left the kitchen, leaving DJ to wonder, as he caught a last glimpse of denim-covered legs and bare feet disappearing up the stairs, just what Joe was apologizing for.

Ignoring the chocolate milk that was calling to him from the fridge, DJ poured himself some sparkling water instead. The number of times he'd repeated the experience hadn't softened the blow any, unfortunately. His days of running laps and hours of physical conditioning—part of the price he paid for going to school on a baseball scholarship—were over.

He worked in an office now. On his feet all day, granted, but still ... he couldn't tuck away a double burger, fries and a malt the way he'd been able to most of his life. Not without buying himself a new wardrobe first, anyway. So DJ flopped down in front of the TV with his water and an apple, determined to wind down and ignore what was obviously going on upstairs.

DJ'd never met anyone quite like Joe, so it hadn't occurred to him to screen for it during the roommate-finding process. He knew the party-all-night type by sight; same with the tweakers and the drama queens. But he was coming to realize that Joe was in a league of his own.

Working in a bank as part of the management training program meant Joe had to dress well. He also went to school two nights a week, completing the educational requirements of the program, but usually took Sundays off to get his laundry done, do homework, and just generally get ready for

his week. The other four nights, though, he either went out and stayed out or brought someone home and got quietly laid.

The man was amazing and DJ had nothing but awe for his abilities. Joe wasn't ugly—far from it. But he wasn't magazine cover pretty, either. Fit, but not a gym rat. Sure, he was intelligent, but Stephen Hawking had nothing to worry about.

DJ hadn't found the nerve yet to ask Joe what his secret was, but he would some day. It was uncanny, the way the man could pick up a date. Any day, any where, any time, seemingly. Coming home from work, going to the store. School was a given. The capper—the night that DJ had mentally awarded Joe the title of international champion of the world—was when Joe had gone out to gas up his motorcycle. Just gas, that was all.

He'd come back an hour and a half later, his clothes askew, and a weary smile on his face. Weary, but satisfied.

Fucking amazing.

The crime drama on TV was quiet for the moment, and DJ was reaching for his glass when he heard it: the rhythmic squeak of bed springs, punctuated by euphoric moaning. Guttural and needy, it went straight to DJ's dick and he couldn't keep his gaze from abandoning the television and wandering up, over his shoulder to where the corner of the door to Joe's room was just visible.

Lucky bastard.

* * * *

"What's wrong with your neck?"

"Nothing. It's just a little tweaked. Ever since an accident I was in about ... five years ago. Every once in a while it bugs me." The concern he read in DJ's eyes felt good. Joe didn't get a lot of that, and what he did get invariably came from the wrong person. David would be happy to help out, he was sure. "It'll be fine. Got any aspirin or Tylenol I can borrow?"

"Do you want me to—"

"What? *Ow!* Jesus, that hurt."

DJ's hands, in the process of reaching, stopped suddenly. Joe had caught the movement with his peripheral vision and tried to turn his head. Stabbing pain shot down his neck and radiated out over his shoulders.

"Here. Let me take a look at it."

Without waiting for permission, DJ stepped behind Joe and placed both hands on his shoulders. Squeezing lightly, DJ's thumbs gently probed the muscles and tendons bridging Joe's shoulders and neck.

"Move your head to the right."

It wasn't difficult, so Joe did.

"Okay, now the other way."

Joe could only turn his head a little over half-way before the pain stopped him.

"Have you seen a doctor about this?"

Easygoing roommate DJ was nowhere to be seen and in his place was the dispassionate health care professional. Joe knew DJ was a physical therapist of some sort, but all Joe cared about right now were the magic hands giving him relief.

"No, I don't have time. I can't miss work this week. But that feels great. Don't stop."

DJ was working his hands down the muscles of Joe's left side, his thumbs moving in circles. Probing.

"You really oughtta see someone about this."

"I can't. It takes too long. I'd have to miss at least a solid three hours of work and I can't afford to right now. We've got a project going with the Milan office and I've got to be there since I'm the only one fluent in Italian."

"No kidding?"

DJ sounded preoccupied. Like he was focused on the diagnosis and the conversation was an afterthought. Joe didn't care. Whatever DJ was doing, it was working for Joe.

"Can you just—I don't know—rub it, or something? Loosen it up a little?"

Oh, God, it hurt.

Even worse, when DJ found a problem area, he pressed on it and the bright flare of pain stopped Joe's breath. Gradually, though, the pain faded and it felt almost ... good. A good kind of hurt.

DJ really had wonderful hands. The sureness with which he touched told Joe that DJ wasn't just blowing smoke about what he did. Joe could believe DJ did this every day. Touched people. Manipulated them. Moved his hands across their bare skin. How could he get DJ to—The ache flared again and lust took a back seat to pain. "Aw, shit, that hurt. *Fuck.*"

Warm breath ghosted over the back of Joe's neck. Was DJ leaning over him? Heat against his back said yes.

"Listen. If you won't go to a doctor—"

"Don't make me shake my head. Next week, for sure. I promise."

"Hold on, then."

DJ jogged up the stairs, tight jock's ass nicely displayed, and disappeared into his room, returning a moment later. Joe let his eyes drift half-shut and just enjoyed the sight of DJ half walking, half trotting back down the stairs; appreciated the easy play of muscles evident beneath the T-shirt and jeans. He wouldn't mind playing doctor with DJ some time. Open your mouth and say 'ah.'

"Here."

Moving in close, DJ held out his closed fist and Joe lifted a hand to accept whatever DJ was offering. "What is it?"

"Just some extra strength ibuprofen. If you wanted to wash it down with a beer, it wouldn't hurt."

Joe smiled. "Really? I've never had a doc tell me anything like that. Not even once. And I'm pretty sure I'd remember if he had."

An answering grin from DJ had blood throbbing in Joe's cock. The bar stool he sat on encouraged sprawling and Joe's legs were spread wide, with DJ standing almost close enough that Joe could enclose him with them if he tried. "It's an off-label prescription, and I can't give it to you officially. I've used it on myself, though, when I pull something."

Their gazes met and held. For a long moment they looked into each others' eyes, the tension building. It was Joe that couldn't stand it another second, finally, and broke the silence with a soft whisper. "If you ever pulled anything, I'd be happy to rub it for you. Any time."

DJ stared back at him.

What was he thinking? This was so wrong. Rule number one of cohabitation was don't screw up a decent roommate relationship with sex. A good roommate—unlike sex—wasn't something you could find just anywhere. But Joe was finally close enough to see what a pretty green DJ's eyes were, and he swallowed reflexively when DJ's tongue came out briefly to wet his lips.

"You know what would be really good?"

Gazes still locked, they were both held in place by the incredible sexual tension.

"What?"

That tongue flicked out again and Joe's dick twitched. God, if DJ wanted to—

"—in the Jacuzzi."

"I'm sorry. What?"

"The Jacuzzi would loosen up those muscles right up for you. Have you tried it yet?"

Could DJ be flirting with him? How could he test it to find out?

"Is that a good idea if I've had alcohol?" Joe watched DJ's eyes because he sure as hell couldn't tell from the body language.

"If you stick to one you should be fine. But just in case I could, uh, come along. To keep an eye on things."

* * * *

Bad idea. Bad idea. This is a really bad idea.

DJ's conscience was talking to him as he followed Joe down the path to the communal hot tub maintained by the

condo association. He had a Corona in one hand, while he tried vainly with the other to hold a towel in front of his crotch as he walked. Whatever Joe's shorts were made out of, they did nothing to camouflage the shape of his ass, hence the need to cover up what the sight of it was doing to DJ's front.

"Is it always this deserted?"

"Pretty much. Here, let me get the lock." Stepping past Joe, DJ juggled his beer, his towel, and the keys while he tried like hell to ignore the wide expanse of nicely furred bare chest just inches away.

Something smelled damn good—some combination of skin and soap and cologne. The artificial scents were faint, though, and it was the smell of warm, clean skin that teased DJ's nose most. Ignoring the impulse to lean down and get a taste of some of the smooth, dark shoulder so near, DJ pushed the gate open and held it long enough for Joe to pass.

"This was a good idea. I'm glad you thought of it. I've been pushing it in too many directions at once—work, school, going out. It's nice to just relax and do nothing for once."

They each set down their belongings long enough to ease themselves into the spa. Joe's groan of pleasure sounded almost sexual, and DJ was happy to settle into the hot, bubbling water, finally free from the worry of Joe noticing his hard-on.

"Sink down and see how much of your neck you can get under the water." Better to pretend this was a professional consultation—think of Joe as just another client. Yeah, right.

Joe let his body sink deeper into the water until only his head, and his arms hooked behind him on the spa's edge, rose above the water's surface. "That's nice."

They both floated, Joe slowly rotating his head, working the sore muscles, and DJ found himself unconsciously mirroring Joe's pose by dropping lower into the water.

The night was quiet. Faint sounds of a television from one townhome, while music from another drifted lightly on the night breeze. Closer, the churning of the spa's motor and bubbling of the water were soothing. Not exactly a mountain brook, but nice. Steam rose, disappearing into the night. DJ took a sip of his beer.

"DJ, could I ask you a big favor?"

Caught in mid-swallow, DJ took a second to respond. "Sure."

"Could I get you to do that thing on my neck again? That really helped."

Oh, man. This was trouble. The water, the darkness, the alcohol—it had all been working on DJ, too. As relaxed as he was, what if his hands wandered? No. He could do this. He touched attractive people every day as a regular part of his job. He could do this.

Joe must have picked up DJ's hesitation, because he instantly apologized. "Oh, hey, I'm sorry, man. You probably get hit up all the time. You do that all day long and the last thing you want is people bugging you in your down-time. Forget it. The water's great—it's helping already."

"No, no, that's okay. It's fine. I don't mind. Really."

Dark eyes looked back at DJ doubtfully. "You're sure?"

He was a sucker for dark eyes. Always had been, even back before he'd figured out it was specifically dark *male* eyes that turned his insides to mush. "Yeah, it's fine. C'mon, turn around."

DJ reached to set his drink safely back away out of reach and by the time he'd turned back, Joe was presenting his back and shoulders to be rubbed.

God.

Finally an excuse to touch. All that lovely olive skin, bared to his touch. DJ bit down on his lip to keep himself from moaning in appreciation as he slid his hands onto Joe's shoulders and began rubbing.

Smooth, like silk. Warm. Resilient. DJ used his fingers for leverage as he searched with his thumbs for the knots under the wet skin. It wasn't hard locating a pea-sized knot where he thought he'd felt one earlier. He pressed hard, getting an answering groan from Joe for his troubles, and smiled when the mass began to slowly dissolve.

"Oh, that's nice. You've got great hands. I bet you hear that all the time." Joe gave a full-body shudder and pressed back into DJ's hands. DJ had spread his legs to allow Joe to get close enough for DJ to reach and now Joe's ass—Joe's hard, muscular ass—was pressing against DJ's dick. His hard on, never very far away since he'd first touched Joe tonight, was back with a vengeance. "That feels so good."

DJ's cock was throbbing now. Joe was too close; he felt too good beneath DJ's hands. Between DJ's legs. Joe was rolling his head slowly from side to side, stretching his sore muscles.

But to DJ's yearning body, it looked like an invitation. A sexual invitation.

So he stalled.

"Yeah?"

Joe moved his hands from his own thighs to DJ's. "Yeah." And slowly rubbed his ass across DJ's cock.

Whoa.

Instant amnesia.

He couldn't remember so much as his name, let alone why he was stupidly massaging shoulders instead of dick. "Joe?"

The ass-on-cock rubbing paused. "Yeah?"

"What are you doing?"

"That depends. Do you like it?"

DJ might be the world's worst at reading signs, but even he could tell that was an invitation. He dropped his hands to Joe's hips, holding on as he pressed up into that firm ass; stopped fighting the urge to taste that lovely skin spread out before him, and dropped his mouth to Joe's neck. On his way down he whispered, "Yeah, I do" into one perfect ear before nipping it with his teeth.

Wrapping his arms around Joe's waist, DJ latched on to Joe's neck, alternately sucking and biting. Joe groaned, shifting in DJ's arms and tilting his neck to give DJ better access. DJ squeezed his legs, tightening them around Joe's. Some small remnant of DJ's rational mind tried to sound the alert that this was wrong—*You don't make out with your roommate!*—but it was shoved aside without the slightest remorse by DJ's raging libido.

Slipping out of DJ's arms, Joe turned and hooked one hand behind DJ's neck. Lower bodies bumping up against each other, Joe smiled a little as he stroked the hair at DJ's nape. The fingers in DJ's hair sent shivers down his spine, and the weight of Joe's body as he let it press down on his put delicious pressure on DJ's cock.

DJ realized he was rocking up against Joe, searching for something. Wordlessly Joe opened DJ's faded board shorts, wrapped one hand around DJ's dick, and squeezed; began slowly jacking him, from base to head and back again.

That dark-eyed gaze never left his, just moved in close. And then they were kissing. Tongue sliding on tongue, lips and teeth clashing, and all the time that incredible feeling of Joe's hand on him. DJ's head was spinning.

It felt too good. Too right. DJ kissed Joe back, wallowing in the feeling of a stubbled face kissing him, a hot male body grinding down on him, a tight fist jacking him. Joe groaned into DJ's mouth and that was all it took. DJ came, fucking the hand that continued working him until he slumped, wrung out and spent.

* * * *

"Whew. That was close. I was afraid they were going to call my mother—tell her I was out after curfew."

Joe had been kissing DJ and reaching for DJ's hand to shove it down the front of his own shorts, when an older couple, a man and a woman, had come down to use the Jacuzzi themselves. They'd been strangers to Joe and he couldn't tell whether DJ knew them or not. Regardless, he

and DJ had exchanged looks and silently agreed that maybe it was time to take the party private.

"I dunno, Joe. I think she wanted you."

Trying hard to contain his laughter, DJ was having way too much fun mocking him. Joe made a grab for the keys to let them back into the condo, but DJ saw it coming and blocked him easily, so Joe took his revenge by crowding in close behind as DJ worked and looking over DJ's shoulder. He let his hand brush against DJ's butt, fighting the desire to shove both of their shorts down and let flesh meet flesh.

"Cut it out. I can't concentrate."

"Oh, sorry. Does that bother you?" Joe was lying—he wasn't at all sorry. DJ felt great, and Joe couldn't wait to get the rest of DJ's clothes off and finally get to explore.

DJ pushed the door open, stepped through and pulled Joe in behind him. Joe's smile faded when DJ backed him up against the front door, letting the weight of Joe's body shut it the last couple of inches. DJ stepped closer still, eyes closing halfway as their chests touched and they just looked at each other, hands linked, pulses speeding up.

When DJ's head lowered, Joe closed his eyes, expecting a kiss. Instead, DJ hooked his fingers in the waistband of Joe's shorts and dropped to his knees. Working the shorts down over Joe's erection, DJ shoved the navy blue material the rest of the way down and took Joe in hand.

Joe had been hard since DJ first laid hands on him, out in the Jacuzzi and all the way back to the house. To finally have DJ's hands where he'd wanted them, touching him ... He'd been hot in the spa, chilled by the night air on his wet body,

and now another new heat rolled over him at the sight of DJ gripping his dick like he would never let go.

A hot, strong hand on him, DJ only paused a second to look up before opening his mouth and swallowing Joe down, and Joe was in heaven. Hot and moist and sheer fucking heaven. Holding him still with one hand on his hip, DJ sucked him, used tongue and lips like DJ couldn't get enough. Eyes closed, DJ sucked up to the head, let the ring formed by his lips catch on it, worked in short, shallow movements that took Joe right up to the edge.

DJ moaned a little as he took Joe deep, his lips meeting his fist, and the top of Joe's head nearly came off. The vibration traveled down his shaft and hummed through Joe's balls. DJ pulled off a little and Joe followed, thrusting in time with DJ's motion.

Looking down through lids he could barely keep open, the sight of his dick disappearing into DJ's mouth sent a bolt of lust through Joe's body. "Oh, yeah, do it. That's so—"

DJ shot him a look, eyes slitted in pleasure, and added a twist of the hand to his motion as he worked Joe's cock. Somehow he added even more suction, his cheeks hollowed with the effort, and Joe went off, shooting hard down DJ's throat.

His knees a little wobbly, Joe was happy to let DJ lead him over to the couch, and even happier to lie down and let DJ wrap those strong arms around him. Joe closed his eyes, relaxed and happy, and let his mind drift. There had been something crazy hot about seeing DJ—All-American, straight-looking, frat boy handsome DJ—on his knees sucking him off.

And there was something reassuring and ... comforting, almost ... about having DJ's arms around him. He could relax and just be. Joe shifted a bit, getting comfortable, twining his legs with DJ's, and let himself drift off.

Sounds of a muffled argument on the sidewalk outside woke Joe. He lifted his head to listen, at first momentarily disoriented, then in searing pain as his already stiff neck let him know he'd be paying for his moment of romantic carelessness. Biting back curses as he laid his head carefully back on DJ's arm, Joe marshaled his thoughts.

The voices outside moved on, leaving Joe to concentrate on what he'd done. He'd slept with his roommate. Literally.

Rolling his head, carefully this time, back a bit, Joe looked at DJ in the filtered light from the street light outside that the living room blinds couldn't completely block. He looked ... Joe searched for the right word. Kinda normal. Yeah, normal. Like the nice guy he was.

And wasn't that just Joe's problem in a nutshell?

DJ was a nice guy.

He was the kind of guy who never missed voting. Who separated out his glass recyclables from the plastic and the paper. He probably drove his grandmother to get her hair done every week. DJ had 'settling down' and 'boyfriend material' written all over him.

Which would be all well and good, except Joe was none of those things.

Joe was the guy you called when you were having a party and you needed help deciding which was hipper: a Ricky and Lucy theme or Man from U.N.C.L.E./Girl from U.N.C.L.E. Or

when everyone was driving out to Palm Springs for the weekend and you needed a fourth to split the cost of the hotel suite. Or when it was Saturday night and you just wanted some no-strings fun and sex—because that's what Joe had written all over him.

DJ was a nice guy, not to mention his landlord. Joe didn't want to hurt DJ and he sure as hell didn't want to have to move. Shit, shit, shit. What was he going to do now?

Roll quietly off the couch, shower, dress and leave for work a little early, that's what—without looking back at a sleeping DJ. He needed time to think.

* * * *

"Hey there, punkin. Look what the cat dragged in this morning. I hope she was worth it."

Ginny, the office's receptionist laughed and gave DJ a barely muted leer, clearly expecting a response. Having no idea of what an appropriate response might be, DJ ducked his head and looked away, hustling past to stow his coat and books in the break room before heading back to check the day's patient log.

DJ figured he deserved it, though. Sleeping on the couch all night, his alarm upstairs in his room going off unheard and unheeded, he'd overslept and was only just now arriving for work. Late.

"Hi, Ginny. No, not even. My alarm didn't go off. I think I need a new one."

"Oh, too bad." Ginny's broad smile evaporated. "I liked my scenario better."

He hated being late. But thinking about that only reminded him of the reason behind it. And that brought back memories of Joe bumping against him in the Jacuzzi, sweet tongue sliding easily into DJ's mouth, and Joe's hand jacking him like he'd never been jacked before.

God. DJ groaned softly and wrenched his thoughts back to the present. He had to forget about last night and focus on his work. Only a few years out of school, DJ didn't have the kind of tenure and track history that allowed for swanning into the office whenever he damn well felt like it. Who did he think he was, a cardiac surgeon?

"Yeah, me, too."

DJ patted the receptionist's ample shoulder and smiled a smile he hoped conveyed regret, all the while feeling like a complete and utter shit. He liked Ginny a lot. She was great at her job, good with patients and scary efficient. But she embarrassed the life out of him sometimes. A single mother with two teen-aged girls, there was seemingly nothing that wasn't fair game as a topic of conversation for Ginny, the more explicit, the better.

It wasn't that DJ was ashamed of being gay, but he would never dream of divulging his dating woes to Ginny. After discussing it with the rest of the staff first, she would no doubt kill him with kindness, throwing every single man she met—the ones she didn't want, any way—in his path. A gay yenta.

God help him.

Once he began working, though, things went smoothly. Bottom line: he liked helping people. It made him feel good

when a patient came in with a debilitating injury and, because of his efforts, could eventually do pretty much everything they could before. That didn't always happen, of course, and at times it was heartbreaking when even his best efforts fell short.

What DJ really wanted to do, though, was get into sports injury therapy. After being a jock for most of his school life, more and more he was realizing that he missed the atmosphere, the passion and energy that serious athletes brought to their sports. And so he was going to school two nights a week, earning the additional credits he needed to be able to apply for work in a sports injury clinic. He was close to finishing, with only one more semester left. Then ... then he had a shot at doing what he really wanted to do.

It was Thursday, which meant DJ had his biomechanical analysis class. Although it was interesting as hell and even fun a lot of the time, it took all of his concentration to get what he needed to get out of the class. He knew that to get in with the group he'd been scouting, that he'd need to finish in the top five percent of his class. A B, even a B-plus, wouldn't cut it. He needed an A, and so he poured all of his energy and focus into his class. It made for a long day and DJ's tail, like everything else, was dragging by the time he got home that night.

The place was dark when he threw his book bag down on the little round table that served as a dining area. Mail he hadn't seen before lay piled neatly on top, so Joe must have been home at some point. Although, judging by the silence, he wasn't home now.

DJ's eyes strayed to the townhome's upper level and the balcony leading to the bedrooms. When he caught himself straining for a noise, any sort of noise at all, he knew he was in trouble. That's when he let himself think about how much he wanted Joe to be home. His stomach turned over just thinking about seeing Joe again, and DJ finally admitted to himself that all day he'd been rehearsing little things in his head to say to Joe. Ways to say, "Hell, yes," without sounding too pitiful, to anything Joe suggested, as long as it involved the two of them.

God, he was pathetic.

Look at him, hoping with a fervor that bordered on desperate to run into his roommate. DJ wanted to kick himself. He and Joe had only been sharing living space for a couple of months. They'd been pretty compatible in most ways, respectful of each others' differences, and things had been going really well. Just when it looked as though he might've found someone to live with potentially long term, he'd gone and screwed it up. He'd not only fallen for Joe's charm, but he'd let himself act on it.

He was a moron.

He knew Joe didn't have long term relationships.

In the nearly two months they'd lived together he'd seen Joe bring home—what?—twelve or fifteen guys? What was that, one-point-five guys per week, average? The NFL's top defensive lineman didn't manage that many sacks in a week. And those were just the ones Joe brought home.

Shit. Brooding wasn't getting him anywhere. Walking to the fridge, DJ propped the door open with one arm and

looked for something that sounded good. His gaze stopped on the sparkling water and he almost reached for it. But then he spotted the Coronas. He really didn't need the extra calories, but ... Oh, screw it. A man couldn't live on a diet his whole life.

DJ found a bottle opener and, after popping the top, he reached for the remote and flipped on SportsCenter. A little Chris Berman sounded good—comfort food for the sports fan's soul. Slouching down on the sofa, DJ refused to think about the last time he'd been on this sofa. Absolutely refused. Letting his mind go blank, DJ focused on Boomer's voice and let the stats and stories of the day pour over him. And if his hand strayed to the spot where Joe's head had rested last night—if he stroked the spot mindlessly with his thumb and imagined he could still feel the heat from Joe's body—well, that was no one's business but his own.

* * * *

Looking up at the professor from his desk in the second row, Joe realized he was going for the wrong degree. Instead of international finance, he should have gone for business school instructor. Okay, so maybe the pay scale wasn't exactly equal, still ... This guy got to talk about whatever he wanted, for as long as he wanted, and the class was his captive audience. They couldn't tell him to shut up. They were all paying a shitload of money to be here and most of them needed the grade.

Maybe if the instructor was more entertaining Joe wouldn't find his mind wandering back to last night so frequently. God

damn, but DJ had a fine body. Big and satisfyingly thick. Muscles he could sink his teeth into. Wrap his legs around. Go down on and—

Whoa, buddy.

Not going to go there, remember?

Damn, it was hard not to, though, with the prof droning on and on *ad nauseum* with yet another of his unfunny stories about the time he'd ... Oh, who cared? Joe really, really wanted to tell the man to *shut up* and either get back to the subject matter or let the class go.

The professor didn't, though, and Joe resigned himself to listening with half his brain in case the man said something pertinent accidentally. The other half of his brain kept circling back to DJ and last night. Even aside from the smokin' hot sex, Joe'd had fun just hanging out with DJ. Smart, funny, easy to be with—DJ wasn't constantly trying to one-up him, or shore up a shaky ego by pulling out esoteric bits of knowledge to make himself look smarter than he was. Man was secure with himself, and wasn't that refreshing?

When the class eventually broke up, Joe grabbed his things and headed for the door before the prof had time to recall any more stories. He was half-way across campus, heading for his bike, when he heard someone calling his name and turned. There was no mistaking the tall figure cutting across the grass to intercept him. Tall, Asian, goatee and glasses that were the last word in fashion, Casey Kim had been a member of the same loose configuration of friends that Joe had found himself a *de facto* part of since high school.

As two of the group's three gay members, it occasionally struck Joe as odd that he and Casey had never paired off, beyond one drunken make-out session when they'd both been too trashed to care. Or maybe not. Casey wasn't really his type; a little too classically effeminate, too interested in the latest gossip and who was sleeping with who.

"Joe, how are you? Great to see you, sweetheart. How's every little thing?"

It was still good to see Casey—a living link to his misspent youth. "Doing great, Case. Still trying to finish up that degree. How 'bout you? Still trying to decide what you want to be when you grow up?"

Casey laughed and dished back. "Fuck you, you little punk. I'm meeting Elaine and Ronnie at *The Green Parrot* in a half-hour and I was going to invite you along, but you can just forget it now. You still have the manners of a peasant."

Joe shrugged and acknowledged the assessment. "You know me—same old, same old."

"Seriously, though," Casey laid a hand on Joe's arm, "why don't you come with? It's just drinks. It'll be fun. I haven't seen them in months and you ... I haven't seen you in forever. However, one does hear stories."

Casey smiled slyly and Joe wondered who'd been talking. They had plenty of friends in common, but Joe couldn't think of anyone he'd seen recently that might have made editorial comments.

Funnily enough, though, Casey's suggestion didn't even begin to sound good. Ronnie and Elaine were good people; smart, funny and always up for a good time. So why didn't he

want to go? Joe was always up for a party. Except tonight, apparently, so he lied. "Oh, man. That sounds good. But you know what? Say hi for me, would you? My neck's been giving me problems lately and I think I'm gonna head home. Next time, though." Shifting his books to the other arm, Joe pasted a wistful smile on his face and rubbed his neck for effect. Like Joe knew he would, Casey caved.

"I can't believe you're turning me down." Casey shuffled his feet, jingled the change in his pocket and thrust out his lip in a caricature of a pout.

"Yeah, me either. Gettin' old, I guess. Take it easy, Case." Taking off before Casey had time to think of any more arguments, Joe found his bike, strapped his books to the back and headed for home.

The cool night air carried the scent of strawberries as he raced by a ten-acre field of them, going fast, and Joe was nearly past them by the time the aroma caught up with his nose. He tried to remember the last time he'd had fresh strawberries, distracting himself from things he didn't want to think about by recalling meaningless details. He thought about buying some if he could get by during the day when the stands were open. When Joe realized he was thinking about buying the extra-ripe ones and feeding them to a naked DJ...

Shit.

All roads lead to home just like lately all thoughts led to DJ.

Joe gave in and let his thoughts wander where they obviously wanted to go. To DJ. A picture of DJ's smooth, naked chest came into his head, and Joe pictured squeezing a

piece of ripe fruit over one bare nipple and licking up the juice, watching DJ's face as he alternately nipped and licked at sensitive flesh.

The bike shook as he hit a shallow rain channel, and Joe spent the next few seconds working to bring the bike back under control. He'd better pay attention or he'd lay the damn thing down and he knew from experience road rash wasn't a good look for him. So he focused on riding before he killed himself or someone else, and in only a matter of minutes he was home.

Time to suck it up and pay the price for last night's pleasure. What would DJ do? Treat everything as business as usual? No harm, no foul? Or would he expect something? Joe couldn't decide which he was hoping for most.

It crossed his mind that DJ was possibly avoiding him, because by the time Joe got home DJ was already in bed asleep. He told himself that he felt relief from dodging the bullet and not disappointment that DJ wasn't ready and waiting for round two.

* * * *

Maybe Joe was avoiding him.

Either that or Fate was screwing with him, because over a week had gone by since that night in the Jacuzzi. And in the entryway. And on the sofa.

Not that DJ had been thinking about it constantly, or doing anything even remotely close to obsessing about it. True, the thought of Joe's mouth moving on his might have crossed his mind once or twice. He might even have caught himself

curving his hand into the shape of a tunnel, remembering the feel of Joe's dick sliding inside it a time or two. And so what if he'd run his tongue around and around his mouth, as though he could still taste the salty flavor of Joe's come there?

Nothing wrong with that. Nossir, not a thing.

Nothing wrong except that it made reasons four-twenty-seven through four-twenty-nine that he needed to get laid. And for real laid. Full penetration, fucked hard all night long, kind of laid. Because when a couple of kisses and a hand job had him mooning around like a middle-schooler with a crush ... yup, that was a pretty good sign.

He was pathetic, definitely. Look at him: folding laundry when there was a beautiful almost-spring day outside. What he ought to do was get off his butt and go down to the park and see if he could find a pick-up game of hoops. Yeah, that sounded good. Get hot and sweaty with a few other guys, maybe guard a little too close. Make a some unnecessary body contact. Who knew? He might finally get lucky. While he was at it he could check out the summer softball leagues.

Softball made DJ think of baseball, and thinking about baseball of any kind took him back to college. God, that had been fun. Funny how you didn't realize at the time when you had things really good. Being part of a team, the camaraderie, sharing the highs when they'd won, crying in their beers together when they'd lost.

A big part of the rosy glow of nostalgia probably had to do with Danny. He'd met Danny Esposito at the College World Series his senior year, where Danny had been part of the host school's team staffing the event in a town two-hours away.

Danny had been his first. His first real boyfriend. They'd managed a weekend a month together for nearly eight months before distance and differences had combined to let his first romance fizzle out. He'd managed a few short relationships since, but nothing ever seemed to last.

DJ carried his folded laundry upstairs to his room, and thought about why that was. He shrugged to himself and admitted that maybe it was him. He wasn't the most exciting guy in the world. Or maybe it was the ten or so extra pounds he'd picked up since college. An attractive body always caught his eye, too, so he hardly had room to throw stones there.

DJ was just clearing the last step down the stairs to the condo's main level when the front door open and Joe walked in, his helmet in one hand and leather jacket in the other. Speaking of attractive bodies ... Snug jeans outlined a taut, curvy butt and a white T-shirt, plain save for a clothing company's logo that stretched nearly from nipple to nipple, displayed Joe's gorgeous chest and shoulders perfectly. Joe flashed a surprised smile in DJ's direction and carelessly tossed his belongings down on the chair nearest the door.

"Hey. How ya doin'?"

"Pretty good. How 'bout you?"

There, that was a fairly bland response. He'd had a full week to think about how he should respond to Joe, but his body obviously had its own agenda. There were butterflies turning somersaults in DJ's stomach and he had to fight hard to keep a goofy smile off his face.

"I'm good. Happy. It's the weekend and I got my big project finished—the one that's been kicking my ass for the past two weeks. It's done, the bosses are pleased, and I'm a free man." Joe's smile was blinding, and against his will DJ felt himself slipping under its spell again. He loved that smile and he'd do a lot to see it again. Rubbing his neck a bit, Joe's impossibly beautiful smile somehow got even brighter. "My neck's even good—I think it must have all been stress-induced. I feel like celebrating."

"Yeah?" *Stay out of this, pal. You're not going to get involved, remember? Isn't that what you decided?*

"Yeah. What are you up to? Feel like doing something?"

Shrugging, DJ made a last, vain attempt to resist Joe's charm. "I was thinking about going down to the park, actually. Maybe playing some basketball."

Joe pretended to consider it, pushing his lower lip out, practically begging DJ to imagine what he could do with it. Bite it. Suck it into his mouth and—

Aw, crap. Be strong, man. Be strong.

"I was thinking about a ride down to the beach. You know the—What's the name of that place? The seafood place. Right on Coast Highway, I think. You wanna go? Have a drink, maybe get something to eat?" It sounded great and DJ's resolve was slipping faster than Bluebird Canyon after a big rain. "C'mon, it's a beautiful day out."

DJ cast a desperate look around the room, hoping to spot a chore that absolutely couldn't be put off. Before he could find anything, though, someone that sounded just exactly like him said, "Yeah, sure. That sounds good, actually."

Joe's smile was back in force and DJ grinned goofily back.
"Cool."

*You are doomed, Charlie Brown. Doomed, doomed,
doomed.*

Juggling his backpack, the pizza and his keys, Joe let himself into the condo, the stillness inside letting him know that DJ hadn't made it home yet. It was Wednesday night, and since it was Joe's turn to pick up the pizza, DJ must have stopped for something to drink. Joe put the pizza on the table and turned on the TV to ESPN.

Pizza and the game—their regular Wednesday evening routine.

The ride to the beach for seafood and beers nearly two months ago had been the start of something. It hadn't led to sex, much to Joe's disappointment, but a friendship had been born that day. He had no idea how DJ had been able to ride behind him on his motorcycle all the way to Newport Beach and not hit a perfect ten on the horniness scale. Apparently the man had reserves of willpower that Joe could only dream of because Joe had spent the meal fighting the urge to touch DJ.

After making sure the game was on, Joe checked the fridge and found it severely lacking in the beverage department, adding weight to his theory about the reason for DJ's lateness. He plopped down on the sofa and checked the score of the game in progress, pausing when a player with a build reminiscent of DJ's came up to bat. Joe found himself

squinting, comparing the player on the TV screen with the picture in his mind of DJ. Professional athlete or not, Joe gave DJ the edge. Damn, but the man was built.

As though conjured by Joe's thoughts, the front door open and the man himself blew in, a six-pack of his favorite diet drink under one arm, a pizza balanced on the other. "I know I'm late, but we were out of soda."

DJ's smile never failed to get a rise out of him. A little wry, as though he found life a source of endless wonder and amusement, it was as warm and natural as the man it belonged to.

"No problem, except it was my turn to get the pizza, dumbass."

Standing in front of the table already home to Joe's attempt at dinner, a perplexed look on his face, DJ gave a weary laugh. "Seriously?" He set the white cardboard box down next its twin already waiting, lifted up the lid and looked inside. "Man. Long day. I completely forgot."

"What the hell—it's not like it won't get eaten. Come sit down, the game's already on."

"Yeah, okay. Gimme a minute, I just wanna—"

"What?" Joe looked up, exasperated. "Sit. Eat. Watch the game."

"Gimme a minute, okay? I'll be right back."

Something was up. Short-tempered wasn't DJ's style at all. The man was patient in ways Joe would never be. "What's so important it can't wait 'til the commercial? Bases are loaded and Bonds is up, for Chrissakes."

DJ stopped, mid-way across the room. Just stopped and stood without speaking.

"DJ? Something wrong?"

Whatever internal battle DJ was fighting, it must have been resolved because he turned on his heel and walked quickly back, stopping inches away from the sofa where Joe sat.

"Wrong? Yeah, you could say that. Look at me and tell me if you notice anything."

Obviously something was eating at him. DJ stood, legs braced, arms stiff at his side, and as Joe's gaze swept over him DJ almost seemed to flinch. "No. Can't say's I do."

A muscle in DJ's jaw jumped as he gritted his teeth, met Joe's gaze, and gestured with one hand. "Look a little lower."

Joe swung his gaze in the direction DJ indicated and ... whoa ... "Mmm, yeah. That would appear to be, um, something of a ... uh ... hard-on." Joe tried a smile. "Geez, I know you like baseball a lot but—"

Leaning down to brace his hands on the back of the sofa, DJ brought his face close to Joe's.

"I like baseball. But that's not what caused this. It was you. All the way home, thinking about sitting next to you. Smelling you. Wanting you. Thinking about that time in the Jacuzzi and how I'd like something like that to happen again. But it can't, because we're roommates. And because you don't want it to." Eyes narrowing, DJ looked hard at Joe. "I was about to go jerk off, so if you don't mind..."

Joe was stunned.

DJ thought ... "No shit?"

"No shit."

"DJ." He wanted to grin like an idiot, but Joe didn't think DJ was ready for that. "Can I just ask, what made you think I didn't want that?"

Blinking, DJ now looked as stunned as Joe had been a moment before. "Because. Because it never happened again. I know you're Mr. One-Nighter. You've never once brought the same guy home twice, so I figured it was just one of those things. Once and done. Besides, I was right here. If you'd been interested, you knew where to look."

The way DJ's voice softened, the uncertainty that came into his eyes had Joe reaching out instinctively to touch him. Joe's hand found DJ's and he wove their fingers together, hands touching palm to palm.

"Aw, DeeJ. No." Joe turned, rising to his knees, reaching for DJ with his free hand as DJ pulled away. "No. That's not it at all. It wasn't that I wasn't interested. If anything, I was too interested."

"Too interested?"

DJ's eyes narrowed, the look on his face openly skeptical, and Joe couldn't blame him. He knew what his past must look like to somebody like DJ. How could he hope to convince DJ that things had changed? That he'd changed.

"Yeah, I was. Still am."

"I'm supposed to believe that Mr. Love-'em-and-Leave-'em is suddenly interested in ... What?" DJ straightened, and Joe's hand fell away. "That's a good question. What are you interested in?"

Joe sat back on his heels, looking up into DJ's face, normally so trusting and open, now frankly wary. It sucked, but Joe had no one to blame but himself. He'd been a rootless party boy for so long he couldn't blame DJ for not believing him.

"You. I liked you right away and I was always attracted. But hanging out with you, getting to know you ... it's different now. It's all come together for me and I'd—God, this sounds stupid. But, could we see each other?"

"See each other, like dating?"

Damn, but that sounded like interest in DJ's voice. He was so good at playing things close to the vest, Joe had begun to wonder if he'd imagined that night with DJ all those weeks ago. But for the first time since then, the spark was back in DJ's eyes.

"Sounds kind of lame, doesn't it?"

"Dating your roommate? Yeah. Sounds like a major bad idea. Real recipe for disaster, if you ask me." So then why was DJ moving closer and slipping a hand into Joe's hair? Tipping Joe's head back.

"Definitely no kissing." Joe looked up as he reached out and placed a hand over DJ's crotch, molding it to the shape of the hard flesh behind the zipper. "Or inappropriate touching."

Glad he was watching DJ's face, Joe could feel the life pulsing beneath his hand and the look was too hot to miss. DJ closed his eyes, his head dropping back to expose his throat as he pressed forward into Joe's hand.

Boys of Summer: Sharing Spaces
by Stephanie Vaughan

DJ stayed that way for a moment before opening his eyes and staring very deliberately down into Joe's as he climbed over the back of the sofa. "And for sure no fucking."

* * * *

Joe met him half-way, still kneeling on the sofa as DJ climbed over. Once over, DJ paused for a moment, gazing into Joe's eyes. Assessing. "You know, we really shouldn't do this."

Staring back, Joe's eyes flickered down to DJ's mouth and back up to his eyes. "Probably not."

DJ didn't know whose benefit he was saying it for, but he felt the need to say it one last time. "This could totally mess things up."

"Yeah, it could." Putting one hand on DJ's chest, letting his fingers trail slowly down, coming to rest just above the snap of DJ's pants, Joe's face relaxed into an easy smile. "Or it could be really, really good."

They paused for a moment, kneeling, staring into each others' eyes. And just like DJ wasn't sure just what it was he was looking for in Joe's eyes, later he couldn't say who made the first move. Maybe they both did, because suddenly they were kissing.

One arm around Joe's neck, the other on Joe's ass, DJ tilted his head a little to feel the slide of lips and tongues better. Up close, the scents of skin and hair were thrilling, clean and sharp and uniquely Joe. DJ rocked his hips a little, looking for pressure and ground against Joe's ass when he

found it. The sounds from the TV faded into background noise as the reality of Joe in his arms took over.

It was Joe who moved things horizontal, leaning into DJ, pushing him backward until he fell, pulling Joe down on top of him. Spreading his legs, DJ lay back and took Joe's full weight, groaning at the glorious pressure of Joe's crotch grinding against his.

The silky heat of Joe's tongue in his mouth, lips moving aggressively over his own, had DJ opening. He wanted to open himself more, take everything Joe had to give. As they kissed and the weight of Joe's body pressed down on him, he grew achingly hard, and waves of heat pooled in his dick. Rolling his hips, DJ nearly came at the jolt of desire that flashed through him. Instead, he slanted his mouth to get more of the taste and feel of Joe, that wicked tongue slipping suggestively into his mouth. Sucking hard on Joe's tongue, DJ couldn't get enough.

Pulling away just enough to speak, Joe ran the fingers of one hand down DJ's nose, brushing briefly over his cheeks and down to his jaw. Coming to rest on the side of DJ's neck, DJ shivered as Joe stroked seductively back and forth across his jaw line. "God, you are so sexy."

"If you say so." It stroked his ego to have someone as beautiful as Joe touching him and looking at him with heat in his eyes.

"Oh, yeah. Definitely. Here," Joe reached for DJ's shirt, "can we lose this?"

His blue Henley skimmed off and tossed aside, DJ groaned when Joe brought his hands up to pinch a nipple and run two

fingers down his belly, stopping at his pants. It was almost too much. After lying in his bed night after night, imagining scenes just like this, it sent DJ up in flames to have Joe actually touching him and stroking him.

Eyes gleaming wickedly, mouth curving in a smile of anticipation, Joe lowered his head to DJ's chest and licked at one nipple. As heat and sensation raced through his body and gathered in his dick, DJ gasped and arched up off the sofa. "Oh! Oh, God, yeah." DJ shivered as Joe's mouth moved to the other nipple, warm tongue licking, lips blowing a stream of cold air next.

Joe kissed him hard on the mouth. Looked into DJ's eyes and whispered, "I really want to fuck you."

A thrill shot through him, and DJ gazed up at Joe's face. Such soulful dark eyes, that perfect straight nose, those lush lips. He wanted. Wanted more of Joe—more of everything. He was overwhelmed by it. "And you're waiting for...?"

Joe smiled and kissed him again quickly. "From the minute I met you I knew we were going to get along. On the important things we think alike."

His hands on Joe's waist, DJ's fingers slid up under Joe's shirt and pressed into the warm, smooth skin there. Searching Joe's eyes and liking what he saw there, DJ smiled back. "Can we agree on a bed, then? God knows I've waited long enough."

"You were waiting for me?"

"From the minute I met you, I think."

"If I'd only known."

Moving to a bed took some negotiation, since neither one wanted to let go, but somehow they made it up the stairs, DJ leading the way to his room. "Do you mind?"

The hall light lit Joe from behind, highlighting his thick, black hair and casting his face into shadow. Even in the semi-darkness, though, Joe's beautiful smile and slow shake of the head showed clearly enough. "Anything you want."

Watching Joe undress was possibly the single most erotic moment of DJ's life. He'd been thinking, dreaming, anticipating this moment since he'd opened his door that day and Joe had walked into his life. DJ was stripping out of his own jeans as quickly as possible so that he could take in everything about Joe, down to the smallest movements.

DJ'd seen guys undress hundreds of times during his college baseball career, but he'd never seen anyone like Joe. Muscular yet sleek, maybe it was his Italian blood, but something about Joe gave him a sophisticated, European look. Pants first, now thumbs hooked in black briefs and then—*Oh, yeah*. Naked and beautiful. Gorgeous dick, flushed and hard, curving up toward Joe's belly.

All Joe had to do was look at the bed and DJ was on it, waiting. Kneeling, stroking himself, DJ didn't mind a bit when Joe climbed onto the bed and brushed DJ's hands aside.

"Uh-uh. That's for me. That's all mine now."

One hand wrapped around his cock for a squeeze, the other pulled his head in for another hungry kiss. DJ moaned and thrust into Joe's hand, put his own hands on Joe and just about lost it at the feel of that velvety heat.

Boys of Summer: Sharing Spaces
by Stephanie Vaughan

DJ liked kissing and part of him was happy that Joe liked it, too. You didn't get to be that good at something unless you genuinely liked to do it. But right this second DJ needed more than kissing and he needed it from Joe. Hard.

"I want you to fuck me. Now. God, I want you."

* * * *

It should have felt weird. Could easily have felt odd. On the scale of things that had the potential to go really wrong, getting naked with a friend had to be way up there. But DJ looked amazing, all hot, naked skin and greedy eyes, and what could have easily seemed like a good idea taken way too far didn't. It felt good and right and, damn, but he wanted this.

His hand wrapped tight around DJ's dick, DJ arching and thrusting under him, Joe was ready to go off. He had to slow things down. So he reluctantly opened his hand and let go of DJ, only DJ wasn't having any of that. Grabbing Joe's hand with his own, DJ took both hands together and held them in place around his balls and the root of his dick while he ground up against them. His voice when he spoke was gritty with passion and his eyes kept drifting shut. "C'mon, Joe. Let's do this. Don't make me beg."

"Oh, DeeJ, no." He kissed DJ, couldn't seem to stop, 'cause he tasted so freaking good and it felt so damn right. "No, I just want this to last a little bit and I don't think it will 'cause you get me too hot."

"Yeah? Me, too. You, I mean." DJ's smile was bemused and his eyes were getting that glazed-over look. "Stuff's up there."

Joe's gaze followed the direction of DJ's nod and broke away long enough to reach into the drawer next to the bed for—yes!—condoms and lube. "Always knew you were the Boy Scout type. Hey, watch it!"

DJ had taken the opportunity of Joe's stretch and reach to get an iron grip on Joe's dick.

"Don't want you getting distracted. Always knew you were a little ADD."

"Believe me, no one's getting distracted here. Although ... God, I love your body. This..." Joe lowered his head to suck one tiny brown nipple into his mouth and worry it with his teeth for a moment, "I hope you like your nipples played with 'cause I can't stay away. And this..." Moving lower Joe took DJ's beautiful, beautiful cock in his hand again and slurped it into his mouth. The taste of pre-come and sweet, clean skin merged, and Joe was in heaven. He began working DJ with his tongue and lips, and DJ groaned and swore. "This is a work of fucking art."

"Oh, shit yeah, that's nice. Sweet." A ragged groan rumbled up from the depths of DJ's chest and he swore some more. "God, that's good. But I want your dick. In me."

There was no more delaying and Joe sat back long enough to apply protection and slick himself up. Lubing his fingers liberally, he applied two of them to that sweet puckered ass that was calling to him. DJ arched and came up off the bed

when Joe found his prostate and strong muscles clamped around Joe's fingers.

"Never say I can't be reasoned with."

Removing his fingers, Joe moved his cock into place and pressed. That sweet moment when resistance gave way and the head of his cock first slid in ... there was nothing like it. Nothing. It was victory, euphoria, anticipation, completion all in one. Savoring the moment, Joe pushed slowly, letting DJ's body adjust and his own wallow in the tight, hot heaven they'd found together.

DJ groaned and arched, his body sliding down on Joe's cock, and Joe made a last final push to be all the way in. The sound of panting filled the room, and Joe paused to look down at DJ, eyes closed, head thrown back, hands gripping the sheets, a smile curving his gorgeous lips.

Joe's gaze traveled down past DJ's taut abs, his muscular legs drawn up, to where their bodies met. He withdrew slowly, then just as slowly pressed back in, entranced by the vision of DJ's body swallowing his dick. Was there a hotter sight on the planet? Joe didn't think so.

Pulling back again, Joe leaned forward on one hand and wrapped the other around DJ's cock. A moment of adjusting and they found their rhythm, DJ groaning with every instroke and sighing every time Joe withdrew. It was all so incredibly fucking good, the glorious rush of sensation every time thrust hard into DJ, the joy of looking down into DJ's beautiful face and knowing it was more than just fucking. It was—

DJ came and the smoking hot sight of his mouth open in a silent 'ah' of ecstasy, come splattering his belly and chest,

combined with DJ's body clamping down hard on Joe's cock and Joe came, too. Closed his eyes as the rush of completion came roaring up from his balls and he emptied himself into DJ.

Joe eventually rolled to one side, but he left one leg tangled with DJ's. He didn't know why, but he found himself fascinated with DJ's skin; how smooth it was, resilient, springing back when a finger pressed into it was removed. Running his hand along DJ's side, down to grip that incredible ass, Joe pulled DJ's leg up and over his own where he continued to idly stroke it.

When DJ finally roused, it was to reach for Joe's hand and bring it to his lips. Opening his eyes to meet Joe's gaze, DJ smiled and held Joe's gaze as he placed a kiss in the palm. DJ held onto the hand and brought it to his chest.

Something in DJ's expression worried Joe. Was he having regrets already? Joe could see that DJ's internal monologue of doubt had started already, so when DJ's mouth opened and closed without words emerging, Joe's anxiety kicked into high gear. "What? Say it. Whatever it is, I want to hear it."

"Don't take this the wrong way, but..." DJ looked apprehensive and Joe's heart plummeted. "How do you feel—just hypothetically—about TVs in the bedroom? My day's ruined if I miss SportsCenter."

End

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