

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS



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Sex With Lex

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SEX WITH LEX

Carol Lynne

Dedication

To my cousins and sisters. Thank you. I couldn't have hand-picked a better group of friends.

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Chapter One

Lex Whitefeather hung up the phone with a smile on his face and went to find Shorty, his foreman on the Lazy River ranch. He left his office and headed to the barn. He found Shorty fixing the leather on a bridle.

"Hey, I just got off the phone with Sam. He asked if he could bring his college roommate home to work for the summer. I told him it would be all right but I needed to run it by you to make sure we had enough work to keep him busy. It seems the kid doesn't have any family to go home to for the summer. Sam thinks his roommate could benefit from a summer on the ranch."

Shorty looked from Lex back down to the bridle he was working on. "Sure, I can always use another strong back around here. Plenty of hay to put up and fences to mend. Are you going to let him stay in the house or would you like him to bunk with the rest of the cowboys?"

Lex rubbed his chin. "Sam would never forgive me if I kicked the kid out of the house. I mean it's not like there's not enough room, for Christ's sake." Lex thought about the six-bedroom log and stone house that his ex-wife had insisted on building. Of course that was only a year before she left him and Sam.

Sam never even got a chance to know her which, as it turned out, was probably a good thing. How a woman could abandon her only child eight months after giving birth he'd never understand. Although theirs was never a marriage of love he'd done his best to give her whatever she wanted to make up for his own shortcomings, but it wasn't enough for her and she split.

Shorty interrupted Lex's thoughts. "This kid have a name and when do you expect 'em?"

Lex smiled. Shorty was never one for small talk. He'd been foreman on the Lazy River since Lex was nine. At sixty-eight and barely five foot four, Shorty truly lived and breathed the Lazy River. "His name's Nick Barker and they'll leave right after finals on Friday."

Shorty nodded and went back to work. Lex wandered over to the corral and whistled for his horse, Night Fever. The black quarter horse gelding came up to the fence and nibbled at Lex's pocket. Lex laughed and rubbed the white blaze on his forehead. "What're you looking for, Fever?" He pulled a couple of sugar cubes out of his pocket and held them out in his hand. "Well, I can see you've got my number. I guess I need to quit spoiling you."

Lex let Fever go back to the shady spot under a cluster of trees and headed back to his office in the main house. He walked in the front door and went to his study and poured a finger of scotch before sitting in front of the big picture window. He'd built the house with this view in mind. He knew that with a wife like Terri he'd need a refuge and this was his. He looked around the room at the large dark red leather sofa and armchair deep enough to hold a big man like himself comfortably. The Native American artifacts on the shelves and over the fireplace were a legacy from his grandfather, John Whitefeather. Lex inherited the artifacts with the old house when his father passed away. The ornately carved desk had been his father's. Lex put his feet up on the footstool and looked out at the setting sun, the pinks and purples casting their colors on the nearby mountains.

Lex thought of Sam. He'd been away at college for five years, only coming home for holiday breaks and summer vacations. He was working toward a law degree and seemed to be doing fine. Lord knew he had the brains for it. What Lex didn't know was whether he had the drive. Sam just seemed sort of lost the last couple of times he'd been home. Well, no reason to dwell on it, he'd be home in another week. Lex thought about his new houseguest. Sam told him Nick was a year older and worked out a couple of

times a week. He'd asked Lex if he still had the old set of free weights around somewhere because Sam thought Nick might enjoy working out in his spare time.

Lex finished his scotch and went down to the basement. A slow smile worked its way across his face. The more he looked at the basement the more he decided maybe a complete workout room would be nice to have. It had been a long time since he'd done something extravagant for himself and what better time than now. Lex walked back up the stairs to make a couple of calls.

* * * * *

The flight from Austin to Missoula was bumpy and Nick still wasn't feeling right. He looked out the plane window as they set down in Missoula, his home for the next three months. Nick felt nervous about meeting Sam's dad. He'd seen a couple of pictures and heard Sam talk about him constantly but he normally didn't do well around parents, even though Sam's dad was hot. Nick still remembered seeing his picture on Sam's desk for the first time.

He'd asked Sam who the guy was and Sam had told him it was his father. Nick had nodded and walked away feeling like a perve. Damn, he shouldn't be ogling his roommate's dad. Sam had told him his dad was forty-four but all Nick saw was a grade-A stud.

The passengers started standing and getting their luggage out of the overhead bins and filing down the aisle. Sam stood and got out his backpack and then handed Nick his. They walked down the ramp into the terminal. When they cleared the security gate, Sam waved and walked up to his dad. They hugged and Nick's heart stopped.

"Oh sweet fuck," he mumbled to himself. Sam's dad was even better-looking than his picture. Standing at least six foot four, the man was some kind of god to be worshipped. His Native American heritage was evident in his long silky black hair and bronzed skin. Nick allowed his eyes to travel up the faded jeans showing off a pair of

legs that went on forever, ending with a very impressive bulge. Nick swallowed, *Jesus, he was in trouble*. How was he supposed to suppress an erection for an entire summer?

Nick stood trying not to stare as father and son greeted each other with a warm hug.

Sam stepped away from his dad and motioned to Nick. "Nick, I'd like to introduce my father, Lex Whitefeather. Dad, this is my roommate and best friend at school, Nick Barker."

Lex Whitefeather held out his hand toward Nick. "It's very nice to meet you Nick. Please call me Lex."

Was it his imagination or did Lex's voice suddenly go a little lower? It was already a deep bass, but when he talked just then Nick's chest vibrated with each word. He swallowed again, trying in vain to relieve the lump in his throat. "Thank you for giving me a job and a place to stay this summer. I've heard a lot about the Lazy River from Sam and can't wait to see it."

Lex dropped his hand and smiled. *Oh damn, he even had dimples in his cheeks*. "Let's go get your luggage and head home then." Lex started walking toward the baggage claim with Sam at his side.

Nick followed behind Lex, which gave him an excellent view of his well-worn jeans. Nick's cock started to harden against his zipper. No way could he walk behind Lex and not stare at his perfect ass. He discreetly thumped his cock and willed it to deflate. It didn't seem to be listening to him, so he tried to hold his backpack in front of his crotch while they waited for the rest of the luggage.

Before long they were riding down the interstate toward the ranch. Nick sat in the backseat of the midnight blue quad-cab pickup truck. Sam was in the front seat talking a mile a minute about everything he wanted to do when he got to the ranch. Nick looked toward the front and noticed Lex's eyes on him in the rearview mirror.

Lex cleared his throat and addressed him. "Sam didn't say whether ya knew how to ride."

Nick shifted in his seat, trying to alleviate the still-hard log in his jeans. "Um...no, I was hoping to learn while I'm here." *He so hoped he wouldn't get sent back to Texas on the next plane for that.*

Lex smiled and winked. "No problem, I can teach ya. I've taught several people to ride so it's not a big deal." He finally broke eye contact and looked at Sam. "You'll never guess what I did this week."

Sam rolled his eyes and put his finger on his chin. "Umm...let me guess. You sat in your study and looked out the window?" Sam looked back at Nick and laughed. "It's kind of an ongoing joke. Anytime Dad can't be found he's always hiding out in his study, staring out the window."

Lex playfully punched Sam in the arm. "No, smart-ass. I had a gym built in the basement so we can all work out together this summer." He smiled proudly at his son.

Sam's jaw dropped. "What do you mean we can all work out together? Have you ever known me to lift weights, Dad?"

Lex shrugged and looked a little letdown. "I just thought it would be a good way for us to wind down in the evenings. I didn't mean to offend you."

Sam looked out the window. "I know, Dad. I'm sorry I snapped at you. It's just that I'll never be the big strong man you are. I guess my body must come from Mom, huh?"

Lex reached over and squeezed Sam's shoulder. "No. Your mother was tall. I think you got your build from my mom's side of the family, along with your blue eyes." He drove for a while in silence. After a few miles he turned his head back to Sam. "What're your plans for the summer?"

Sam cleared his throat and looked at his dad. "Well, I was hoping I could talk Justin Meyers down at the law office in Quints into giving me a job. I've been thinking a lot about it and I'd like to go into small-town law. I thought if I worked in a law office as a clerk or assistant I could decide whether or not it's right for me."

Lex seemed to think about it for a minute. "Sounds like a good plan for the summer. Have you talked to Justin yet or would you like me to call him when we get home?"

Sam smiled as though a huge weight had been lifted. "I don't want you to call Mr. Meyers. I wanna do this on my own. I've already sent him a letter about a summer job but I haven't heard back from him. I was hoping I could borrow the truck and run into town tomorrow morning."

Lex shook his head. "Tomorrow's Saturday. If you want to talk to Justin you'll either have to go when we get home or wait until Monday morning." Lex looked at the clock on the dash. "We'll be home in another half-hour, that'll give you time to take your bag in and make it back to town before five. I'm sure if you get there before he leaves Justin will stay long enough to talk to ya."

Sam nodded and then looked back at Nick. "Um...could you show Nick around the ranch for me?"

Lex looked into the rearview mirror and nodded. "Sure I can. I thought we'd put him in the bedroom across from yours. So if you'll show him where that is I can show him the rest of the ranch."

"Cool. Thanks, Dad...for everything."

They rode the rest of the way singing to old country songs on the radio. Lex's voice was so deep and scratchy it gave Nick goose bumps. They pulled onto the ranch road under a sign that had Lazy River burned into a huge log. Nick thought his eyes would bug out of his head when he saw the house come into view. He'd never seen anything like it. Sam told him before that his dad came from money, but damn. River rock about a third of the way up with logs the rest of the way, the house looked like some kind of ski resort instead of a home. The front porch ran the length of the house and was deep enough to hold comfortable-looking furniture and a porch swing. Nick smiled to himself when he spotted the wide hammock on the other end of the porch. Nick had

never seen anything this cool even in magazines. He could see himself now stretched out on that big hammock in the evening with a cold beer in his hand.

The truck stopped and they all got out. Lex handed Sam his bag and then pulled out Nick's. "Sam will show ya to your room. I'll be in the barn when you're ready for a tour."

Nick nodded and took his duffel bag. "Thank you. I should be out shortly." Sam led him up the wide porch steps and into the house.

* * * * *

Lex walked toward the barn, cussing the whole way. What the hell had he been thinking to let Sam bring his friend for the summer? He'd managed to keep his secret from everyone in town all these years and now temptation itself was going to be sleeping down the hall. He'd always gone into Missoula to scratch his itches. His cock sitting stiff and heavy in his jeans reminded him he would need to make a trip soon.

He entered the barn. "Shorty? Ya in here?"

Pete, one of the cowboys, stuck his head up from a stall as he wiped his hands on a rag. "He went into town to pick up his medicine from the pharmacy. You need something?"

Lex walked closer and shook his head. "Naw. I just wanted to introduce him to Sam's friend. He'll be living and working here this summer." He pointed toward the horse in the stall. "What's wrong with Sugar Foot?"

Pete wiped his brow on his shirt sleeve. "She stumbled a little up on the bluff this morning. She's got a few scrapes I'm cleaning up."

Lex nodded and bent to look at Sugar Foot's back leg. "Looks like you're doing a good job. Just make sure to watch it. Ya don't want infection to set in."

Pete nodded and went back to cleaning the wounds. Lex went out to the corral and whistled for Fever. He came ambling up, as usual sticking his nose right in Lex's pocket. Lex was too deep in thought to even harass the gelding about his presumptuousness.

He couldn't get the image of Nick out of his head. Dark brown hair cut short enough that the curls he knew were there were only little waves. Long, thick black lashes over eyes the color of amber in the sunlight. Lex's cock went hard just thinking about Nick's body. He was only about five foot eight but he had wide shoulders. His well-defined muscles were evident beneath the skintight white t-shirt he wore. His chest narrowed down to trim hips and buns of steel. Lex looked around and rubbed his jean-covered erection against the corral post in front of him. He closed his eyes and groaned. Fuck, he wanted a piece of that ass. He had to keep telling himself he was thinking about a guy who was his son's best friend. He rubbed a little harder, not even aware of what he was doing. Footsteps on the gravel behind him brought him out of his lust-filled trance.

Lex looked over his shoulder at Nick. "Ready to see the ranch?"

Nick walked closer and leaned against the fence beside him. He reached out and stroked Fever's nose. "You don't plan on riding horses, do you? Because it might take me more than a couple of minutes to learn."

Lex shook his head and pointed to the old pickup parked behind the barn. "Naw, most the time I get around in that. Come on. I'll give ya the fifty-cent tour."

They climbed into the beat-up white four-wheel-drive truck and Lex looked over at Nick. "Ya should put your seat belt on. Some of the paths are not very smooth, so unless you want a concussion I'd buckle up."

Nick nodded and put his seat belt on. "Sam said to tell you not to wait dinner. He was hoping he could get Mr. Meyers to let him take him out for a meal. Sam thought he might be a little more receptive over a plate of ribs."

Nick shrugged his shoulders and looked out the window. "Are those hills over there part of your land?"

Lex slowed the truck and leaned closer to Nick, looking out the passenger-side window. "Not those but those over there." He reached out his arm and pointed toward another group of hills. "They're part of the Lazy River. We've got about eighty-six hundred acres, more or less. Most of it we raise cattle on but some we just leave to

nature." Lex looked at Nick and smiled, flashing his dimples. "Now do ya understand why I take this old beat-up truck most of the time?"

Nick smiled back and licked his bottom lip. "Yeah, I understand. It would take forever on a horse."

Lex looked at the pink tongue snaking out to lick that luscious lip and almost groaned. He cleared his throat and sat back up. "I'll take ya to my favorite fishing hole. Maybe we'll get lucky and Sam'll come out and do some fishing with us this summer." He stopped and looked over at Nick. "I'm sorry, I didn't even ask. You do like to fish, don't ya?"

Nick turned his head to look out the side window again. "I've always wanted to learn but I grew up in various foster homes in Houston. No one really cared enough to teach me."

He didn't say anything else and Lex felt a lump form in his throat. He didn't even think about it, he just put his hand on Nick's thigh and squeezed. "Well, I care enough to teach ya. I'll teach you that and anything else ya want to learn about living on a ranch."

Nick reached down and put his hand over Lex's. "Thanks. I'd appreciate that."

Lex drove toward the deep part of the stream where he liked to fish. "Do you mind my asking what happened to your parents?"

Nick answered without looking at him. "Died in a wreck when I was six. The only family member left was an elderly aunt who could barely take care of herself so they put me into foster care." Nick fiddled with the door handle as he talked. "I was too old and everyone wants babies so I was stuck in the system until I turned eighteen. Thankfully when I was in junior high I was enrolled in an after-school program at the YMCA. That's where I started getting into gymnastics. I had a really great coach when I got to high school. He knew I didn't have anything but a bed to go home to so he let me stay at the gym later than the rest of the team and practice. It was a lot of work but it all

paid off when I won a full scholarship and a position on the gymnastics team at the university. It paid for almost everything my first four years of school.”

Lex couldn't believe Nick was so nonchalant about being an orphan. Most kids would be bitter about spending a lifetime in the care of strangers but Nick used his circumstances to better himself. Lex admired him for that.

Chapter Two

After a month and a half on the ranch Nick was finally settling in. He got up before dawn and worked out in the gym before eating breakfast with Lex and Sam. Sam started working for Justin Meyers at the law office and loved it. He came home every night sharing something new that he'd learned that day about the law.

Nick worked Monday thru Friday from six-thirty in the morning until five-thirty at night. He knew the other cowboys worked longer hours and some weekends but Lex said it wasn't necessary for him. Nick liked the extra time in the gym so he didn't argue.

Lex taught him to fish and ride a horse, although he wasn't very good at either one yet. It was still difficult to keep his cock in check around Lex but he enjoyed himself so much when they were together that it was worth the pain of blue balls. When Lex took them fishing, they usually rode horses to the creek. Lex would pack a lunch and the three of them would spend most of Sunday just lazing by the bank, either fishing or swimming. Afternoons by the creek, they found, were the best times for a quiet nap. Sometimes Nick would stay awake so he could watch Lex sleep. He was so beautiful he made Nick's fingers itch.

Sam started working later and later in the evenings. Most nights he didn't even make it home for dinner. Nick had a feeling that something other than work was going on but Sam hadn't mentioned anything so Nick kept his nose out of it. The problem was Sam's frequent absences put Nick alone with Lex in the evenings, so most days after dinner Nick went downstairs and worked out after watching Lex disappear into his study. It was better that way, Nick thought. His feelings for Lex were growing stronger every day. Once in a while he caught Lex looking at him but when Nick would catch his eye he'd quickly look away. It started to make Nick paranoid that Lex was catching on to his feelings.

One evening in mid-July, Nick was downstairs working out on the banded weight machine when Lex came down the stairs. He was dressed in typical workout clothes but he looked a hell of a lot better in them than Nick thought any other forty-four-year-old man would. Lex's light gray jersey shorts showed off his long, muscled legs to perfection and he wasn't wearing a shirt, which suited Nick's libido just fine.

Lex went over to the free weights and started setting them up for bench presses. "I hope you don't mind if I work out with ya tonight. It gets kind of lonely upstairs by myself all the time. I just don't understand what could be so important that Sam has to work late every night."

He wasn't going to touch that one. "No, of course I don't mind. As long as you're a Toby Keith fan," he said, pointing to the stereo. "I like the rhythm of his songs when I work out."

Lex smiled and stretched out on the weight bench. "No, Toby's great. I like most of the country artists out now but none of 'em can touch Hank Williams."

Nick sat slack-jawed at the amount of weight Lex easily bench-pressed. His mouth watered as the muscles flexed, set off by a thin sheen of sweat. He tried his best to keep up with his own exercises but kept getting distracted by the bronzed god on the bench.

Lex stopped and sat up. He stood and went to add more weight to the bar. He looked over at Nick. "Would ya mind spotting me on this set? This weight is at the top of my limit."

Nick swallowed and stood. His erection was threatening to pop right out of his red jersey shorts, but what could he say? "Sure, that's no problem." Fuck, Nick just hoped Lex would think his erection was due to the workout and not him. He went around behind the bench and put his hands on the barbell. Lex found his grip on the bar and Nick helped him lift it off the stand.

Lex grunted on the ninth rep and Nick's cock jumped in his shorts. He was watching the play of muscle on Lex's abdomen when he literally watched Lex's cock harden before his eyes. He looked down at Lex's face and found him staring at Nick's

own erection. Lex did his last rep with the weights and Nick helped him set the weights onto the stand.

The two men just stared at each other for the longest time, both afraid to move or speak. Finally Lex lifted his hand and ran it across the front of Nick's tented shorts. Nick let slip a soft moan. Lex looked him in the eye and did it again, only a little harder this time. Nick's hips thrust forward of their own volition. This time Lex moaned. He raised his hand for a third time and surprised Nick by slipping it up the leg of Nick's shorts until his hand was covering Nick's barely contained, jock-covered erection.

Lex squeezed the erection in his hand. "God help me, but I want you."

He released Nick and sat up. Nick came around to face Lex and straddled the weight bench. He sat down knee to knee with Lex and leaned forward, pressing his lips to Lex's. The kiss was soft and gentle, learning each other. Slowly the kiss deepened and Lex ran his tongue along the seam of Nick's mouth. Nick opened for him immediately and stroked his tongue against Lex's.

Lex tangled his tongue with Nick's. "God, I've wanted ya from the moment I saw you." He hooked Nick's legs around his back and lifted him onto his lap. He ground his erection into Nick's ass as he sucked on his neck. "Still not close enough." Lex looked around and carried him to the workout mat.

Nick lay under the man of his dreams and fought for breath. Lex kissed and licked his way down Nick's hairless body. He bit Nick's nipples and sucked them into his mouth. A line of pure fire raced from Nick's nipples to his cock. Lex seemed to notice Nick's cock jump, because he raised his head and smiled, flashing his sexy dimples. Lex scooted down his body until he came to Nick's shorts.

Lex looked up at him. "Are ya okay with this?"

Nick thrust his cock toward Lex's face. "Can't you tell?"

Lex smiled and pulled his shorts and jock strap down his legs and off. "Damn, you're beautiful. I've never seen a man shaved before. Why'd ya do it?"

Nick ran his own hand down to the soft skin of his hairless pubic area and stroked his own cock. "It's not shaved, it's waxed. At first I did it because that's what everyone in gymnastics does but I kept doing it because it feels more sensitive when I touch it. Needless to say, I've done a whole lot of touching this past month and a half." He continued to stroke his erection until Lex took his hand away and replaced it with his mouth.

He ran his tongue up the side of Nick's cock. "Damn, you've got a big, fat cock for someone your size."

Lex ran his tongue around the crown and back down a couple of times before wrapping his lips around it and sucking him in. Nick arched up off the mat. "Fuck, that feels good." Lex pulled off his cock and ran his tongue down the side once more until one at a time he sucked Nick's balls into his mouth. "Oh God."

Lex swirled his tongue down behind Nick's balls and looked into his eyes. "I wanna taste your ass."

Nick nodded and turned over onto his hands and knees and presented his hairless asshole to Lex.

Lex groaned. "Fuck. I wish I had a condom. I wanna ride this ass. I wanna stick my cock inside it until you taste me." He leaned over and ran his tongue up and down Nick's crack. He spread Nick's cheeks wide and leaned in and ran his tongue around the rim of his asshole. Sticking his face against the crack of Nick's ass, he began sucking and nibbling on the puckered hole. Lex finally pushed a finger in and then two, then three. Nick thought he was going to pop at any second.

When Lex had him stretched he went back to using his tongue. He stiffened it and jabbed it in and out of Nick's ass. "Oh...I'm gonna come."

Sitting back, Lex stripped off his shorts and pulled Nick up to his knees to face him. Lex started stroking his own erection and Nick was mesmerized by the work of art in his hand. Darker than his bronzed skin, the cock was long and stood proud. It looked like Lex was holding a tree branch in his hand. He stroked himself and leaned in to

devour Nick's mouth. Breaking the kiss, he rubbed his cock against Nick's. "Come on my cock. I want to feel your cum dripping down my body."

"Damn, that's the sexiest thing anyone's ever said to me," Nick said as they wrapped their hands around each other's cocks. They kissed and stroked each other until Nick couldn't hold it anymore. Seed spurted from his cock like Old Faithful, landing on Lex's chest, stomach and cock.

Groaning, Lex let loose his own spray of pearly white strings. The sound of his grunts when he came vibrated not only Nick's chest but also his balls. The two men collapsed back onto the mat, entwined in each other's arms.

Lex ran his fingers through Nick's hair. "Fuck, that was good."

"Mmm." He nodded and snuggled closer to Lex. "I've been wanting it for a long time. Drove me crazy spending so much time with you and not being able to touch."

Kissing his forehead, Lex tilted his chin up. "I'm sorry if you think this is inappropriate behavior for a man of my age but, fuck, you're just so damned sexy I couldn't help myself. I tried to stay away." Lex shook his head. "I was so afraid this would happen."

Freeing his chin, Nick began licking Lex's pebbled nipple. "Can I sleep with you tonight?"

Lex buried his face in Nick's hair and got really quiet. "This wasn't fair to you." Lex sighed and kissed the top of Nick's head. "I can't be with you out in the open like that. I'm falling for you hard and fast but I love my son and this would kill him. I've hidden this side of myself from Sam his entire life. Hell, I've hidden this from everyone, even myself sometimes. I'm in the closet and that's where I have to stay. I'd love to fuck you morning, noon and night but I can never acknowledge to the outside world that we're lovers."

Nick closed his eyes and tried to calm himself. He didn't understand why Lex was still in the closet. Should he stay the rest of the summer and fuck Lex as often as he could before he had to leave or should he take his broken heart and go now? He

reached his hand out and ran it through the long silky strands of Lex's hair. "I think that's bullshit. Sam's a grown man. Let him deal with real life for a change instead of the one you've created for him." Nick closed his eyes and tried to calm down. "I'm in love with you," he whispered softly.

Lex moaned and took his mouth in a dance of love and longing. "I know ya don't understand my reasons but someday when you're older... Maybe it'll make more sense. I wish—"

Nick didn't let him finish because it no longer mattered. "I can't stay. I won't pretend that I don't feel anything for you. I'm going to tell Sam that I've got to get back early. Would you drive me to the airport tomorrow?"

He watched as Lex's happy smile crumbled before his eyes. "Oh God, baby. Please don't ask me to send ya on your way with a smile."

Nick kissed him and traced the planes and angles of his face. "I'm not asking you to smile. I'm just asking you to send me on my way. It hurts too much to know that your fears will keep us apart in the end. If I stay I'll fall even deeper and it'll kill me when you turn your back on me at the end of the summer." Nick stood and shook his head. "Just take me to the airport and kiss me goodbye. That's all I ask."

* * * * *

The next morning after breakfast Lex drove Nick into Missoula to the airport. After they left the small town of Quints behind, Lex pulled him to his side. Nick put his head on Lex's shoulder but neither of them talked. Finally Lex turned and kissed the top of his head. "I can't believe there are so many things I don't know about you. It seems we've talked about everything under the sun but I just realized that we've never talked about you. I don't even know what you're studying at the university."

Nick gave a sad forced chuckle. "I'm studying to be a veterinarian. It's kind of funny since I didn't even know how to ride a horse until a month ago." He stopped

talking, remembering the patience that Lex had shown him on his first few days of riding Lucky. "I've still got another year and a half left before I finish."

Lex wrapped his arm even tighter around Nick. "Promise you'll call me if ya ever need anything. No matter what it is. I'll be there to help."

"Thank you for everything. I appreciate you teaching me to fish and ride and for sharing yourself with me, even if it was only once. I'll never forget you. I hope you know that and if you ever decide to be honest with yourself and your son, call me."

Lex blinked rapidly, trying to dispel the tears that threatened. "There's a lot more to it than just telling Sam his father's gay. Believe me. I wouldn't let you go if things were that easy."

Lex pulled the truck up to the terminal building. "Are you sure you don't want me to come in with ya?"

Nick bit his lip and shook his head. "I don't want to cry in a public place and if you say goodbye to me inside, that's exactly what I'll do. Now kiss me and wave."

Lex wrapped both arms around Nick and pulled him in for the mother of all kisses. He felt the tears on Nick's cheeks before he saw them. He pulled back and swiped his tongue up both cheeks to wipe away the tears. "I'm sorry things couldn't be different but I'm the only parent Sam has left. I have to put him before myself on this."

Nick dried his eyes and cupped Lex's face. "Sam's lucky. I wish I had a parent who cared as much about me as you do about Sam." He drew away from Lex and got out of the truck. Lex watched as he grabbed his duffel and backpack out of the back of the truck. Nick gave him one last wave before walking through the airport doors. Lex rested his head on the steering wheel for a few seconds.

A horn honked and he jerked up and looked in the rearview mirror at the police car behind him. Giving a short wave, he dried his eyes and put the truck into gear.

Chapter Three

Three years later

Nick was just getting home after a twelve-hour workday when the phone rang in his modest studio apartment. He quickly unlocked the door and answered on the fourth ring. "Hello."

"Hi, Nick? It's Sam."

Nick sank to the couch, unable to hold himself up. He hadn't heard from him in almost three years. Sam transferred to Missoula before the fall semester after Nick left the ranch in such a hurry. He'd received Christmas and birthday cards but that was about it. He missed his old friend. "How the hell have you been?"

"I've been good, great, actually. Finally graduated from law school and passed the bar last summer. I went into partnership with Justin Meyers. As a matter of fact that's kinda what I'm calling about."

"That's great. You've worked for Justin for a long time." Nick ran his fingers through his shaggy hair, trying his best to keep the memories at bay.

"Yeah, I have. Um...the reason I'm calling was to see if you would, um...come up to Quints. Justin and I...oh hell, Nick, I don't even know how to tell you this. I'm gay. Justin and I are having a commitment ceremony and I need you to be there. I...um...I blamed you for a lot of things that I shouldn't have and I need a chance to make things right with you. Please tell me you'll come?"

Nick let out a tired sigh. "I already knew you were gay."

"You did? How did you know? I didn't even know until after you left the ranch that summer." Sam sounded totally shocked at Nick's revelation.

"I don't know. I just always knew."

Sam chuckled. "Well, I wish you'd have filled me in. You could have saved me a lot of mental anguish. Now please tell me you'll come to Quints?"

Nick closed his eyes. He knew he should tell his old friend no but he couldn't bring himself to do it. "When?"

"The ceremony will be the last weekend of the month but I was hoping you could come a week or so earlier so we could have a chance to work things out between us."

"I'll have to check with the other vets in the practice. I've got a couple weeks' vacation coming to me so hopefully it won't be a problem. If nothing else I'll fly up that weekend."

"That would be great. Call me and I'll pick you up at the airport."

"Okay, I should be able to get back with you in a couple days. It was nice hearing from you. I've missed you."

"Yeah, me too. Bye, Nick."

"Bye."

* * * * *

Two weeks later Nick was on a plane headed for Missoula. He went to the bathroom twice on the plane to throw up because his nerves were getting the best of him. Nick didn't know how he was going to face seeing Lex again. His feelings for the man had yet to fade. He'd even tried having sex a couple times in the past three years but he was never able to go through with it. His cock refused to work for anyone except Lex and Lex didn't want it anymore.

Nick thought back on the phone conversation he'd had with Sam. He still couldn't figure out what Sam had been talking about. What could he possibly blame Nick for that he needed to make up for now? He knew things had changed between the two of them when Sam transferred schools after that summer but he just figured it had something to do with Justin Meyers. He even thought that maybe he'd hurt his feelings

by cutting out on him earlier in the summer or that he just wanted to be closer to Justin. Whatever it was things just weren't the same between them after Sam transferred.

As the plane landed, Nick could still see some snow here and there. It was late May but Montana weather was unpredictable. Gathering his things, he disembarked with the rest of the passengers. Expecting to see Sam, he was surprised when he came face-to-face with Lex. He quickly excused himself and ran into the men's restroom. He locked the stall door and proceeded to toss his cookies once again.

He was just rinsing his mouth at the sink when Lex walked in. "You okay?"

Nick finished rinsing his mouth out and reached for a paper towel. He dried his face and wiped his mouth. "Yeah. I'm fine now. It, uh...must have been something I ate on the plane." He walked around Lex and out of the restroom.

Lex followed him out and to the baggage area. He stopped beside Nick and said nothing. His suitcase finally came through and Nick grabbed it off the conveyor belt.

He turned toward Lex. "Which way to the truck?"

Lex pointed the way and followed him out. They got to the parking lot and Lex steered him to the white quad-cab pickup.

Nick put his suitcase in the backseat and climbed in. "New truck?"

Lex shook his head. "No, not new. I got it right after you...left." Lex said nothing else and pulled out of the parking lot after paying the toll. "Sam said to tell ya he was sorry he couldn't pick you up. He had an emergency court appearance."

Nick just nodded and looked out the side window. "'S okay."

* * * * *

Lex gripped the steering wheel until his knuckles turned white. Nick hated him so much even the sight of him made him throw up. Fuck! He knew it was his own damn fault but he still felt he'd done the best thing for Sam. Even though Sam just recently came out of the closet, *he* was still firmly locked in. So what if his life had been absolute

hell since Nick had left, it was his own damn fault. He didn't even try to go into Missoula anymore. Nothing and no one would ever replace Nick in his heart or his bed.

He'd heard the same lecture over and over from Shorty and from Sam. "Get your head out of your ass and do something with yourself." He'd become withdrawn to the point that he rarely even rode his horse anymore. He spent so much time in the study that he had to replace his leather chair the previous winter because it was falling apart from overuse. He drank too much for a while after Nick left until Sam and Shorty cornered him in his office and demanded to know why he was trying to kill himself with scotch. Lex didn't tell them anything but he'd cut way down on his alcohol consumption. It never really helped anyway. Even when he got so drunk he passed out he still dreamed of Nick and woke in a cold sweat with a raging hard-on.

They drove for a while in silence. Lex looked across the cab at Nick. It was now or never. "So how've ya been?"

Nick shifted in his seat but didn't look at him. "Good, I guess. I'm working for two veterinarians in Austin. We do everything from snakes to bulls. I've only been with them a little over a year so I always get the jobs where I have to stick my arm up a cow's ass and other shitty jobs like that but everyone has to pay their dues, I guess. At least I'm glad for the long hours. Anything's better than going home to an empty apartment and microwaved frozen dinners."

Lex was surprised to hear that. "You aren't dating anyone then?" He knew he had no right to ask but he had to know. He bit his cheek and held his breath.

"I haven't had a date more than a casual dinner or movie in the last three years. I'm just not interested." Nick looked at him quickly then turned back to the window. "What about you? You dated anyone?"

Lex laughed a little too harshly. "I don't know if I made this clear to you before but I've never dated anyone in my life besides Terri, the woman I married. I used to go into Missoula every couple of months to scratch my itch but those usually were one-night kind of things. But to answer your question, no, I haven't dated anyone since you. Not

that we ever went on an actual date. Hell, I haven't been off the ranch more than a handful of times since ya left, forget about going to Missoula. That kind of sex is over for me now."

Nick swung his gaze to Lex. "Are you saying that you're no longer gay?"

Lex smiled and shook his head. He put his hand on Nick's shoulder. "I'm saying that I finally figured out what had been missing in my life. Sex for the sake of sex is empty and hollow." Lex cleared his throat and took his hand off Nick's shoulder, gripping the steering wheel again. "The one time we made love was better than anything I could have ever imagined. Nothing with a stranger in a hotel room could ever compare, so I just gave it up."

Nick shifted in his seat again and this time turned toward him. "Why did you sell the blue truck? I thought it was brand-new."

Lex shrugged and turned the radio on low. "I couldn't drive it without thinking about you. It got to the point that by the time I showed up to wherever I needed to go I was depressed. I'd turn around and go home and stay in the study for days. I finally knew I had to sell it or put a gun to my head."

Nick reached his hand across the seat and put it on Lex's thigh. "I'm sorry you had to go through that. If it helps any it was about the same for me. Still is. Except you felt guilty and I felt angry."

Lex reached down and covered Nick's hand with his own. He pulled the truck to the side of the road and turned it off and broke down. The audible sobs actually shook the truck. Nick pulled Lex into his arms. He smoothed the hair out of his face and kissed his cheek. "Please don't. I can't stand to see you this way. If being here is going to upset you maybe I shouldn't stay."

Lex grabbed Nick by the arms and looked deep into his golden eyes. "Please don't leave me right now. Sam would never forgive me and I'd never forgive myself if I drove you away again."

Then it happened. He pulled Nick into his arms and covered his face with passionate kisses, ending with a toe-curling kiss on the mouth.

Nick sat back and looked at him. "I don't know if I can do this again. My feelings for you haven't changed. If anything they've grown deeper but I still can't be your little secret."

Lex rested his forehead against Nick's. "Please just give me a little more time. I've been trying to work up the courage to tell Sam that I'm in love with you. I just need a little more time."

Nick cupped Lex's cheek. "Please explain to me why you're so afraid of telling Sam that you're gay. He's gay. I think he might understand."

Lex shook his head. "He'll have questions about why I married his mother if I was gay and I'm just not ready to tell him the answer."

"Why? What's the answer?"

Lex closed his eyes and drew in a deep breath. "I paid her to marry me and bear my child." He opened his eyes and looked at Nick. "Terri knew there was something wrong with me when I first started dating her because she kept trying to get me into bed and I kept coming up with excuses. She was from a poor family and just wanted a way out. My mother's family was very wealthy and known all over Montana. I think Terri saw me and my family's money as her ticket to a better life. I told her if she married me I'd transfer money into a checking account for her."

Lex ran his thumb over Nick's cheek. "After we were married I tried to give her everything she wanted. I wanted a son and she said it would cost me more money because she knew I was gay and that was her price for sleeping with a fag. But I wanted a son more than I needed the money so I happily agreed. Thank God it only took a month of fucking her to get her pregnant. After Sam was born she was richer and took off when Sam was only eight months old. I think she would have been gone sooner but it took her awhile to get her figure back. She's never attempted to see him since."

Nick kissed Lex again. "You're right. I think that story would really hurt Sam but why do you have to tell him all of it? Can't you just tell him you're gay and leave it at that? Sam said he wanted to make things right with me. That's why I'm here a week early. Let me see what he wants to say to me first and we can take it from there."

"Will you stay with me while you're here?" Lex ran his hands over Nick's back and kissed his forehead. "We don't have to do anything if that's your choice but I'd like having you around the ranch again. I've missed ya so much."

"Of course I'll stay with you, ya big lug. You can probably even talk me into sharing your bed as long as Sam no longer lives with you."

Lex smiled and shook his head. "He lives with Justin and I'd love to have you in my bed." Lex straightened behind the wheel and drove them to Quints. "First though, I promised Sam we'd meet them for dinner."

Chapter Four

Gus's hadn't changed a bit. Same old tables and beer signs. Nick hoped the food was the same too. Gus Schumacher made the best ribs in the state. He was a toothless, old, wiry, black man with no hair. He told everyone that was the secret to his ribs. He made them tender enough so that even he could eat them.

Looking around, they didn't see Sam and Justin when they entered the bar so they found a booth in the back and ordered beers.

Lex was sitting beside him in the booth and the proximity was almost too much for him to handle after being away from the man he loved for three years. Nick tried to concentrate on the menu.

Taking the menu from his hands, Lex put it back in the holder. "Why are ya bothering with that? You already know you're going to order the ribs." He subtly put his hand on Nick's thigh.

Nick squeezed his legs together, effectively squeezing Lex's hand. "I'm trying my best to think of something besides being in your bed tonight and you're not helping."

Lex chuckled. "I've got the same problem. Why do ya think I already have my napkin in my lap?" He took a drink of his beer and set it down. "So tell me what you love the most about being a vet."

Nick was grateful for the distraction, although Lex still had his hand on his thigh. "Well, I think the best part of my job is when I can hand a pet back to its owner and know that I helped it or even saved its life. Little girls with tears in their eyes get me every time. I mostly get sent out on the ranch calls though. It makes a lot of sense since I'm not only the youngest vet there but also by far the strongest. Connie, one of the vets, is a tiny little thing of about five foot two and then Al is around sixty." He shrugged. "So I go on the calls and smile, knowing I'm contributing my fair share to the practice."

Lex nodded and squeezed his leg again. "I bet you're a terrific vet." Before he could say more Sam and Justin strolled across the room.

Sam slid into the booth followed by Justin. Sam held his hand out to Nick. "It's so good to see you friend. I've missed you." Sam released his hand and motioned toward Justin. "I don't think you've ever met Justin, have you?"

Nick shook his head and reached out a hand. Justin was older than Sam by about the same margin Lex was older than him and if he didn't miss his guess, he was a friend of Lex's. The older lawyer had short blond hair and piercing blue eyes. Nick could see why this was the man to bring Sam out of the closet. "It's good to finally meet you."

Justin's hand enveloped his and they shook. "Nice to finally meet you too. Sam's talked about you many times these past two years. I'm glad that you've accepted our invitation." Justin looked over at Sam. "Sam really needed to see you."

They ordered ribs and a pitcher of beer and got caught up on each other's lives. Sam was talking about the new house Justin had built for them in the country right outside town and Nick could see the love in his eyes. "Are you going to stay at the Lazy River or with Justin and me?"

Nick swallowed his beer before he choked. "Um...Lex already invited me to stay out at the Lazy River. I was hoping I could get some more riding practice in." Nick turned toward Lex. "Do you still have Lucky?"

Sam started laughing and smacked his hand on the table. "Are you kidding? Lucky is the luckiest damn horse in the state. Dad babies that horse like he was human. He even had a special heated stall built for the winters up here." He stopped laughing and looked at Nick like something had just occurred to him. "I'd forgotten you always rode Lucky that summer." He looked over at his dad then averted his eyes.

Lex cleared his throat and took his hand off Nick's thigh. "Lucky's getting old. He doesn't handle the winters like he used to, that's all," he said, obviously trying to defend his actions.

Nick felt an inner ray of hope and did a happy dance in his head. "What about fishing? You guys still go fishing on Sundays, don't you?"

Sam shook his head and looked uncomfortable. "Not in a long time. I'm...uh...pretty busy with the practice and before that it seems I always had studying to do on the weekends. I'd like to go this Sunday though. How about just me and you go and we can catch up on things." Sam gave Nick a look that meant he needed to clear the air with him in private.

"Sure, sounds great. I'll expect you right after breakfast." The food came and the group fell silent as they enjoyed their ribs. Nick rolled his eyes and licked his fingers. "Damn. Gus still makes the best ribs."

Lex cleared his throat and nodded. "It's a pretty sad thing that you have to come to Montana from Texas in order to get a good plate of ribs."

Nick chuckled and licked his fingers again. He saw the flare of heat in Lex's eyes. "They could have good ribs in Austin. I wouldn't know. I pretty much just work and go home. I...uh...don't have any real friends there anymore and I hate eating at a restaurant alone."

When they'd finished eating Justin picked up the bill. "Let me get it this time. Next time someone else can pay." He got up and went to the bar to chat with Gus and pay the tab.

Lex wiped his fingers on his napkin. "I'm gonna hit the restroom before we leave and see if I can get the sauce off my fingers any better." Lex left the booth.

Sam reached over and grabbed Nick's hand. "I need to talk to you about Dad but I guess it will have to wait another day and a half." He looked into Nick's eyes. "He's not been good since you last saw him. I'm worried about him." Sam saw Lex coming back toward the table. "I'm glad you're here."

Lex walked up to the table. "It's damn good having him back." He looked over at Justin still talking to Gus at the bar and then back to Nick. "You ready to head to the ranch?"

Nick nodded and slid out of the booth. Sam stood and the two men embraced. "It feels good to be back. I'll see you Sunday morning."

Sam slapped Nick on the back. "I'll even bring lunch."

Nick waved goodbye to Justin and followed Lex out to the truck. Lex got in and pulled out of the parking spot in front of the bar. They were halfway home before Nick got up the nerve to unbuckle his seat belt and slide across the bench seat to sit beside Lex.

Lex put his arm around him and pulled him even closer. "I'm glad you're back." He slowed the truck down and kissed him quickly. "I need to get you home. I'd like to take ya inside and straight to bed but Shorty'll be waiting for us. I think he missed ya too."

Nick ran his hand over the bulge in Lex's jeans. "Shorty's like a father to you, isn't he?"

Lex spread his legs a little and nodded. "My own father was a bitter drunk. He married my momma for the ranch and her money and that's all he gave a shit about. Shorty's the one who taught me everything I know about ranching. So yeah, Shorty was definitely the father figure in my life. Still is, as a matter of fact."

He rubbed Lex's cock a little harder and Lex moaned. Nick started unzipping Lex's tight jeans to get to the hard cock inside. "Well, we can't have you around Shorty with a raging hard-on. Maybe I should just take care of it before we get home." He scooted back in the seat and put his head in Lex's lap. He separated the denim and the long, thick cock he'd dreamed of for the past three years sprang free, almost hitting him in the face. He looked at Lex for his approval.

Lex spread his thighs even further and turned onto a gravel road. "Just give me a second to pull over. I warn you though, it's not gonna take much to set me off." He pulled over to the side of the road and pulled his jeans down to his thighs. Lex leaned his head back on the seat and spread his legs as wide as he could. "Do your worst, baby."

Nick smiled at the endearment and ran his fingers up the long, thick cock. He traced the veins one by one, and when he saw a large drop of pre-cum appear from the slit, he licked it off. "God, you taste good." Nick swiped his tongue once more across the head and wrapped his lips around the wide cock. He was out of practice so he couldn't go all the way down but he licked his palms and jerked Lex off while he licked and sucked what he could get into his mouth.

Lex rested his hands on Nick's hair and gently thrust his hips upward. "Fuck, that feels good." He thrust a few more times. "Gonna come."

Nick sucked harder, swirling his tongue around the throbbing cock. He reached down and squeezed Lex's sac. That was all it took for Lex to come down Nick's throat. Nick managed to swallow every drop. "Mmm...you taste good." He licked Lex clean and sat up, still rubbing the soft skin of Lex's groin. "When did you start waxing?" Lex got a sheepish look on his face. "After you left I was pretty much stuck with just my own hand. Then I remembered you told me it made your cock and balls more sensitive and well...I needed all the help I could get." Lex pulled his jeans up and zipped them. He looked over at Nick's erection. "What about you? Do you need relief before we get to the ranch?"

Nick shook his head. "I'll just pull my shirt out of my jeans. It'll just look like I'm a weary traveler. I can wait." He leaned in and kissed Lex. "I just needed to taste you. To remember what your seed smelled like." He winked at Lex. "You can pay me back later." He leaned in and kissed the side of Lex's neck. "I wish I could suck up a mark on you to let everyone know you're taken."

Lex turned and took his mouth despite driving. "Someday you can mark me anywhere you want. Just be patient for a little while longer." Lex pulled into the ranch drive and Nick reluctantly scooted back to his side of the truck.

As soon as they pulled up Shorty came walking out the main house's kitchen door. He ambled over to meet the two men. "I was wondering if you two were ever going to

show up. I made a pitcher of margaritas. Let's go inside and welcome Nick back properly."

Shorty walked back to the house and Lex gave Nick a look that spoke volumes. Yeah, Nick was sure Lex would welcome him back *properly* later. He carried his suitcase in the house and set it by the door. He didn't want Shorty to see him take it to Lex's room.

Shorty poured each of them a glass and sat at the kitchen table. Nick knew he would never be able to get used to the size of the house. The kitchen itself was bigger than his whole apartment. It even had a fireplace and loveseat on one end. The whole house was decorated in a Native American theme but according to Sam, who'd seen pictures, it hadn't been that way when his mom lived here. Nick guessed that Lex did his own redecorating when Terri left. The result was stunning. The huge house took on an almost intimate feel, with its dark reds and golds. The wide-plank floor always shined even though there was a lot of foot traffic. Lex told him he had a woman come in once a week just to dust and do the floors.

Nick took a gulp of his margarita. "That's good, Shorty, thanks. So how have you been?"

Shorty drank his glass in three swallows and filled it up again. "I'd be a hell of a lot better if you could figure out what the hell is wrong with Lex. He's been like a bear with a sore paw since the day you left. He even managed to run off my best damned cowboy."

Nick looked over at Lex. "Pete left? What did you do to make him so mad?"

Lex shook his head and looked down. "Long story."

Shorty snorted. "Long story, my ass." He looked at Nick and smiled. "He caught Pete riding Lucky one day and knocked him clean off that damned old horse, breaking Pete's wrist in the process."

Lex looked at Shorty as if to explain his actions once again to the old man. "I'd already told everyone here that Lucky was gettin' too old to be a damn work horse. It wasn't my fault that Pete forgot."

Shorty rolled his eyes. "Pete's working for the Lanhams now. A damn crazy bunch, that family is. I think he'd like to come back but he says he can't until the boss gets the thorn out of his paw." Shorty looked at Nick as if he knew exactly what Lex's problem had been.

They finished up the pitcher of margaritas and Shorty stood and took his hat off the peg on the wall. "You come on out to the stable tomorrow and I'll bet Lex will let you ride old Lucky." He chuckled and went out the kitchen door toward the bunkhouse.

Nick smiled and looked over at Lex. "He *so* knows you're gay."

Lex looked like Nick had slapped him. "The hell he does. That old man was here when I dated and married Terri."

Nick rolled his eyes and sat back in the chair. "I'm sorry but I'm telling you he knows. I doubt he'll ever say anything to you about it but he knows."

Lex looked toward the screen door. He bit his lip in thought. "Do you suppose that's why he's the only one around here that hasn't been trying to push women on me since Terri left?"

Nick just nodded. "I think he accepts that you are what you are and nothing he says is going to change it."

Lex finished the last of his drink and took the empty glasses to the sink. He rinsed them and stuck them in the dishwasher. When he came back to the table he stood in front of Nick and parted his knees. Kneeling down in front of him, he started unsnapping and unzipping Nick's jeans. "Time for me to welcome you home properly."

Nick groaned and toed his sneakers and socks off. He lifted his ass so Lex could pull his jeans and underwear off and spread his legs. "It's about time."

Lex picked him up and carried him to the little loveseat in front of the fire. He was glad it was still chilly enough for a fire, it was nice. He set Nick down and knelt before him once again. He unzipped his own jeans and started stroking his cock as his tongue worked over the sides and head of Nick's erection. "Mmm...oh fuck, this is nice." Nick moaned as Lex ran his tongue down to Nick's sac and sucked one nut into his mouth. Suckling the heavy sack, he pulled Nick farther down on the loveseat so his ass was hanging off the end.

Lex stuck his finger into Nick's mouth and pulled it back out. He took the finger and started running it around Nick's puckered entry. Nick grabbed hold of Lex's long hair and arched his back. "Feels so good. Eat it, honey."

Lex pulled his mouth off Nick's sac and smiled. He moved his way to Nick's anus and licked, sucked and kissed. Nick remembered how much Lex enjoyed eating his ass. Lex forced his tongue into the tight hole and Nick groaned and opened even more for him. "Yes, oh God, yes." Nick grabbed his cock and started pumping. "Wanna fuck you. I want you to ride my cock."

Pulling his tongue out of Nick's ass, Lex looked at him. "You got any condoms in that bag of yours?" At the shake of Nick's head Lex licked his lips. "I've never had sex in the house except the couple times with Terri. I don't know if you trust me but I'm clean. I was tested a year ago for a physical Sam made me get and I haven't been with anyone but myself since."

Nick continued to stroke his own cock. "I'm clean. I get a physical every year for insurance and I haven't been fucked since I was with you."

Lex nodded his head. "I've got lube in my bedroom. I'll just go get it." He started to leave the room.

Nick got up from the couch. "I might as well just follow you to the bedroom. We can try the loveseat out another time." Nick picked up their clothes and Lex grabbed his suitcase.

Lex led him up the stairs to the last room down the hall. Nick had never seen Lex's room and he wasn't disappointed. Decorated in shades of blue, the room was dominated by the king-size bed and the fireplace. Two black leather club chairs sat in front of the fireplace with a white throw over the arm of one. "This is a beautiful room."

Lex put the suitcase down and pulled Nick into his arms. "I redid it about a year ago. I needed the blues to calm me down. I've been having a little trouble with my blood pressure lately." He led Nick over to the bed and pulled down the covers, revealing midnight blue silk sheets.

Nick stretched on the bed and wiggled around. "Man, these sheets feel nice. Don't think I'm going to forget about your blood pressure. We'll discuss it later. Now how about you find that lube? My cock has been begging for your ass for three long years."

Lex pulled open the bedside drawer and withdrew a well-used tube of lube. He handed it out toward Nick. "Do you want to do it or should I?"

Moaning, Nick stroked his still rock-hard shaft. "Give me a little and I'll lube up my cock while I watch you stretch yourself. It will be sexy to see you fingering your own anus."

Lex stretched out beside Nick and put a drop of lube into Nick's hand. He squirted some into his own hand and then raised his legs up with Nick's help and squirted some directly into his hole. He capped the lube and threw it on the table. Lex ran his fingers around his hole to spread the lube then worked two fingers into his opening. He arched his back and put in two more.

Nick couldn't believe how fast Lex was stretched wide open. "I thought you said you hadn't had sex in years, how did you do that so fast?"

Lex's face turned crimson and he reached into the drawer and pulled out a very realistic-looking dildo. "I said I'd only been with myself."

Laughing, Nick took the flesh-colored dildo and ran his hands up and down the long length. "Yum. Later, I'd like you to fuck me while having this shoved up your ass."

Lex groaned and crawled to the middle of the bed. He spread his thighs wide and hooked his arms under his knees. He presented his well lubed and stretched hole to Nick. "I've thought of doing that same thing every time I used that. It was the only way I could come. Now fuck my ass. I can't wait any longer."

Crawling up between Lex's spread thighs, Nick stroked his cock one more time and, without preamble, pushed slowly in to the hilt. He gave Lex only a few seconds to get accustomed to his size before he started a fast, hard rhythm.

Lex arched and lifted his ass even higher into the air so Nick could go even deeper. "It feels even better than I dreamed it would. Fuck me harder. Make me come."

Nick smacked Lex's ass and pulled out. "Flip over."

Grunting his approval, Lex turned over and raised his ass in the air while hugging the pillow under him. Nick held his cock by the base and jabbed in and out of Lex, eliciting wild groans of pleasure from him. "Need more," Lex moaned.

Taking pity on him, Nick smiled and rammed home. He used one hand to grip Lex's hip, while he reached under and wrapped the other around Lex's dripping cock. He pumped into Lex as hard as he dared.

With his back arched, Lex howled and came, splashing his seed through Nick's hand and onto the clean sheets. The over-powering smell of Lex's cum wrapped around Nick like a warm pair of arms. Burying himself as deep as he could, Nick exploded. He didn't think he'd ever come so hard in his life. He was still vibrating when he pulled out and fell onto the bed next to Lex. Nick crawled into Lex's arms and started licking cum off his hand. "I love your taste almost as much as I love you."

Lex looked at him with tears in his eyes. "I love you too. I'll love you 'til the day that I die."

Nick kissed the tears from Lex's eyes. "No matter what happens this week, you'll always have my heart. I mean that." He kissed Lex with wild abandon, kissing and licking his face and neck before moving down to suckle and pinch his sensitive nipples.

Lex groaned and held Nick's head. He suckled a little while longer and came back up to suckle Lex's tongue.

Lex pulled Nick on top of him and grabbed his ass. He took the twin well-muscled globes into his hands and squeezed. "Damn, your ass is still hard as a rock. What have you been doing since you quit gymnastics to stay in shape?"

Nick ground his semi-hard cock against Lex's. "I go to the Y most days before I go to work. I either work out on the machines or swim. Swimming keeps me in the best shape."

Lex continued to squeeze and spread Nick's ass, thrusting up every so often. "If swimming can keep this ass of yours like this I'll put in a pool tomorrow." Lex ran his finger along the crevice.

Nick pushed in toward his finger. "Not very economical to have an outdoor pool in Montana, big guy." He licked the side of Lex's face and ran his fingers through the black length of Lex's hair. "I love this hair. I've fantasized many times over the years of having it wrapped around my dick."

The two men ground themselves together until both were coming again, the heat splashing up between their bodies. "I want to fuck you in every room of this house and every acre of property I own. I want to fuck you morning, noon and night and twice on Sundays but right now I'm an old man of forty-seven who needs a little breather."

Nick chuckled and rose off Lex's chest. "Ew...kinda sticky. How about a shower?" He pulled Lex to his feet and looked toward the five doors spread around the room. "Which door?"

Lex laughed and pointed to the doors one by one. "That door led to Terri's room and private bath, that one is a dressing room and closet, that leads to the hallway as you know, that one to the master bath and the last one as you can see leads out onto the balcony. It's one of my favorite places to jack off and think of you in the evening. I purposely built the house so my bedroom didn't have any buildings behind it. No sense in giving old Shorty a heart attack."

Nick led him into the bathroom. He stopped in the doorway and Lex ran right into the back of him. He looked around the room. "You have a fireplace in your bathroom?"

Lex snuggled up to his back. "Of course and I can't wait to fuck you in front of it one day. As you can probably tell I have kind of a thing for fireplaces. They come in handy when there's four feet of snow on the ground and the electricity goes out. I remember freezing my ass off in the old house every winter growing up. I decided if I ever tore it down and built my own home I'd have a fireplace in damned near every room. The stone masons were kept busy for over a year between the outside and inside of this house."

Lex kissed Nick's neck. "Would you rather take a bath or a shower?"

"I'd like to take a quick shower and then go back to bed. I'm sorry, honey, but getting sick twice on the plane and then once when we landed along with everything else has got me pretty worn out. I'd like to just snuggle up behind you and bury my face in that beautiful hair of yours and go to sleep." He looked at Lex over his shoulder and winked. "Maybe wake up a few times during the night to fuck."

Lex kissed him and let go to turn the shower on. He motioned to the cabinet. "Why don't you get a couple of towels out and put them on the warming rack there on the wall."

Nick shook his head and went to get the towels. He didn't think he'd ever get used to living like this. Hell, he only had three towels at home. He'd never even seen a towel warmer. He put two thick white towels on the warmer and joined Lex in the shower. The shower had multiple spray nozzles on three walls. Nick just shook his head and turned into Lex's waiting arms. "Let me wash your hair for you."

Lex turned his back to Nick and handed him the herbal shampoo he always used. "How can a guy turn down such a request? I'll be honest with you. This is one of my fantasies. I used to notice the way you watched my hair blowing in the wind while we were out riding. I've thought a lot about cutting it over the years but I haven't thought about it once since the day I first noticed you admiring it."

Nick leaned in and bit his shoulder. "I hope you never do more than trim it." He squirted some shampoo into his palm and ran his hands through Lex's hair. He started at the top and massaged his scalp before getting more shampoo and working his way down to the ends. Lex's hair brushed the top of his crack and Nick couldn't help but to slide a quick finger down the crevice of his ass. "So damn sexy."

He turned Lex so he could rinse the hair with the handheld spray nozzle. Lex's hair was so thick Nick didn't think he'd ever get the soap out. When he was finished rinsing it, he leaned in and kissed Lex's neck. "Would you like me to put conditioner on it?"

Nick conditioned Lex's hair and the twosome soaped each other's bodies clean. When they got out Nick fell in love with the towel warmer. "Oh, this feels like heaven."

Lex chuckled and swatted him on the ass. He went to the sink and pulled out his blow-dryer. "I normally let it just air-dry but if you're going to sleep with your face in it I'll gladly take the time to blow it dry." He slowly ran a pick through it until it was tangle free and plugged the blow-dryer in.

Nick took the blow-dryer from his hand. He pointed toward the little bench on the side of the sink. "Sit. I'll dry it for you."

Twenty minutes later the two men got into bed. True to his word Nick snuggled up to Lex's back and buried his face in his clean-smelling hair and went to sleep almost immediately.

Chapter Five

Lex woke the next morning to find beautiful golden eyes staring at him. "Mmm...glad it wasn't all a dream. I was afraid you wouldn't really be here if I opened my eyes." Lex ran his hands up and down Nick's chest, only stopping to tweak his nipples.

Leaning in for a morning kiss, Nick chuckled. "The way my ass feels I can tell you for certain it wasn't a dream. You made love to me twice during the night and, boy, can I still feel it." He parted his lips and pressed them to Lex's.

Lex groaned and rubbed his morning erection against Nick's thigh. Nick turned slightly rubbing his cock against Lex's. Their hands roamed each other's bodies and their mouths dueled.

Licking a path down Lex's neck, Nick groaned. "God, I want to mark you." He kept going and ended up sucking up a mark over his heart. "At least here I'll know you're already spoken for. Someday you have to promise I can mark your neck." He scooted back up to Lex's mouth for another breath-stealing kiss.

Pulling him on top, Lex spread his legs and thrust his cock hard against Nick's. "I promise, baby. I know you're a little tender so let's rub ourselves off and go outside and see the horses."

* * * * *

Forty-five minutes later they headed for the horse barn. It was still pretty early and on Saturdays the cowboys usually didn't start work until eight, so Lex and Nick had the barn to themselves.

Lex led him over to the special enclosed stall in the corner. When Nick realized what he was looking at he smiled. Lucky was living the life of a king. No wonder Lex

got teased about it. His enclosed stall was twice the size of the rest of them in the barn and this one actually had a window unit that if Nick's eyes were seeing right gave off not only heat but air-conditioning as well. Lex had even installed a much bigger window for Lucky to look out of.

Nick turned to Lex and took his hand. "Why did you really do this?"

Lex looked away for a minute and then back to look at him. He shrugged. "I wanted to take care of you but that wasn't possible. I guess I transferred some of my feelings for you to Lucky. I felt as long as Lucky was being looked after you would be okay. I know it sounds stupid but it just helped me cope."

Picking up his hand to kiss his palm, Nick shook his head. "It doesn't sound stupid at all, but he needs to be ridden. Lucky loves to run through the fields with someone on his back so why did you knock your best cowboy off him?"

Lex looked around the barn and pulled Nick into his arms. "Because Lucky was you. No one rides you but me. When I rode up and saw Pete on Lucky I can't even begin to explain the emotions that went through me. I know I lost control but the way I felt seeing him on top of you...Lucky..." Lex took a deep breath and shook his head. "He should have been grateful I didn't kill him." Lex leaned in and kissed Nick and then stepped away from him again. "Do you feel like taking a ride?"

Nick said nothing but nodded. He saddled Lucky while Lex went out to find Night Fever in the pasture. He was tightening up the cinch when Shorty came into the barn. "Hey, Shorty."

Shorty stopped and looked at him. "Morning. How's it goin'? I mean have you found that thorn yet?"

Nick looked at Shorty, confused. "Thorn?"

Shorty chuckled. "Yeah, the thorn in the bear's paw. Have you removed it yet?" Shorty looked at Nick knowingly.

"I've been working on it. But the last little bit he needs to get out himself or it's just gonna fester."

Spitting a wad of chewing tobacco on the ground, Shorty adjusted his hat. "I think that last little bit will be just fine if he'd just do it already. Waiting never got anything done." Shorty tipped his hat again and strode out of the barn.

Nick shook his head and led Lucky out the back door and out into the pasture. He saw Lex just finishing up. He pulled Lucky alongside Night Fever and stroked down his nose. "Almost ready?"

Lex tightened his cinch and climbed into the saddle. "Ready and willing."

They set off at a leisurely pace, not having a destination in mind, just wanting to soak up nature. After a couple of hours Nick started to squirm in his saddle. He wasn't used to this anymore.

Lex gave him a knowing grin. "Let's head back to the house. I've got a new feed outfit stopping by to give me some quotes."

Nodding, Nick gave Lucky his head and let the horse run about a mile before slowing him back down. Lex caught up with him and smiled. Nick smiled back. "I love this. The cool wind in my face makes me feel totally free. It's like I'm in heaven."

Lex leaned over his saddle and stretched far enough to kiss him. "You look damn good with red cheeks too." They rode on for a while and Lex turned to look at him with a question in his eyes.

Nick could see Lex wanted to ask him something but was uncomfortable doing so. "What do you want to ask me?"

Shrugging his shoulder Lex looked out over the mountains. They were almost in view of the barn so he couldn't get close to Nick. "I was just wondering whether you'd ever consider moving here. I know you have an apartment and a job in Austin but I don't want to live without you again."

"I have an apartment in Austin. Not a home and a job with two strangers. If things can be worked out on your end there's no way I'd go back to Austin." Nick looked straight ahead as they came up to the barn. He could see the cowboys getting ready to

ride out. Some were on horses and a couple were on four-wheelers. Their eyes bugged when they saw what horse Nick was riding.

Nick turned his head toward Lex. "How're you going to explain to them why it's okay for me to ride Lucky and no one else?"

Lex looked over at his men. "I don't have to explain shit to them. They work for me, remember."

They rode into the corral and dismounted. Nick led Lucky, despite the obvious stares. He tied him to a corral post while he unsaddled and groomed him. "Could we leave Lucky out a while? I think he needs more of the clean morning air."

"Lucky's your horse now, Nick. You can do whatever ya want with him." Lex finished grooming Night Fever and let him loose in the pasture.

Nick did the same with Lucky. He picked up his saddle and caught up with Lex. "What do you mean he's my horse? Since when?"

"Since the day you first sat on his back. I'll never forget the look on your face that day." Lex looked into his eyes. He lowered his voice and leaned a little closer. "Damn, I wish I could kiss you right now."

Nick winked and mouthed "later" as Shorty came up the aisle of the barn. Lex put their saddles away in the tack room and came back out.

"Lex, that guy from the feed distributor is here to see you." He looked between the two men. "Have a good ride?"

"Yeah, we did," Nick said. He turned toward Lex. "I'm going to work out for a while. Come and find me when you're finished." Lex nodded and Nick walked toward the main house.

When he got inside he went to the bedroom to change clothes. He pulled out his old gymnastic shorts and put them on without underwear. The look of his soft cock was almost obscene. He couldn't wait for Lex to get a look at him hard in them. He left off his shirt and shoes and headed to the basement. He was just starting his workout when

the phone rang. He found the cordless in its base on the wall and answered it. "Lazy River."

"This is Thelma at the pharmacy in Quints. I'm calling to tell Lex his refill prescription is ready for pickup."

"Okay, thanks, I'll be sure to tell him." Nick hung up and walked back to the weight machine. He couldn't help wondering whether the prescription had anything to do with Lex's blood pressure. He'd just have to ask Lex about it and stop borrowing trouble. He decided against the weights and stretched out on the mat and started in on his stomach crunches.

He'd done almost two hundred when Lex came through the door dressed in an old ratty pair of shorts and nothing else. It seemed Lex had the same idea he did, only where Nick's shorts were skintight Lex's were baggy-legged. Nick bet he could reach right up the leg of those shorts and pull Lex's cock into his mouth. That's all it took for Nick's cock to go rock-hard. The head of his cock was trying to push its way out the waistband of his shorts. Well, that was new.

Lex pointed to the free weights. "Wanna spot me, baby?"

Nick laughed. "I spotted you the second you came into the room." He got up off the floor and stood at the head of the weight bench.

Lex rubbed a little chalk onto his hands and lay down. He found his grip on the bar and lifted it off the rack. Unlike last time he didn't even try to hide the fact that he was looking right at Nick's erection.

Nick thought he'd teach him a little lesson and pulled his tight shorts down under his balls. This was a big mistake on Nick's part because Lex almost lost control of the weights. If he hadn't been there to steady the bar Lex could have been seriously hurt. He helped Lex steady the weights back onto the rack. He was just about to apologize when Lex grabbed the back of his legs and pulled him closer. In the blink of an eye he had Nick's cock down his throat. One hand held the back of Nick's legs and the other rubbed his own cock through his baggy shorts.

Nick pulled his cock out of Lex's mouth. "Get on the mat. I want to taste you too. Oh and leave the shorts on for now." Nick winked and walked around the weights to join Lex on the mat. He knelt over him with his knees just on either side of Lex's head. Thank god the man was all legs or this wouldn't have worked. His face was eye-level with that long, thick cock sticking out of the leg of the baggy shorts. He lifted the leg of the shorts and sucked the head into his waiting mouth. He groaned and thrust downward when Lex sucked his cock all the way down his throat. He pulled off Lex's cock. "Fuck, you're gonna make me come too soon if you keep that up."

Lex totally ignored him and thrust his own erection toward Nick's mouth in a silent command. Nick decided to even the score by wetting his own finger and searching out Lex's most vulnerable spot. He traced the tight hole of his ass and slowly pushed his finger inside. The shorts were getting in his way so he slid them off. "I want to taste your ass." He pulled out of Lex's mouth and turned him over. He scooted around behind Lex and pushed Lex's head and chest to the mat. "Damn, your back door is sexy. It looks like it's begging for my tongue. Is it?"

"Ohhhh... God...eat that ass, baby. I want you to lick me up and fuck me with that beautiful tongue of yours." Lex rested on his chest and put his arms behind him, spreading his own butt cheeks.

"Mmm..." *Lick.* "Sooo good." *Lick.* "Get ready for my tongue." *Lick.*

Nick chewed on the tender flesh, nipping and licking until he thought he might pop. He stiffened his tongue and began jabbing it into Lex's ass. Lex's seed erupted all over the royal blue mat and he collapsed.

Nick rose up and went to lie in a sixty-nine position with him. Lex took his cock into his mouth as Nick cleaned Lex's cock and the mat underneath. He fondled Lex's balls and kissed and sucked on the now-soft cock. Nick didn't care that it wasn't erect, it still belonged to Lex and that was all that mattered.

Lex was going to town on Nick's cock. He bit, he sucked, he took Nick's length all the way down and swallowed. Finally it was too much and Nick exploded down Lex's

throat. Lex licked up every drop and sucked the head for more. When he was done he scooted around and snuggled into Nick's arms. "Now that's what I call a workout."

They dozed naked on the floor for about an hour before getting up to take a quick shower. Lex even had a pretty little shower cap for his hair. Nick couldn't help but to rib him about it a little. "You look like the sweetest thing I've ever seen."

He got a slap on the ass for that but it was worth it. "I forgot to tell you the pharmacy called and said your prescription was ready." He waited for Lex to fill him in. Instead Lex just nodded and continued soaping his body. "Are you going to tell me what it's for?"

Rinsing off, Lex turned to him. "I already told you, I've been havin' trouble with my blood pressure. That's what the medicine's for. Would you like to go into town with me to pick it up?"

Kissing him on the neck, Nick nodded. He licked the water droplets off his skin. "Did the doctor say anything about activity levels you shouldn't cross?"

Lex's brows drew together. "What's that have to do with anything?" He wrapped his arms around Nick and soaped his hands. He ran his hands up and down Nick's body.

"It's just that when I tell you I want to fuck you to death I don't mean literally. Now answer the question, please." Nick turned around to rinse the soap off his body and Lex started on the front.

"He said I shouldn't drink much and try to watch what I eat. Try to stay away from stressful situations and stuff like that. He said absolutely nothin' about fuckin' and quite frankly if fucking you is going to kill me then let it kill me because I don't plan on stopping. I've waited my whole damned life for someone like you and it's taken me forty-seven years to finally get it. I won't give it up, I'll do anything else ya tell me to but I won't give up fucking you."

Nick leaned around Lex and turned off the shower. They stepped out and Nick grabbed a towel. "Amazing how spoiled you get with a towel warmer in such a short time." He smiled and dried off.

Lex hauled Nick into his arms. "I'll buy one this week for down here."

"No, you won't. I don't want you to buy things for me. I have my own damn career and my own money. If I want a fucking towel warmer down here I'll buy one." Nick looked for his shorts and scooped them up. He didn't bother putting them on just wrapped the towel around his waist.

Lex did the same and reached out to wrap his hand around Nick's arm. "Why are you suddenly pissed at me?"

Shaking his head, Nick started up the stairs. "I'm not Terri, damn it. You don't have to give me things to keep me here."

Lex stopped midway up the stairs. "Is that what you think I'm doing? Because you're wrong. I want to buy you things because I have shitloads of money and you're the only person not related to me that I love. I didn't buy stuff for Terri to try to keep her here for me. I tried to keep her here for her son. You I want for me. I want to spoil you and do things for you because I love you, damn it. Not just because I'm an old man trying to buy himself a young stud."

Nick closed his eyes and counted to ten. He turned back around and went down the stairs until he was eye-level with Lex. He wrapped his arms around Lex and kissed him. "I'm sorry I flew off the handle. You have to remember who you're dealing with. I've taken care of myself since I was six years old. I've never even been given a birthday present my whole adult life. When I was a kid usually if I was lucky whichever foster mother I had at the time would bake me a cake but that was it. I'm not used to people giving me anything. It's just uncomfortable for me."

Tears trickled down Lex's face. "I think that's the saddest thing I've ever heard. You're gonna have to try to get used to it though. I buy things for the people I love, just ask Sam. It doesn't mean I'm trying to buy loyalty or affection, or that you can't afford

to buy it yourself. It just means that I love you and want to share everything I have with you." Lex kissed him again and again. "And boy, are you going to have a Christmas to remember this year. When is your birthday, by the way?"

Nick rolled his eyes and bit Lex's shoulder. "I turned twenty-seven on April twenty-ninth so you'll have to wait and give me a cake next year." He turned and pulled Lex up the stairs. "Come on, we need to get dressed and go to town. While we're there I want to stop at the grocery store and stock your house with some healthier foods." He stopped when he felt Lex stop on the stairs. He turned to look at him. "Don't argue. If I'm going to give up my house and job to move here you'd better be sticking around for a good long time."

Chapter Six

They drove to town and pulled up in front of the drugstore. Nick turned to Lex with a wicked smile on his face. "What would you do to me if I went in with you and bought a couple of tubes of lube?"

Lex flashed his dimpled smile. "I'd just tell everyone you're Sam's friend and let him deal with the fallout. Although I don't think Justin would be too happy with you."

"What's the town think about the two of them being together?"

"Well, they don't advertise it but most people know and I guess accept it. Justin and Sam are the only lawyers around so I guess people don't have much choice unless they want to go all the way to Missoula." Lex got out of the truck and waited for Nick on the sidewalk.

They walked into the drugstore and Nick went to the health brochure section. He picked up a pamphlet on high blood pressure and stuck it in his pocket. Next he went to the vitamin section and picked out a good multi-vitamin and took it up to the counter. He asked the pharmacist if the vitamins should be all right to take with blood pressure medicine and was told "yes, as long as the dosage wasn't exceeded". He took the vitamins up to the cashier.

He flashed the girl the pamphlet he dug out of his pocket. "I assume this is free, isn't it?" She told him the pamphlet was free but if he was really interested they had a pretty good little book on the subject for only a couple bucks. Nick nodded his head and the girl went and got the book for him. He took his purchases and went to sit in the truck.

Lex came out a few minutes later and climbed behind the wheel. "What're ya reading?"

Nick held up the book. "I'm learning how to take better care of you since you've not been doing such a hot job of it. It says that you should eat lots of fruit high in fiber such as apples, raw leafy vegetables, wholegrain breads and pasta, low-fat dairy products and most importantly no more than three ounces of hard liquor a day. So, on to the grocery store, my dear man."

Starting the truck Lex laughed. "I don't know about eating nothing but rabbit food all day but I will make an effort to eat at least one salad and one apple a day. My doctor already gave me the lecture about the alcohol though."

Nick reached over and put his hand on Lex's thigh. "I'll try my best not to become a nag and I promise to eat everything I make you eat. Deal?"

Lex covered Nick's hand with his. "You've got yourself a deal."

* * * * *

They made a quick run to do the grocery shopping before heading back home. Lex helped Nick unload the groceries and went to help Shorty out in the barn while Nick fixed dinner. Lex was whistling when he entered the barn.

Shorty looked up from his perch by the door. "What the hell's gotten in to you, boy? I haven't heard you whistle in years." He gave Lex a knowing grin.

Lex shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know. I guess I'm just having a good day. I figured you'd be happy I wasn't coming out here to bite your head off about something." Lex pulled up another stool and sat down next to Shorty. "Nick is making grilled chicken and salad for dinner. Would ya like to join us?"

Shorty laughed and slapped his leg. "Sounds like Nick's putting you on a blood pressure diet. Thanks for the offer but the boys and I are heading into town to do some drinking." Shorty sat for a minute and then cleared his throat. "I'm happy for you. Having that young man at the ranch is just what the doctor ordered."

Lex's jaw dropped. "What exactly are you trying to say?"

Taking off his hat, Shorty ran a hand over his nonexistent hair and sighed. "What you do with your life is your own business, son. But don't throw something special away because of what others might think. You understand what I'm telling you?"

Lex gathered the end of his braid in his hand and fingered the individual hairs. "How long have ya known?"

"Well, that would depend on what exactly you're talking about. I've known you were different since you were in high school. I've never seen a boy with so many girls chasin' after him that truly didn't want to be caught, until you. I've known about your feelings for that young man in the house since the day I saw you teach him how to ride. It was confirmed when he left early that summer and you fell into the darkest hole I've ever seen."

Lex couldn't even look at Shorty. "It was my fault he left. I told him I would never be able to love him out in the open. I explained my reasons to him and he agreed that it was a tough choice for me to make but that he couldn't live like that."

Shorty just looked at him. "What's changed? Have you finally decided to come clean with Sam or are you just stringing Nick along?"

Lex shook his head and dropped his braid back behind his back. "I don't know how to tell Sam without him asking questions about Terri. I'm ashamed that I did things the way I did just to get a child. I don't want him to hate me for it."

Throwing his hat on the ground, Shorty stood up and for the first time in years raised his voice to Lex. "Goddamn it! Give the boy a little bit of credit, would ya. You've been one hell of a father to him whether you're different or not. Why does it matter what you did to get him? The fact is you got him and you've loved him and taught him right from wrong every day of his life. Besides, you don't have to answer questions about Terri if you don't want to. Tell Sam that part of your life is private. End of discussion. Just don't you dare let Nick walk back outta your life again or I'll quit the day he leaves." Shorty bent and picked up his hat and stomped off toward the

bunkhouse. He turned around when he was halfway there. "Hey, Lex? I love you, son." He turned around and walked away.

Twenty minutes went by before Lex could summon the strength to get off the stool. He felt completely numb. He'd never had a conversation with Shorty like that in his entire lifetime. He went back to the house and entered through the kitchen door.

Nick was out on the back patio grilling the chicken. He opened the French doors and joined him. Nick looked over his shoulder at the sound of the door. "Hey, the chicken's almost done. I've got the salad already fixed and in the fridge."

Lex walked right up behind him and wrapped Nick in his arms. He leaned his head on Nick's shoulder and kissed his neck. He felt Nick tense and look around for any of the cowboys who might still be in viewing distance. "I don't care anymore. I'm tired, so very tired of denying myself. Of denying you. I love you and I'm ready to talk to Sam."

Turning around in his arms Nick's eyes narrowed. "Who've you been talking to?"

Lex kissed him. "Shorty. He said a lot of things that made sense to me. He told me to tell Sam about us but if I didn't want to tell him the circumstances of his birth then that was my business. He even yelled at me. Shorty never yells at me. He told me if I let you leave he's quittin' the same day." Lex smiled. "Grumpy old man doesn't even realize I couldn't live without him either."

* * * * *

Lex volunteered to clean up the kitchen so Nick retired to the hammock on the porch with a blanket and a glass of iced tea. He was trying to figure out how to tell his employers at the vet practice that he was moving to Montana, when Lex came out to join him on the porch.

"Care if I share the hammock with ya, good-lookin'?"

Nick scooted over and held up the blanket. Lex slid in beside him and the two were cocooned in the hammock. Nick kissed his neck and laid his head on Lex's chest. "I was

just thinking about how I'm going to quit the practice. Is there a need for another vet around here?"

Running his hands up and down Nick's back, Lex yawned. "I think so. If nothing else I could probably keep you busy full-time. It seems something is forever happening right here on the ranch. I bet we call the vet out twice a week on a regular basis, but Doc Henry's getting old and grouchy. You might talk to him about going into some kind of partnership. He might even be willing to sell you his practice. He's got to be at least seventy."

Nick began to undo Lex's shirt one button at a time. He needed the warmth of Lex's skin. "I'll need to find a job fairly quickly. I've got student loans I'm still paying off and before you say it, no, you can't pay off my loans for me. This is something I want to do by myself. In the meantime I'd be happy to earn my keep by taking care of the cattle around here."

Lex pulled Nick's t-shirt off over his head. They were skin to skin under a warm blanket and it felt like heaven. "Please don't take this the wrong way but I hope you don't want to work all day every day like you have in the past. I'm finally at the stage with the ranch that I don't have to do a lot of work if I don't want to and I'd like to spend my off time with you."

Nick leaned down to swirl his tongue around Lex's nipple. "Maybe we should just forget about a practice then and I can work on the Lazy River and maybe substitute for Doc Henry when he needs me. That would probably be enough for now. Until you get tired of me, that is."

Lex reached for Nick's zipper. "That's not gonna happen. I just hope ya don't mind living with an old man in a couple years. I might have to start hiring only ugly cowboys from now on." He got Nick's zipper down and pulled out his cock.

Nick mirrored Lex's action and began stroking Lex's cock. Neither of them was in a hurry. They just wanted to relax and touch. "You're nineteen years older than I am now yet you still look my age. The only place on you with the least little bit of age is around

your eyes and I think that's sexy as hell. Besides, I don't just love you for your hot bod and killer hair. I love you for the man you are. A man who'll deny himself happiness for twenty-six years because of the love he feels for his only son."

Running Lex's hair through his fingers, Nick went on. "Speaking of Sam. Why do you suppose he wants to go fishing tomorrow with just the two of us? He keeps saying he needs to make things right. Other than transferring schools and kind of forgetting I existed he's done nothing to me personally that he has to apologize for."

Lex ran his thumb over the crown of Nick's cock. He came away with a drop of precum and lifted his thumb to his mouth. "Mmm... That's enough about my son while I'm thinking about your cock. You'll just have to wait until tomorrow to find out what he wants. For now how about we take these jeans the rest of the way off and you can figure out the best way for me to fuck ya in this hammock."

Laughing, Nick shoved his jeans all the way down and off. "How do you keep guessing all my hidden fantasies from that summer three years ago? Did you notice that I spent an ungodly amount of time in this thing?"

Lex lost his jeans too and pulled Nick on top of him. "Of course I noticed. I watched you almost every night from the safety of the dining room window. I must confess I even jacked off a time or two just watching ya."

He got Nick settled and slowly stroked his cock. He looked up under heavy-lidded black eyes. "Ride me."

"I'd love to but we don't have any lube." Nick started shifting his hips back and forth over Lex's cock. He touched Lex's face and rubbed down his shoulder to his chest and pinched his nipples. He was going to come just by rubbing his anus along the length of Lex's big, fat cock. "Ohhhh...sweet...gonna come..."

Lex stroked him faster as Nick stroked Lex's cock with his ass. Nick felt like a bull rider sitting astride him. Tilting his head back, Nick moaned which seemed to whip Lex into a frenzy of strokes and thrusts until they were both coming. Nick came all over

Lex's chest and Lex's cum coated his ass. Lex pulled him down for a feverish kiss. "I'll never get rid of this hammock."

Moaning, Nick kissed him again. "Fuck, that was sweet. Let's go get cleaned up and you can take me to bed. I've got a fishing date tomorrow morning." Nick looked around to make sure no one was out and about and got off the hammock. He picked up his clothes and walked into the house naked.

Lex followed him and locked up the house. Nick was just entering the bedroom when the phone rang. He looked at the clock. It was eleven-ten. *Who the hell would be calling this late?* Nick gave him a puzzled look as Lex shrugged and picked up the phone. "Hello."

"Hi, Lex, are you surprised to hear from me?"

Chapter Seven

Sitting down on the bed before his knees gave out, Lex ran his hand through his hair. "What do ya want, Terri?"

"What? No hi or how've you been? I'm disappointed in you Lex."

"I asked you a question. What the hell do you want?" Lex felt like he was going to throw up. He hadn't heard from Terri since the day she left. The only contact he'd had was from her lawyer twenty-five years ago, demanding a huge divorce settlement.

"Why, I just thought you'd like to know I got a nice letter from my son today. He's invited me to his commitment ceremony. I see how it is...like father, like son, huh? Anyway I thought I might just have to take a little trip to Montana to see exactly what you've done to Samuel."

Lex stood and gripped the phone so tight he was surprised it didn't break in his hand. "Stay the hell away from Montana. You've hurt that boy enough."

"Oh, but darling, I haven't even started. I thought he might want to know all of his father's old secrets. I'm sure you still have some you don't want him to know about. Am I right?"

Lex started to feel dizzy so he braced his hand on the bedside table and sat down again. "What do ya want?" Lex wiped the cold sweat from his face. Nick must have heard the distress in his voice because he brought him a cool cloth and put it on the back of his neck.

Nick looked Lex in the eyes. He put his fingers to Lex's neck to check his pulse. "Two more minutes and then I'm hanging up that damn phone."

Lex nodded and waited for Terri's reply.

"I'm broke and divorced for the fourth time. I'll need a little hush money to tide me over until I can find husband number five. Be a dear and send a check to my lawyer or I will be at that ceremony." Terri hung up.

Lex took the phone away from his ear and tried to hang it up. His hands started shaking and he thought he might pass out. The phone fell to the floor just before he collapsed.

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Nick rode in the ambulance with Lex. They made him ride up front but at least he was still close to him. He guessed the paramedics could tell there was no way he could have driven himself. He'd called Sam right after the paramedics got Lex loaded into the ambulance, so he should be waiting at the hospital for them.

The ambulance pulled into the emergency bay and a doctor came out to meet it. Nick tried his best to answer the doctor's questions about what happened, as they wheeled Lex into the emergency room. They disappeared behind another set of swinging doors but they wouldn't let him go with Lex. He was directed to the admissions department to fill out the necessary paperwork. He'd thought enough to bring Lex's wallet with him so the paperwork didn't take long.

When Nick was finished he went to the waiting room and found both Sam and Justin holding hands and looking nervous. Nick straightened his spine. Thank God he'd had time to put his clothes back on once the paramedics got there. He still wasn't sure what to tell Sam about the events leading up to the heart attack. He was sure Lex wouldn't want Sam to know his mother had called. Sam interrupted his thoughts.

"How's Dad?"

Nick stood in front of him and bit his lip. "I don't know. He at least regained consciousness before the paramedics loaded him into the ambulance. It seems he's had a heart attack but I still don't know how severe it is."

Sam started biting his nails, a bad habit Nick had always teased him about. "Where was he when he collapsed?"

Nick had to think fast. He didn't want to tell him a lie but he wouldn't give Lex's secret up yet either. "He was on the phone. When he got off he tried to hang it up but passed out instead."

Sam narrowed his eyes. "Who was Dad talking to that upset him so much he had a heart attack, for Christ's sake?"

Nick closed his eyes and swallowed. "I only heard his side of the conversation but I think it was...Terri." Nick felt like he'd just betrayed the man he loved. He didn't even wait for Sam to answer. He just walked over to the orange plastic chair and sat down. He put his face in his hands and refused to listen to any more questions. If Sam didn't understand then too bad, because Nick was really afraid he was about to cry and that would blow Lex's cover. So even when he heard Sam standing over him, he didn't look up or acknowledge his presence. Finally Sam just sat down beside him.

Sam's hand hovered above his old friend's back. He wanted to comfort Nick but wasn't sure it would be welcome. He looked over at Justin still standing across the room. At Justin's nod Sam laid his hand on Nick's back. "You love my dad, don't you?"

Nick's face shot up out of his hands. He turned his head toward Sam and looked at him for several seconds. Sam watched as Nick finally let the tears fall. "Yeah, I do. I'm so sorry you had to find out this way. Your dad didn't want you to know yet, but I can't sit here and pretend I don't love him more than my own life."

Sam wrapped the now-crying Nick in his arms. "It's okay with me that you love him. In fact I'm damned glad you do. He's needed you for years but I didn't understand that. All I knew was that you left early that summer and my dad wasn't the same. He would lock himself in his study for days and do nothing but drink. I thought... This isn't the time or the place for this discussion. Can we talk again later when we know Dad will be okay?"

Nick nodded and dried his tears. "Please don't tell your dad that I told you. It's very important that he tells you himself. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

Sam smiled and patted his back. "He needs to come out. Not be outed. Yeah, actually I totally understand that. I won't say anything until he does."

Nick sat back up in his chair finally dry-eyed. "Thanks."

Sam just nodded and motioned Justin over. Justin sat down on the other side of him and held his hand despite the looks they received.

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After waiting over two hours a doctor approached them. "Are you with Lex Whitefeather?"

The three of them stood. Sam nodded. "I'm his son and this is his partner, Nick," he said, pointing toward Nick.

The doctor smiled. "So you're the one Mr. Whitefeather has to thank for saving his life. The paramedics told me you performed chest compressions until the ambulance arrived. It's nice to meet you. My name is Harold Rollins, the cardiologist on duty tonight. I've already spoken to Dr. Spencer, Mr. Whitefeather's cardiologist, and filled him in on the situation. It appears he suffered a mild heart attack which we've chosen to try to treat with medication." He looked over at Nick a little sheepishly. "Can you tell me what he was doing immediately before the attack occurred?"

Nick could tell by the look in Dr. Rollins' eyes that he'd heard from the paramedics that both men had been found naked. "He was fine until he received a phone call. I don't know what the conversation was exactly but I can tell you that Lex was upset by it. As a matter of fact he was livid. Lex was starting to sweat and he looked like he was dizzy. Before he hung up he grabbed his chest and passed out."

"Dr. Spencer and I agree that Lex would benefit from a lifestyle change and new medication. He was damn lucky the heart attack wasn't any more serious and that you had the proper training to administer to him so effectively. We'll keep him overnight

and probably release him tomorrow afternoon. We'll run a few more tests in the morning but we don't expect to find anything new. I'd also like Mr. Whitefeather to join our cardiac rehabilitation program. Do you have any questions for me?"

Nick cleared his throat. "When can I see him?"

Dr. Rollins looked at his watch. "He's already been taken to a private room and is most likely asleep and right now rest is important. Once he's released he'll need to start a doctor-approved exercise regime. Why don't you come back in the morning? Visiting hours start at nine o'clock."

He nodded and Dr. Rollins left. Nick turned to Sam. "I don't like just leaving him here. It's two-forty-five now. I think I'll just stay and catch a nap in the waiting room until visiting hours in the morning. You two go on home and I'll call if anything happens."

Sam shook his head. "Dad wouldn't want you sleeping in the waiting room and you know it."

He looked Sam in the eye. "And you know that if the positions were reversed there would be no way in hell he'd leave this hospital. I'm staying and that's final."

Justin put his arm around Sam. "Is there at least something we can do for you?"

Feeling relieved that he wouldn't have to argue his point anymore, Nick sighed and smiled. "Yeah, actually there is. Could you call Shorty when you get home and tell him what's going on? Have him bring Lex's truck to town tomorrow and a change of clothes."

Chapter Eight

By nine the next morning Nick was chomping at the bit to get to Lex. At exactly nine he walked to the nurses' desk and asked for Lex's room number. The polite nurse told him the number and Nick strode down the hall. When he opened the door Lex sat behind a tray of food. "Eat your breakfast so you'll grow big and strong."

Lex held his hand out toward Nick. "C'mere, you."

Nick went right into his arms, almost knocking the tray over in the process. He chuckled and slid the wheeled tray table to the end of the bed. He sat on the side of the bed and kissed Lex. "Don't ever worry me like that again, old man."

Lex pulled him back down for another kiss. "I love you, baby, but you look like shit this morning. What'd you do, sleep in your clothes?" He slid his hands down Nick's wrinkled shirt.

Nick looked down at his shirt and shrugged. "The waiting room chairs are definitely not comfortable in this hospital."

Lex narrowed his eyes. "You mean you slept in the damn waiting room? Why didn't ya go home?"

Stroking Lex's face, Nick shook his head. "No way was I leaving you here all alone. I just hope they let you out of here today because I don't think my back can stand another night."

Grinning, Lex pulled him down again. "I hate that you were so uncomfortable but a part of me's glad you stayed." Nick could see a question forming in Lex's eyes. "Was Sam here last night?"

"Yes. He waited until Dr. Rollins spoke to us then Justin took him home." Nick didn't say anything more but he knew Lex wasn't going to let it drop.

"What did you tell him?" Lex asked in a suspicious voice.

"I told him you got a phone call around eleven that seemed to upset you. I didn't tell him that phone call was taken in the bedroom or that we were both naked when the paramedics came. Sam asked me who you were on the phone with and I told him the truth. I'm sorry, I just couldn't lie to him but I didn't tell him everything either."

Nodding his head, Lex put his hair behind his ears. "This," he motioned to the room around him, "has made a few things clearer to me. I'll tell Sam today about us." He gripped Nick's hand. "Terri got an invitation to the commitment ceremony. I don't even know how Sam got her address because as far as I know she's never once contacted him. She made it pretty clear that his being gay was disgusting to her and she thinks it's my fault he turned out the way he did."

Nick could see the muscles in Lex's jaw bulge as the anger slowly built inside him. "That fucking bitch. Don't upset yourself. She's not worth it, Lex."

"Terri said if I didn't give her another chunk of money she'd tell Sam all of it. If I don't send the money through her lawyer she'll show up at the ceremony." Lex laid his head back on the pillow and closed his eyes. "I'll have to tell Sam all of it because that woman will never get another dime from me. If Sam has to hear the things I've done then it should be from me not her."

Nick looked over at the heart monitor. The readings were becoming erratic. "Calm down. We'll deal with this together as a family. Sam loves you and nothing is going to change that, but if you get yourself worked up again they won't let you go home today." He cupped the side of Lex's face. "I need you home where I can take care of you."

There was a knock on the door and Nick started to get off the bed, but a hand from Lex stopped him. "Stay where ya are, baby. I'm through hiding."

The door opened and Shorty strolled into the room. He looked at Lex for a long time. He didn't seem to be fazed by the sight of Nick sitting beside him. "How're you feeling, boy?"

Lex smiled at the old man. "Tired but good. The doc says they'll probably let me go home later if I behave m'self. He wants me to join the cardiac rehabilitation program after I'm released. They'll teach me how to eat smarter and what exercises I need to do daily to strengthen my heart and lower my blood pressure." Lex smirked and flashed his sweet as sin dimples. "He's afraid I'll get depressed."

Nick squeezed his hand. "We won't let you get depressed, will we, Shorty?"

Chuckling, Shorty came farther into the room. "Hell, no. We'll keep you so busy you won't have time to get depressed. Right now Belle's getting ready to foal. I reckon it should happen sometime tonight or in the morning. You've got to be there for that. You've yet to miss a birth since you've lived on the Lazy River."

Yawning, Lex nodded to Shorty. "That's the best part of owning a ranch. To see new life come into the world. You tell Belle to hold on until I can get there." Lex yawned again, this time covering his mouth with his fist.

Shorty took that as his cue to leave. "I brought your truck in and a change of clothes for both of you. All the stuff you need is in a bag in the front seat. I've got Gil waiting to take me back to the ranch so I'll just see you later." He walked to the bed and put his hand on Lex's forehead. "Come home, boy."

He left the room and Nick looked toward Lex. "I'm going to follow him down and get the bag out of the truck. Maybe they'll let me change and shave in your bathroom." He bent to kiss Lex. "Take a nap. Sam will be here soon and you need your strength."

Nick caught up with Shorty at the elevator. They walked toward the parking lot and Shorty pointed out the truck. "What happened?"

He put his hands on his hips and looked around the parking lot. "Terri called him just before he had the heart attack." Nick went on to explain what Lex had told him Terri wanted.

When he finished Shorty took his cowboy hat off and slapped it against his thigh. "That damn bitch. I'll kill her if she shows up to ruin Sam's special day. I'm thinking

about killing her anyway for causing Lex's heart attack." Shorty looked Nick in the eye. "What's Lex going to do?"

"He said he was tired of hiding and that he would have to tell Sam everything. Lex said he wouldn't give that bitch another dime of his money."

Shorty nodded his approval of Lex's decision. "What are the doctors really saying about his condition?"

"That he should be fine with the proper medication, diet and exercise. But he needs to make a few lifestyle changes, including eliminating stress from his daily life. Which means we need to settle this thing with Terri now, any suggestions?" Nick looked at the old man hopefully.

Shorty rubbed his bald head. "I don't know how to get a hold of Terri, so that's out. I guess we can intercept phone calls and I'll put the cowboys on alert that she might show up."

Nick nodded. "About the cowboys? Do you think someone should say something to them about me and Lex? Normally I'd wait and let Lex handle it but I'll be damned if I'll sit by and let anyone say something to upset him."

Shorty nodded and put his hat back on. "I'll go have a little meeting right now with them. They'll be told if they don't like the boss's lifestyle they can pack their bags today. I don't expect much trouble though." Shorty looked at Nick, a little red-faced. "I think most of them figured it out when they saw you on Lucky, but knowing it and seeing it are two different things. Don't worry about the cowboys, Nick. I'll take care of them. You concentrate on Lex."

Tipping his hat, Shorty ambled toward the battered white pickup in the lot. Nick waved a hand to Gil, the hired hand, and headed for Lex's truck.

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After putting on a fresh white t-shirt and a clean pair of jeans, Nick felt almost human again. He pulled out Lex's shaving kit and laughed at the razor inside. He stuck his head out the door to a now-awake Lex. "How long have you had this old razor?"

Lex rubbed his still-smooth jaw. "Well, what do you expect? I'm half Native American. It's not like I've a lot of hair to shave." He cocked his eyebrow and winked. "And after your bad influence I have even less hair." He smiled and started to lift up his hospital gown. "Wanna see?"

Nick shook his head and went back into the bathroom. "Maybe later, stud." Nick shaved and brushed his teeth. He looked into the mirror and left the bathroom. "There. I finally look human again."

Lex licked his lips. "Good enough to eat." He held out his hand and beckoned Nick toward him. "C'mere and let me have a little taste."

Nick was walking toward the bed with heat in his eyes when the door opened and Sam and Justin came in. Nick gave an inward sigh. His hunger would have to wait until later, but he was glad Sam was here. Lex needed to talk to him today before he went home. Nick was still a little afraid of how Sam would react to all the news and he wanted Lex safely in the hospital if anything should upset him.

Sam slapped Nick on the back. "Well, it looks like you managed to get a little sleep last night." He walked over to his dad and kissed him on the forehead. "How are you today?"

Lex took Sam's hand and pulled him down to sit on the side of the bed. "I'm feeling fine and don't let Nick fool ya. He didn't get much sleep at all last night. He just looks good naturally."

Nick raised his eyebrows at Lex. "Um...Justin, would you like a cup of coffee in the cafeteria? I haven't had a chance to eat yet and since Sam's here he can look after his old man." He looked at Lex and gave him a devilish grin. "We'll probably be gone about thirty minutes." He gave Lex a sympathetic look as he left the room with Justin.

Watching Nick walk out the door, Lex grinned. "No respect for the elderly." He turned back to his son. "How are you? Is everything ready for next Saturday?"

Sam squeezed his dad's hand. "I'm good and everything's taken care of. I'm just worried about you, but then I've been worrying about you for a while now."

Lex took a deep breath and let it out slowly. "I...need to talk with you about some stuff, Sam. I've been thinking about it a lot lately and this heart attack has solidified a lot of things in my mind." He reached for the glass of water on his table and took a drink. "I need to be honest with you about something and I'm not sure how you're going to react. First I need to tell ya...I...uh...I love Nick. I'm gay and I've been in love with him for three years but I was afraid to let anyone else know."

Sam bent and kissed his dad's cheek. "I'm glad you finally told me but I've known you were different from other fathers most of my life. I wish you had told me three years ago though. I blamed Nick for the way you fell apart after he left early that summer. It wasn't his fault, was it?"

Lex couldn't even look at his son. Instead, he gazed out the third-story window. "No. It wasn't his fault. I pretty much pushed him out the door. I wasn't ready to announce my sexual orientation to you or anyone else around here. I told him I loved him but that it would have to be our secret. Nick told me he loved me too but couldn't live his life as a secret so he left." He paused to look back at Sam. "It nearly killed me to be away from him. I wasn't strong enough to tell you the truth and here I find out you already knew." Lex cocked an eyebrow. "How did you know, by the way?"

Sam smiled. "Dad, you've had women practically salivating over you my entire life but you've never given any of them the time of day. When I was young I wondered why you'd go to Missoula for weekends every couple of months and didn't take me along. As I got older I figured out why, but I didn't know Nick was gay. I wish I had. It could have come in handy three years ago when I felt so confused about who I was. I thought I was straight. I mean, I've dated plenty of girls and even had sex with them. There was just something about Justin that turned me inside out. I liked being with him

and I even admitted to myself that for some unknown reason I was attracted to him. It took almost another year for me to admit it to him. So, you see, I'm not much different from you when it comes to denying to the world who and what I want."

"Nick is gonna move in with me. I just hope the rest of the town and the cowboys on the ranch can accept it because I'll give up the Lazy River before I'll give up Nick again." Lex swallowed around the lump in his throat. "There's something else I need to talk to you about. I got a call from your mother last night. How did you find her, by the way? She told me she'd gotten an invitation to the ceremony."

"I've been looking for her on and off since I turned eighteen. I...I had a lot of questions to ask her but I didn't want to hurt your feelings by asking where she was. Justin finally tracked her down through a friend of his in the police force. I sent the invitation so that she'd know before she ever agreed to see me that I was gay. I'm sorry. I didn't know she'd call you. What did she say to upset you so much?"

Running his hand through his hair, Lex blew out a long breath. "First she blamed me for you being gay. Then...I'm sorry to have to tell you this, Sam, but then she told me if I didn't send her money she would tell you all about me and my past mistakes."

"Bitch. How dare she try to blackmail you?" He looked at his dad and squeezed his hand again. "Tell me all of it. That way she won't have anymore ammunition against you."

Lex looked back toward the window. "You already know my mom died when I was thirteen and then Dad died of a heart attack when I was barely eighteen. What you didn't know was that I couldn't inherit the Lazy River until I married and settled down. I was only eighteen and gay but I needed to keep my home so I started dating Terri." Lex went on to tell Sam the whole story. When he was finished he braced himself for the blowup.

Sam leaned down and hugged Lex. "That's it? That's the secret you've been keeping locked up inside yourself for all these years? I'm not mad at you for what you did. Hell, if anyone's to blame it would be the money-grubbing bitch that had me. It

thrills me that you wanted me so much. I'm just sorry you had to live your life in secret because of me."

Lex hugged him back and kissed the top of his head. "I *love* you and I never wanted to take a chance of losing you. Until Nick came along I never felt like I was giving something up for that. He's the first man I've ever been in love with. I'm glad you don't hate me."

Sam wiped the tear from his eye. "Never."

Chapter Nine

Nick drove Lex home later that afternoon. After getting him settled on the couch in the study, he went to make a pot of homemade soup. Once he finished with the soup he went outside to find Shorty.

He found him on his usual perch in the barn. "Hey, I'm making a big pot of vegetable soup for dinner. I thought I might even mix up a batch of sweet cornbread. Interested?"

"Sure, sounds real good. How's the patient this afternoon?" Shorty didn't even look up. He just continued to work on the bridle in his hand.

"He's in the study sleeping like a baby. Dr. Rollins said to give him another day or so of rest before making him get some exercise." Nick looked down at Shorty. "He told Sam about Terri today." He shifted his foot in the loose dirt. "And about us. Speaking of which, how did the cowboys take it when you told them?"

Shaking his head, Shorty finally looked up at him. "Had to let one kid go. He hadn't been here long enough to know what a fine boss Lex could be when he was in a good mood. Most of 'em left have been with us for more than five years. They're good men, every damn one of them but we still need Pete back."

Shorty set down the bridle he'd been working on. "I'm getting too damn old to be foreman of such a big spread. I thought about asking Lex if he'd sell me an acre or two so I could build me a little house and semi-retire." Shorty stopped talking and looked out over the ranch. "Pete's the best man to take over my job but someone's got to talk him into coming back." Shorty looked Nick in the eye. "Think maybe you could go talk to him? Without my full salary you could offer him a nice raise and the use of the foreman's house."

Nick nodded and sighed. "I'll go talk to him now. Tell me where to find him, then you can go in and check on my man. Hopefully I'll be back with good news before the soup's ready."

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Pulling up into the ranch yard, Nick eyed the area before he got out of Lex's truck. He didn't see Pete but figured he was probably around somewhere. He got out of the truck and walked toward the barn. He passed a cowboy on his way and asked for Pete. The cowboy told him he was in the corral breaking a horse for the boss.

Nick found Pete just where the cowboy said he'd be. Pete still looked the same, tall with strawberry-blond hair cut military short from what he could see under his hat. He'd always been friendly toward Nick. Nick just hoped he still felt the same way.

Spotting Nick, Pete called for one of the other cowboys to take the reins of the horse he was working with. He walked over to the fence and stuck out his hand. "Hi. I heard you were back in town. How've you been?"

Nick shook Pete's hand. "I've been good, how about you?"

Pete pushed his hat up on his forehead and wiped his brow. "Well, I guess you've heard how I've been. That damn fool Lex broke my wrist and all over a stupid horse."

Nodding, Nick kicked at the dirt with his sneakers. "Yeah well, that's kind of why I'm here. I wanted to apologize for that. You see, Lex considered Lucky my horse and well...he kind of went off the deep end and sort of substituted the horse for me when I left." Nick looked back up. "You see, Lex and I love each other but he was afraid to let anyone know. That's why I just up and left three years ago. From what I understand Lex didn't take it too well. I'm back now for good and we need you to come back to the ranch and become the new foreman."

Whistling, Pete scratched his short hair. "What's wrong with Shorty?"

"Shorty's decided he wants to build himself a little house on the Lazy River and sort of semi-retire. He told me you were the only one around these parts that he would trust to take over from him."

Pete's eyes narrowed suspiciously. "Does Lex know you're here with this offer?"

Nick shook his head. "Lex had a heart attack last night. The doc told him to eliminate day-to-day stress and that's what I'm trying to accomplish with this visit. You don't have to worry, I can guarantee Lex will stand by my offer. I was thinking maybe a forty percent raise and free use of the foreman's house as long as you're with us." Now it was Nick's turn to narrow his eyes at Pete. "Unless the two of us being together would be a problem for you. I love Lex and I won't hide it."

Pete smiled. "To be honest the reason I started working for the Lazy River in the first place was because I'd heard rumors that Lex was gay. You see, so am I. Life isn't easy for a gay cowboy in Montana. I thought I'd have a little bit of understanding and protection there. So no, the two of you being together doesn't bother me at all. I'd have to give notice to the Lanhams but I'd like the job. Tell Shorty I'll come back only if he'll train me to be as good a boss as he's been though. I'll sleep in the bunkhouse with the rest of the guys until he gets his house built too."

Nick and Pete shook hands and made plans for Pete to give his two weeks' notice immediately. He made a point of asking Pete before he left if it would be okay to tell Lex about his sexual orientation. Pete looked relieved and nodded. Nick drove back to the ranch, feeling great. He enjoyed talking and dealing with the cowboys. Maybe he could be satisfied just working on the Lazy River.

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Shorty was in the kitchen, mixing up a batch of cornbread, when Nick walked into the house. Nick smiled and grabbed the bag of sugar. "I bet you didn't put any of this in that batter, did you?"

Shorty snorted when he saw the bag of sugar. "Real cowboys don't put sugar in their cornbread."

"Well, I'm not a real cowboy and since this is probably the last time I'll get sweet cornbread, that's what I want. Now I've just come back from hiring us a new foreman, so the least you can do is to put a cup of sugar in that damn batter." He smiled and put his hands on his hips.

Grumbling the whole time, Shorty put a half-cup of sugar into the batter and looked at him.

"Okay. I'll consider that a good compromise. You didn't salt the soup, did you, because Lex is on a no-salt diet from now on? I thought I'd put some low-sodium spices in it after it'd cooked awhile."

Shorty grumbled again. "I'm old, not stupid. Now tell me what Pete said and when he'll be here."

Nick started digging around in the cupboards for seasonings. "He said you have to agree to train him and that he'll be glad to sleep in the bunkhouse until your new house's been built. He'll be here in two weeks. Now I'm going to go check on Lex and take him his medicine." He waved to Shorty and took off down the hall.

He opened the door to the study and was immediately caught in a pair of black eyes. "Hey, honey. I didn't know if you'd be awake." Nick walked in and handed Lex a glass of fresh water and his pill.

Taking the pill, Lex put it into his mouth and swallowed it with a drink of water. He set the glass down and held out his arms. "Come snuggle with me."

Nick curled up on the couch beside Lex. He ran his hands up and down Lex's bare chest, just happy to have him home. Lex pulled him onto his lap and ran his tongue up the side of Nick's face. Nick rolled his eyes and moaned. "We can't do this yet. The doctor advised no exercises until the day after tomorrow and then we have to work our way up to it."

Lex grumbled and bit Nick's neck. "How about slow, easy loving? Did the doc say anything about that?" He reached his hands between Nick's legs and massaged first his inner thighs, then his hardening shaft.

Nick purred. "Mmm...that feels good but I have some things to talk over with you and I can't do it if you're distracting me."

Lex sucked on Nick's earlobe and unzipped his jeans. "This first, talk later. I need to feel you." Lex pushed Nick's jeans down to his knees and pulled off his shirt. "God, you've got a beautiful body. Just let me love you." He ran his hands over Nick's body, finding all of his sweet spots in the process.

Nick writhed in Lex's arms, loving everything that was being done to him. He pulled away and kicked his jeans off before going to sit at the opposite end of the couch. He put his head on the throw pillow and spread his thighs in invitation. "Come love me." He stroked the length of his cock seductively.

Lex pulled off his sweats and crawled between Nick's legs and touched, licked and bit his way to Nick's throbbing cock. He nipped the crown and swiped the drops of moisture off with his tongue. Nick's cock jumped at the sensation.

Opening his mouth, Lex took Nick's length down his throat. He almost lost it when Lex began to hum in that low voice of his, making Nick's balls vibrate. He was trying like hell to keep things slow and easy because the last thing he wanted was for Lex to overexert himself. Lex's mouth slid up and down Nick's shaft faster and faster while one hand held his cock and the other fondled his sac.

"Oh...sweet... Oh God, so sweet..." Lex swallowed Nick to the root again and Nick erupted down his throat.

Lex was humping Nick's thigh with such force Nick knew he'd have bruises by morning. When Lex came, Nick felt the warm wetness running down his leg onto the leather couch. He pulled Lex up into his arms. "God, I love that mouth." He pulled Lex's head down and devoured his mouth.

They stroked each other's skin and kissed for another ten minutes before they heard Shorty calling them to supper. Nick raised an eyebrow. "How are we going to explain the smell of *love* on our skin?"

Lex laughed. "I've got a half-bath with a toilet and sink through that door. I think if we can get unstuck from each other we should be able to clean up and dress in no time."

Nick followed him into the little restroom. "I still need to talk to you about something I've done without your approval." Nick bit the inside of his cheek.

"Just tell me. We're partners now, in everything."

Nick washed his cock in the sink and then lifted his leg and placed his foot in the sink. He washed away Lex's seed, still in thought. "Shorty told me today he was ready for semi-retirement." Nick went on to explain the deal he'd made with Pete. "I know it wasn't my place but I was trying to make things easier on you right now. We both know Shorty's right about Pete."

Lex tilted his head back and sighed. "What about you and me? How's Pete feel about us openly being together?"

Nick blew out the breath he'd been holding, now that he knew everything was going to be okay. "Won't be a problem because he's gay too. He was looking for a place where he'd be accepted and protected when he came to work for you."

Lex smiled ruefully. "And I had to go and break the poor guy's wrist." Lex wrapped his arms around Nick from behind. "I'm not mad that you made decisions for the ranch, it's your home now. I'd have preferred you spoke with me first but I understand why you didn't. However, I will be informing Pete on his first day here that looking at your ass isn't acceptable. I didn't know I'd have to worry about my cowboys trying to take you away from me. I'm not sure I like it."

Turning in Lex's arms to face him, Nick leaned in for a kiss. "His hair isn't nearly long enough or black enough to suit me. You're the sexiest man I've ever known. There'll never be a time when you have to question my love or loyalty to you. Got it?"

Lex slapped Nick's bare ass. "Got it. Now get your damn clothes on before I fuck you right here in the restroom."

Chapter Ten

Wednesday afternoon Nick found Lex out by the corral watching Rudy break a new horse. He walked up behind him and wrapped his arms around his waist.

Lex swung around and embraced him. "I thought you were still asleep." They'd spent the entire night in the barn with Belle. She'd finally given birth at about five o'clock that morning to the cutest little foal Nick had ever seen.

Snuggling into his chest, Nick moaned. "I was, until I went to spoon up against your body and found an empty bed. What are you doing out here?"

"I missed the smell. Can you believe it? I needed to smell leather, sweat and horseshit. I'm tired of staying in the house all the time. I need to be out here with my cowboys. I haven't been a very good boss to them the last couple of years and I was just standing here trying to figure out how to make up for it."

Nick kissed the bite mark on Lex's neck. "Hopefully after your appointment today with Dr. Spencer you can resume normal activities, starting with the cowboys."

Moaning, Lex rubbed the hard ridge of his cock against Nick's lower stomach. "If Doc says I can resume normal activities, I'll be starting with you."

"Oh yeah, like you've been deprived lately." Nick smiled and rubbed back. He kissed him once more before turning his attention to the corral. "I'd love to help you do something nice for them. Are you thinking of a raise or maybe something like a party or...I've got it. You should build a big media game room onto the bunkhouse. They'd have someplace nice to play cards or watch a movie. Maybe you could even go all out and redo the furnishings."

Lex kissed him soundly. "That's a great idea. I'll talk to Todd today while I'm in town. I already told him I'd be by. I'm taking Shorty in to pick out a house plan that will suit him."

Nick shook his head. "I still can't believe that stubborn old man won't let you pay for his house."

Rolling his eyes, he looked at Nick. "Yeah, sounds like someone else I know. But what Shorty doesn't know is that I told Todd to knock off twenty percent from his quote and I'd make it up. He's also going to use only the best-grade materials and send me the bill for the difference. Shorty will probably spend his entire savings on this house and I don't want anything falling apart."

"You're a good man." He pulled out of the embrace and turned toward the house. "I'm driving you to town, by the way. I'm meeting Sam for lunch and then we're going car shopping and no, you can't go. I asked Shorty to send a couple of the cowboys to pick you and your truck up in a couple of hours."

They started walking toward the pickup with Lex holding his hand. "What kind of vehicle are you looking for? Because I don't want you to just get something cheap. You've never been in Montana in the winter. You'll definitely need something with four-wheel drive and look at the safety features. I don't want to take any chances with your beautiful body come the first snowfall. It'll probably take a Texas boy a while before he masters deep-drift snow driving."

"Yes, sir." Nick saluted Lex.

Lex looked over at him and punched him in the arm. "Smart-ass."

* * * * *

Nick parked the truck in front of the doctor's office. He squeezed Lex's hand and walked to Gus's to meet Sam. He was a few minutes early, so he got a table and ordered a beer. As he sat drumming his fingers on the scarred table he thought about the call he'd made to his employers on Monday. They weren't happy that he wasn't giving them more notice but they didn't have much choice. No way would he go back to Austin and work until they could find a replacement. After getting off the phone with them he'd called his landlord and given notice on his apartment. He didn't need to

worry about his car because he'd never bothered buying a new one after he got out of school. His ten-year-old pickup he could easily sell when they went back to get the rest of his stuff.

He looked around at the people in the bar. He could tell by the looks he was getting that word had already spread in the small town. He smiled to himself, at least no one was openly insulting. Nick figured it was because Lex grew up here and, despite everything, still had the townspeople's respect.

He drank his beer and ordered another. Lex would probably kill him when he smelled it on his breath. He'd been asking for a beer since he left the hospital but Nick refused to buy any without the doctor's consent. He saw Sam walk in and waved. Sam came over and slid into the seat across from him.

"Hey. Thanks for having lunch with me." He signaled for a beer and turned to face Nick. "How's Dad?"

"He's good. As a matter of fact he's over at Doc Spencer's right now getting a checkup. He should be able to resume his normal activities after today. He's anxious to get back outside."

The waitress brought over their beers, Nick smiled and thanked her. Sam took a long drink of his and set it down. He looked nervous, Nick thought. Sam cleared his throat. "I wanted to apologize for my behavior over the past few years." When Nick shook his head and started to interrupt Sam held up his hand. "No. You deserve an explanation for the way I've treated you."

"You see I've known for years that Dad was gay but I didn't really understand that you were. When you left the ranch so suddenly that summer I thought something had happened. Then after you left, Dad started sinking into a deep, dark hole. I blamed everything on you. I thought you had done or said something to make him feel ashamed of himself because that's how he was acting. There were many times I thought I'd come home to find him dead in his study and every time I thought it, I cussed you." Sam drained his beer and signaled for another.

"It wasn't until the episode with Pete that Shorty finally clued me on what was probably wrong with Dad. That was almost six months ago and I know I should've called sooner but I was afraid. Then when Justin and I decided to have our commitment ceremony it became the perfect excuse to get you back up here. I'm so sorry that things happened the way they did."

Nick was silent for a while. How could his best friend think so little of him? Sam was the first person Nick ever really let into his life and despite what he'd told Sam it hurt like hell when he was abandoned. He knew he had to be honest with Sam and tell him how he felt, but he didn't want to reopen the wounds that were starting to heal. "Thank you for explaining it to me. I won't lie and say that what you did didn't hurt, because it hurt like hell, but I'm glad we've finally cleared the air. It might take me a little while longer to become as close to you as I once was but I'll get there."

Sam nodded and took another drink of his beer. "So, uh...Justin and I were wondering whether or not maybe you and Dad would like to 'get committed' with us on Saturday?"

Nick laughed at the phrase Sam used and shook his head. "Saturday belongs to you and Justin. I have a feeling Lex and I will have some sort of ceremony someday but Saturday is yours. Just enjoy it. We'll be in the front row. Lex'll probably be crying like a girl." Nick looked at his watch. "I know you asked me here to talk but if we don't eat soon we're not going to have time to go by the car dealership. They do sell used cars, don't they?"

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Nick drove himself home in his new-to-him five-year-old, fire-engine-red Chevy Suburban. He felt like he was driving a tank so Lex should be happy. Nick thought he could probably hit every snowdrift from Quints to the Lazy River and still get there safely. He pulled up beside Lex's white quad-cab and turned off the engine.

Lex must have been watching for him because he came out of the house and met him at the steps. "She's a beauty but why did you go for the SUV instead of a pickup?"

Nick kissed him and turned toward his new SUV. "I'll tell you if you don't laugh."

Lex held up his hand. "I promise not to laugh at you."

"Well, when I was looking at different vehicles I thought that maybe someday I could get a dog and he could ride in the back all year round. I've never had a dog because I've never lived in a place long enough." Nick put on his sad puppy face. "So do you think that I could get a dog?"

"Damn, you're cute." Lex leaned down and kissed him. "Baby, you can have anything you want. This is our home now. Not mine but ours. If you want a dog get a dog."

Nick threw his arms around Lex and hugged him. "Thanks, but not right away. I'm too busy now taking care of the man I love and getting settled in but someday. Yeah?"

"Yeah." Lex walked Nick into the house. "The doctor put me on an exercise program. I have to walk either outside or on the treadmill for at least thirty minutes a day to start. Doc said if I watch my diet closely and do my exercises along with the medication, I should live a long and happy life." He led Nick up the stairs to the bedroom. "I told him that was a good thing because I had a pup for a partner." He looked back at Nick and winked. "He also said I could resume normal sexual activities." He started taking Nick's clothes off.

"Oh, he did? Well, then I guess those are doctor's orders huh?" Nick pulled Lex's tight t-shirt off over his head. He reached behind Lex, taking the ponytail holder out of his hair before fanning it out over his chest. "Please don't think I'm weird but someday I'm going to buy you a loincloth and demand the Indian-catches-the-cowboy game."

Lex started laughing. "Damn. What would I do without you?" Suddenly Lex looked serious and pulled Nick into his arms. He gently kissed his lips and looked into his eyes. "Please don't ever let me find out because I love you more than my own life." Lex paused and looked lovingly at Nick. "I did something when I was in town today. I

stopped in to see Justin and changed the deed to the ranch. It's now in both of our names, just in case anything should ever happen to me."

Nick put his fingers over Lex's lips. "Shh. Don't talk that way. My main job from now on is to work beside you on this ranch and to keep you happy and healthy."

Lex bit his fingers. "Speaking of keeping me happy, how 'bout you take off those jeans and make me really happy."

Licking and sucking his way around Lex's neck and chest, Nick kicked off his sneakers and began unzipping his jeans. His hands couldn't get enough of Lex's smooth bronzed skin. He was still as solid and firm as anyone twenty years younger and the sight of his dark brown pebbled nipples threw Nick's lust into overdrive every time. "Promise me that you won't ever work without a shirt around Pete." He nipped at the buds on Lex's chest then soothed them with his tongue.

Rubbing his hands across Nick's cock and steel-hard ass, Lex pulled back and looked at him. "You do remember that Pete was here before and after you and I still threw him from your horse?" He unzipped his own jeans and bent to pull them off.

Nick took advantage of the position and spun him around. He ran his hard cock up and down Lex's crack, pushing just enough to get a good amount of friction going. He moaned and bit Lex's shoulder. "Gonna fuck you." He steered Lex over to the bed so he could reach the lube drawer. He positioned Lex on his hands and knees in the center of the bed and crawled up behind him. He swiped his tongue up the crack of Lex's ass.

The muscles in Lex's back rippled under the sensation. "Christ, that's good." He lowered his head to the bed and presented himself to Nick. Nick licked from the top of his crevice down, stopping to swirl his tongue around the puckered opening and then farther to the sensitive area behind Lex's sac. He continued, ducking under and between Lex's thighs and ran his tongue around the sac and on up to the flared brown head of his cock. He nibbled on the head and worked his way slowly, tasting Lex every inch of the way back to his hole. He nipped at the entry and reached for lube.

Lex was groaning so deeply that the vibrations traveled through Nick's tongue straight to his cock. He slicked up his fingers and began preparing Lex's rosebud. Sensing Lex's need for a little pain, he thrust two fingers deep into his ass. He wasn't disappointed when Lex grabbed his own cock and began pushing back into Nick's hand.

"Fuck me. Fuck me now." Lex continued to work his inner muscles on Nick's fingers.

God, Nick wanted those muscles around his cock. He pulled out his fingers and, without lubing his cock, he rammed in to the hilt. Lex grunted and growled his pleasure as Nick took him brutally. He slammed so hard against Lex's ass he was afraid they'd both have bruises but he could tell this was exactly what Lex wanted.

"More, damn it. Harder. Fuck my ass." Lex continued to growl out commands as Nick continued his punishing pace. He pulled one hand off Lex's hip and stuck two fingers into the tight hole alongside his cock. Lex howled and came, clamping Nick's cock and fingers in a vise of strong muscles.

Nick pushed in as deeply as he could and filled Lex with his cum. He bent his head and sucked up a mark on Lex's shoulder as his cock continued to throb inside him. He fell forward and pushed both of them onto the bed. Nick rolled to his side, trying like hell to catch his breath.

Lex turned and wrapped his arms and legs around him. "That was fucking fantastic. Damn, I may be sore as hell in the morning but I'll sleep with a smile on my face tonight."

Nick rubbed Lex's back and kissed him. "Sam asked if we wanted to take part in their commitment ceremony Saturday. I told him that day belonged to him and Justin." Nick started playing with Lex's pebbled nipples. "He told me why he wrote me out of his life after I left too." Nick went on to explain the conversation he had with Sam. When he was finished he looked into Lex's eyes. "I can't lose you again. You, this ranch and all its cowboys are my family now. You're all I have in the world that means

anything to me. I just hope you don't change your mind about us. I know I still have a lot of growing up to do but I hope you'll be there to teach me."

Kissing his closed eyes, Lex put his hands on either side of Nick's face. "Look at me." When Nick opened his eyes Lex kissed his lips. "You're it for me. Forever. Would you consider having a ceremony for the two of us sometime soon, preferably?"

Smiling, Nick bit and then sucked Lex's bottom lip. "How about Christmas Eve? Most of my life Christmas Eve has been the loneliest day of the year. I think it's time I replaced the bad memories with a good one."

"But that's a little more than six months away. What if you change your mind between now and then?" Lex ran his hand through his hair.

Nick thought Lex really meant what he'd said. He shook his head, trying to figure out how to make this wonderful man believe that he wasn't going anywhere. "We can have our own ceremony just the two of us before then and just renew our vows to each other at a gathering on Christmas Eve."

A smile slowly spread over Lex's face. Those beautiful dimples in full bloom were the sexiest thing about him.

"You've got yourself a deal. When would you like to do it?" Lex nuzzled Nick's neck.

Playing with Lex's hair, Nick thought. "Why not Friday night? The cowboys always head into town and then we can ride out by the creek and take blankets and stuff. I'd like to commit to you under the stars on the Lazy River land."

"Friday sounds absolutely perfect. Can I buy you a ring?" Lex asked excitedly. "I promise it won't be anything flashy, just a gold band."

Shaking his head, Nick kissed him. "If you're going to get me a ring I'd like one that reminds me of you. I was thinking more along the lines of silver with maybe a bit of turquoise in the band and I can get you one that matches. Although I'd like to find just the right ones so maybe we should save the rings for the formal ceremony at Christmas."

Lex bent down and bit Nick's nipple. "How about we both go into Missoula tomorrow and get matching nipple rings?" Lex started laughing and turned a subtle shade of red. "If anyone had told me a year ago I'd be gettin' a nipple ring I'd have told them they were crazy. I mean, no one my age gets his nipple pierced but for some reason it just feels right. Maybe I'm getting younger instead of older." He looked over at Nick. "So what do you think? Would you like to get your nipple pierced?"

"Oh God, that would be as sexy as hell." Nick rubbed his semi-hard cock against Lex. "My cock gets hard now when I see your chest but with a nipple ring..."

Lex laughed and climbed on top of Nick. "I can feel you getting hard, baby, but I'm an old man and it's going to take me a while longer." Lex began rubbing his soft cock against Nick's now-steel-hard cock.

Burying his head deeper into the pillow, Nick moaned and spread his legs. He began thrusting upward and rubbing his cock from side to side against Lex. "Mmm...feels good."

Lex bit down on Nick's shoulder with a little more pressure than normal. Nick groaned as he felt Lex's cock hardening. He rubbed against him as he pinched Lex's nipples. Lex reached underneath Nick and spread his cheeks. Moaning, Nick arched his back, grinding up into Lex as a finger whispered across his entry.

Nick scraped his barely there nails down Lex's back. "Gonna...come with me... Ohhhh!" Nick's seed erupted between their bodies. The spreading heat and smell was so intense as Lex came right behind him.

Lex rolled to the side and spread their combined essence over Nick's chest, stopping occasionally to bend and take a lick. "We taste so good together," Lex said, smacking his lips.

Looking over at him, Nick laughed. "Are you finished finger painting, because I could use a nice long soak in that beautiful garden tub of yours?"

Taking one last lingering taste of their combined juices, Lex purred. "Mmm...good." He got off the bed and pulled Nick up and led him toward the bathroom.

Nick stopped and looked at Lex. "If you get your nipple pierced you're for sure not going outside around Pete without a shirt." He leaned forward and bit Lex's nipple.

Lex held his head against his chest and sighed as Nick continued to suckle. "They're all for you, baby."

Chapter Eleven

They drove into Missoula in Nick's new Suburban, hands entwined on the console between the seats. Nick looked over at Lex and smiled. "Are we getting one nipple done or both?"

Lex looked over at him and shrugged. "Both would be even sexier on you but maybe we should wait and see how much it hurts first." Lex reached over the console and brushed the back of his fingers across Nick's right nipple. It pebbled at his touch just as it always did. Lex moaned. "You're so sensitive there, I can't wait until I can play and tug on the rings with my tongue. God, just thinking about it has me hard."

Raising an eyebrow, Nick made a point of looking down at the bulge pressing against Lex's soft denim. "Cool. Save that for later and I'll do it justice."

They found the tattoo and body piercing shop and pulled in the parking lot. Lex was starting to get a little nervous, which was completely ridiculous. He was a cowboy, for Christ's sake. Cowboys were tough. They didn't let a little pain get them down. He looked over at Nick, who was almost bouncing with anticipation.

Nick looked over at Lex as they got to the door. "You're sure about this, aren't you? I mean, I'm sure I'm going to get both done but if it's not your thing then that's fine with me."

Lex put his hand on the small of Nick's back. "I'm just a little nervous but yeah, I'm sure I want it." He opened the door and ushered Nick through. He looked around at the art on the walls. He drew the line at tattoos. No way. He hated getting his yearly flu shot. No way was someone going to do that to him.

Walking up to the counter, Nick asked the tattooed girl about piercings. She showed them to a display case containing all the needed jewelry. She left them to discuss it and headed back to her stool behind the counter, looking totally bored.

Nick was checking out all the little hoops for their nipples while Lex's eyes wandered to all the other jewelry in the case. He saw a silver heavy-looking contraption and his eyebrows rose. Nudging Nick in the side, he pointed to it. "What's that and where does it go?"

Laughing, Nick shook his head. "Forget it, that's called a Prince Albert and no way am I letting them stick that thing in my cock."

"Oh fuck." Lex's hand went instinctually to his cock. "I'm with you on that. Let's stick to the nipples." He spotted the perfect hoops and almost jumped for joy. "There." The small silver hoops had a turquoise-colored bead dangling from it, but they only had two.

He walked back to the salesgirl and asked if she could check for two more of them. The girl rolled her eyes and began opening cabinets and drawers. She finally came up with one and said she could probably order another. Lex told her one would be enough. He went back and told Nick.

"She's only got one more but honestly I think that's all this old man is up for anyway. I thought you could get both done today and I can get the one done." Lex couldn't believe he was using the jewelry as an excuse to only get one but he honestly couldn't see himself getting both nipples pierced.

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Getting into the Suburban forty minutes later, Nick smiled. "Every time I move my shirt brushes the rings and my nipples go hard. I wonder if it's just because they're a little sore or if I'll have to buy thicker shirts for when I go to town?"

Lex smiled. He could see the outline of the little silver hoops through Nick's thin white shirt. "I don't know but it's a good look on you. Let's hurry and go eat then you can take me home and let me clean them. I wanna suck on 'em but I think they need to heal a little first."

Nick drove them to Lex's favorite steakhouse. They went inside and were seated right away. "Wow, fast service. I was afraid we'd have to wait awhile to get a table," Nick said smiling across the table at Lex.

Lex licked his lips and looked at Nick. "The hostess was eatin' you up with her eyes. I think she likes your nipples too." He flashed his dimples and picked up the menu. Nick shook his head and studied his own menu. He was trying to decide what to order when he heard a throat clear next to their table.

"What are you doing here, Terri?"

Nick's head sprang up at the name and looked at the black widow spider standing beside Lex. She had a nice body and he bet that at one time she was gorgeous but right now it looked like she'd had one too many facelifts. She was downright scary—it was like she could barely blink. No wonder she went through money so fast.

Terri took the empty chair at their table and sat down. "I came to town to talk to you about that little business proposition we discussed the other night. I still haven't heard anything from my lawyer and I wanted to make sure you knew I was serious."

She looked over at Nick and rolled her eyes. At least Nick thought that's what she was trying to do. The skin was a little too tight to cooperate so she just ended up looking stupid, but stupid or not, Nick would not allow this barracuda to upset Lex.

Terri pointed her head toward Nick. "Boy toy, Lex? He looks young enough to be your son. Still a pervert, I see."

She started to go on but Nick grabbed her arm. "Listen, bitch. You will not upset him. Do you understand me? Now take your scary-ass face and hit the road. No one here is interested in anything you have to say."

"Really? No one is interested in what I have to say?" She stood up and grabbed her purse off the table. "Well, we'll just see about that. Won't we?" Terri stomped off toward the door.

Lex started to go after her but Nick put a hand on his arm. "Let her go. Sam's a man now. He already knows your secrets so Terri can't hurt him with them. He's wondered

about her his entire life. Let him finally see what a bitch he has for a mother. You raised him right, now have faith in him.”

Closing his eyes, Lex sat back down. “I know you’re probably right but Sam’s still my son and I don’t want to see him hurt. Thanks for dealing with her though. I just get so worked up around her that I turn into an idiot. I’m sorry I didn’t defend you though. That was really shitty of me.”

Reaching across the table, Nick took his hand. “That, my love, is one scary bitch and if I wasn’t in full ‘protect my lover from another heart-attack mode’ I might have let you. I’m a big boy too, and I can take care of myself. But I do think it would be a good idea to call Sam and let him know to expect a visit from the Dragon Lady.”

Lex made the call to Sam and they were still able to have a nice steak dinner. Afterward, they stopped by one of the major department stores in Missoula and bought Justin and Sam a little wedding gift.

Lex was carrying the bag out to the car, shaking his head. “When I thought about getting Sam a little gift it sure wasn’t silk sheets. It just seems kinda wrong for a dad to get his son sheets. I don’t know how I let you talk me into that. I was thinking more like a toaster or something. I’m having a real present made for them.”

Nick stopped and looked at him. “You didn’t tell me that. What are you having made for them?”

Shrugging, Lex continued on to the car. “I know a guy in town that’s making a partners desk for their home office. I heard them arguing over the fact that two desks just wouldn’t fit so I waited until they went to work and went over and took some measurements.” Lex looked down. “I kinda thought it would be symbolic to the occasion,” he said so softly Nick barely heard it.

Wrapping his arms around him, Nick kissed him. “It’s going to be the perfect gift. They’ll both love it. Do you want me to go back and return the sheets? I thought they were symbolic too. That’s why I chose them.”

"No, the sheets are nice. It just seems weird for me to be giving my son sheets for a bed he'll be sharing and having sex on." Nick unlocked the door and Lex climbed in.

Climbing in the driver's side, Nick started the engine. "We could always keep the sheets for ourselves and stop in at the store in Quints and get a toaster. Besides, the thought of seeing you all spread out on red silk sheets makes me hard."

Lex flashed his dimples. "Well, in that case consider the sheets yours." Lex reached across the console and ran his hand over Nick's fly. "I think we should stop by Sam's on the way home."

Nick could see the worry in Lex's face. "I think Sam needs to do this alone. Stop trying to baby him all the time, he's a grown man."

"Grown man or not if he's hurting he'll need me. Just stop by his house, will you. I'll stay on the porch if everything's okay."

Nick still didn't agree with Lex's thinking but he nodded anyway. Maybe it was because he didn't remember what it was like to have a dad but it just seemed Lex was treating Sam like a kid.

Lex held Nick's hand all the way to Quints. He was looking out the window, thinking about the trip he'd made to his builder the previous day.

Nick looked over at Lex. "You daydreaming over there or is there something wrong? I didn't mean to piss you off about the whole Sam thing but if I have an opinion I need to be able to tell you without you getting sulky."

Looking away from the window toward Nick, Lex smiled. "You have every right to your opinion and I'm not mad at all. I was just thinking about the wedding present I got you."

"You got me a wedding present besides the red silk sheets? Tell me what it is. Oh God, I think I could get used to this present thing. Come on, Lex, tell me?"

Lex chuckled. Nick looked like a kid at Christmas. "I was gonna tell you tomorrow night since I won't have anything to actually give you. The more I think about it though, the more I realize I'll be too busy making love to you to talk about presents anyway." He looked at the excited expression on Nick's face. "Fuck, you're cute." He brushed Nick's nose with his finger. "I asked Todd to design and build a small animal clinic for you at the ranch. I thought it would be nice for you to have a place of your own. You could care for the ranch animals there as well as anything someone wants to bring ya."

Nick's jaw dropped to the floor. "You're getting me an entire clinic for a wedding present? Why? I mean, like *wow*, that's just...that's too much. I thought maybe a watch or something. Do you have any idea how much that's going to cost? How about we compromise? You build an addition on to the barn. Just one room, that's all I really need and we buy only used equipment. I'm only twenty-seven, there's plenty of time for improvements once I start making some actual money. I can probably get a small loan to help with it."

Lex squeezed Nick's hand. "Let me do this for you, please. Besides, I'm not being totally selfless. Do ya have any idea how much I spend a year on vet bills? The clinic will probably pay for itself before you know it."

Looking kind of moon-eyed, Nick smiled. "I never dreamed I'd be able to have my own clinic. Do you think Todd would let me give him some suggestions on the design?"

"Baby, I think Todd will do whatever you tell him to do. It's your clinic after all." Lex had never given anyone a present that was so well received. He was going to enjoy spoiling Nick.

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When they pulled up in front of Sam's house, Nick didn't see any strange cars in the driveway. He turned to Lex. "Hopefully the Dragon Lady changed her mind." They went to the front door and rang the bell.

After a few moments Justin opened the door. Nick could tell by the look on his face that Terri had already been by. "I'm glad you're here. Sammy's upstairs. You might want to go up and talk to him." He stepped back into the house and let them enter.

Lex looked at Nick and kissed him. "Wish me luck?"

Nick shook his head. "You won't need luck. That's your son up there and you obviously know him better than anyone."

Lex nodded and headed upstairs and knocked on the bedroom door.

"Come in."

Lex opened the door and saw Sam sitting on the side of the bed. It was pretty obvious he'd been put through the wringer. Lex went over and sat beside him. He didn't say anything, just put his arms around Sam and held him.

"Oh Dad, she's awful. I'm glad she left me when I was a baby. I can't imagine being raised by such a self-absorbed bitch." Sam held his dad tighter.

"I'm so sorry. I hoped you'd never have to meet her, especially after I heard her talking about gays being perverted. When did she leave?"

Sam wiped his eyes. "I had Justin throw her out about twenty minutes ago. She was a raving lunatic by the time Justin shoved her out the door. She kept saying she was going to make you pay for what you did to me." He looked up at Lex. "In case you're wondering, no. I don't blame you for me being gay. If anything I should thank you. I grew up knowing that you were gay but I also knew you were ashamed of it. When I finally figured out that I was in love with Justin I decided I had to go for it or spend my life alone like you'd done for the past twenty-five years or more. I'm glad we both fell in love with the right people at the right time."

Lex ruffled Sam's hair like he'd done since he was a kid. "Thank you, I'm glad too." He stood and pulled Sam up beside him. "I'll go tell Justin you're going to be all right.

The man looked worried to death when we got here.” He kissed Sam on the forehead. “I love you.”

“Love you too, Dad.”

Lex went back downstairs. He found Justin and Nick having a drink of whiskey in the living room. “He’ll be okay. It’s not every day a son finds out his mother is the Dragon Lady.” He walked over to Justin. “Just go up and hold him. That’s all he needs right now.”

Justin stood up and shook Lex’s hand. “Thanks. I’ll do that.”

Lex pulled Nick up off the couch and headed toward the door. When they got outside Lex looked over at Nick. “We need to get home. I’m afraid Terri might just be in full vengeance mode.”

Nick jumped into the Suburban and started the engine. “You don’t think she’d do anything to the house, do you?” He raced toward the Lazy River.

“It’s Terri. She’d do anything to make me pay one way or the other.” Lex’s chest was pounding and he was glad he had his nitroglycerin tablets in his pocket, just in case. He fingered the pill case as they exceeded the speed limit home.

* * * * *

When they pulled up to the house there was no sign of Terri, but Lex still didn’t trust her. He got out and climbed the stairs to the house. He opened the door and he and Nick began searching rooms, which wasn’t an easy task in a house the size of his. When they’d finished searching they met up in the bedroom.

Nick wrapped his arms around Lex. “I didn’t find any signs that she’d been in the house. You?”

Lex shook his head. “Nothing. Let’s forget about her for the night.” He pulled Nick’s tight t-shirt over his head. He groaned when the nipple rings caused Nick’s nipples to go hard. “Besides, you promised to let me clean these beautiful nipples for you.”

He disappeared into the bathroom and came back with some alcohol and a washcloth. He put the washcloth under Nick's nipple and slowly poured the alcohol over the new piercing. At Nick's inhalation of breath, Lex bent over and blew. "It's okay, baby, just a little sting."

"Geez. You can't blow on my nipples and get me hard while at the same time talk to me like I'm a first grader." Nick hissed as Lex poured alcohol over the second piercing. "Blow, honey. Blow."

Lex blew and passed the bottle to Nick. "I'm next."

While Nick was cleaning his piercing, the fire bell rang out in the ranch yard.

Lex looked out the window and saw the barn on fire. "Fuck. Fuck, that bitch," he screamed as he raced down the stairs. He jumped off the porch and raced to the barn with Nick running beside him.

They found Shorty and the cowboys with hoses and wet burlap sacks attacking the fire. Lex looked over to the pasture. "Are all the horses out?" God, he hoped so. The barn was almost totally engulfed in flames.

Shorty shook his head. "Sorry, we got all but Lucky. His stall was too far back in the barn for us to get to him." Shorty continued to aim the hose at the corner of the barn where Lucky's stall was. "Some of the guys are going to try to clear a path to him."

Lex shook his head. "No, it looks like the whole barn could fall at any time." He walked to the side of the barn. He looked at Lucky through the window and shook his head. "Fuck...somebody find me an axe or a sledgehammer. *Now!*"

A few moments later Lester ran up and handed Lex an axe. Lex took the axe over to the window. "Stand back." He swung the axe toward the window. Glass shattered all over himself and Lucky. A blast of hot air rushed over Lex. He used the axe to make the hole bigger. Lucky was down on his side now and Lex wasn't sure he would be able to get him back up once he made the hole big enough to get him out. Lester came running up and told Lex to go through and see about Lucky while he continued to work on the window.

Lex climbed through the broken window. He couldn't believe the amount of heat inside the barn. He was able to coax Lucky to his feet just as Lester broke through the last of the two-by-fours. He quickly yelled for and received a wet burlap sack to put over Lucky's face and led him outside. Lucky was cut up from the broken glass and Lex knew he had some smoke damage to his lungs but he thought he would make it.

He looked around for his live-in vet. He didn't see him. "Hey, Shorty, where'd Nick go?"

"He took off toward those trees shortly after you both got here."

No sooner had he said it than Nick appeared through the trees, pushing a very dirty Terri in front of him. As the two got closer Lex could see blood running out of Terri's nose. Actually it appeared Terri's nose had been broken. He flashed a smile toward Nick.

Nick pushed Terri down in front of Lex. "I saw her watching through the trees. I went after her and she decided to run. Big mistake on her part because I had to tackle her hard from behind. It seems poor Terri broke her nose in the fall. I told her she was lucky because with her damn face so tight by all rights the nose should have just snapped right off her face."

Lex heard the fire trucks making their way down the ranch road. "I hope the police are with them." He turned to Terri. "Well, what do ya think? Was it worth spending some time in jail? I wonder how many rich men are going to want an ex-felon for a society wife." He chuckled at her scowl. "I think you'd better play up to the guards in there because I think that's the best you're gonna get for a while."

The language that spewed forth out of that woman's mouth made every cowboy on the ranch blush.

Nick sidled up to Lex. "Yeah, you sure picked a winner in that one. Let's hope your second choice is better."

Lex kissed him, making Terri scream even more. "You're not my second choice. You'll always be number one with me."

* * * * *

Later that night after the police carted Terri away and the fire department had put out what was left of the barn, Nick pulled Lex into the shower. "God, we stink."

Lex grabbed for the shampoo bottle and poured some into his hand so he could wash Nick's hair. When he was done rinsing his hair Lex went to work with a bar of soap and washcloth on his body. Lex scrubbed and tasted every inch of body as he cleaned it.

Nick did the same for Lex, paying special attention to the lower half of his body. He teased Lex's balls as his tongue flicked back and forth over the head of his cock. Lex thrust toward his face. "Suck me." Nick obliged willingly. He took the head of Lex's cock in his mouth and sucked hard. Pulling the head from his mouth, Nick ran his tongue up and down the side. He felt every ridge and every vein. Lex began moaning and spread his legs wider.

Nick smiled. He knew exactly what Lex was looking for. He went back up to the head and opened wide. While sucking his cock, Nick stuck three fingers into Lex's ass. He pumped his fingers faster as he felt Lex begin to tremble. He came up for one last breath and then swallowed Lex down to the base. That seemed to do the trick because Lex cried out his name as he emptied himself down Nick's throat. Nick swallowed every bit of cum then came up gasping for air.

Lex fell to his knees beside Nick. He spread himself out on the floor of the big shower. "Make love to me."

Nick smiled and reached up to the ledge for the bottle of waterproof lube. He didn't bother lubing Lex's ass. He knew Lex got off on the pleasure-pain aspect so he put a small amount of lube directly onto his cock. Nick ran his hand up and down his cock while watching Lex squirm and moan on the floor of the shower.

Nick looked down at his cock then back to Lex. "You ready for this? Because it's going to be hard and fast."

“Do it. Do it any way you want.” Lex watched as Nick placed his knees over his shoulders.

“Open wide and say ahhh.” With those words barely out of his mouth he rammed the head of his cock deep into Lex’s ass. “Oh damn, that feels good. You’re hotter than any damn fire.”

Nick pumped into Lex’s ass like it was the most important thing in his world. Nick grunted and groaned like a wild animal. “Can’t get deep enough.” He plunged harder and deeper with each stroke.

Lex put his hands over his head to brace himself against the tiled wall. “Yeah, baby. Fuck, that’s good.”

Nick gave Lex one last deep thrust and filled his body with his seed.

The tendons in Nick’s neck felt like they were about to pop as his body convulsed in pleasure. His body jerked a few more times and collapsed on top of Lex. “Love you. Hope I didn’t hurt you.”

Lex hauled Nick up off the floor and into his arms. “It just can’t get any better than that.” Lex kissed Nick, tasting himself on Nick’s tongue. “Let’s get to bed. We’ve got a long two days ahead of us.” Nick let Lex dry him off and put him to bed.

Chapter Twelve

Two years later

Lex sat back in his favorite chair in front of his study window, watching Nick unload a mare from the horse trailer. It had been exactly two years since they'd had their private commitment ceremony and Lex had something special planned for their anniversary.

He watched as Fred and Wilma came out of the barn to say hi to their best friend. Lex had given Nick the two yellow Labrador Retrievers for Christmas the previous year. He still smiled when he remembered the look on Nick's face when he placed the pups on the bed Christmas morning. For a twenty-nine-year-old man Nick giggled and romped with the pups like he was a kid.

Nick tied the mare to the hitching post in front of the barn and went next door to his animal clinic. He got a lot of business these days, everything from dogs and cats to sheep and cattle. Nick had started an artificial insemination program at the ranch that was starting to take off like wildfire.

Lex reached over and picked up the phone. Dialing Nick's cell phone, he looked at the painting over the fireplace that Nick had given him their first Christmas. It was a portrait of Lex in a loincloth on top of Night Fever. Lex smiled, that man sure did like him in that loincloth.

"Hi, honey. How's your day?"

Lex reached down and rubbed his hardening erection through his jeans. "Lonely. I miss you when you're away from me all day. I just saw you drive up. Are you about ready to come up to the house or do I need to come to you?"

"Mmm...I miss you too, but I've got to get Molly here pregnant this afternoon." Lex could hear the smile in Nick's voice.

"Well, your cock is sure big enough to fuck a horse," Lex said teasingly.

"Thank you, I'll use it on you tonight. What do you have planned, by the way?"

"Shh, secret. Can't tell you or it would spoil the surprise." Lex rubbed his cock a little harder. "Are you sure you can't come up for a quickie? I gotta tell you, baby, my poor cock is weeping for you."

There was silence on the other end of the phone. "I'll be there in two minutes. Be naked and I'll give you fifteen minutes of fun before I have to impregnate Molly."

* * * * *

After a long day with Molly and the Petersons' dog, Nick was closing up the clinic when Shorty came in. "Hi."

"Hey, I've got a huge favor to ask. I know it's a special day and all for you and Lex but Pete just came back from the east pasture and said Old Red has gotten herself cut up again. I was wondering if you could go over and have a quick look at her before you head to the house. I saddled Lucky for you already. It shouldn't take more than about thirty minutes."

Nick put his hands on his hips and blew out a breath. "Fine. I'll check on Old Red but first I'll have to call Lex." Shorty nodded and walked out of the clinic.

Nick tried calling Lex at the house but when he got no answer he tried his cell phone.

"Hi, baby. Are you on your way?"

"No, I'm sorry but Shorty just told me Old Red's been cut up again. I wish to hell you could train that damn cow to stay outta the fences. Anyway, I told him I'd go to the east pasture and take a look at her before quitting for the day."

"How long do you reckon it'll take, because the dinner I'm making should be out of the oven in about forty-five minutes or less."

"I'll be back before then, I promise. I just can't let a cow suffer when I might be able to help. No matter how tired I am or how much I want to be with you."

"That's why I love you so much. You've got a damn good heart. I'll be waiting for you."

Nick hung up and gathered his saddlebag full of salves and sutures, just in case he needed them. He swung up on Lucky and headed for the east pasture. He looked for Old Red but didn't see anything. Afraid that maybe she'd gotten too close to the creek and hadn't been able to get herself out he headed that way. He got to the creek and slid off his horse. He was wandering the creek looking for any sign of Old Red when he heard what sounded like—an Indian attack? He spun around just as a body flew off a big black horse and knocked him to the ground.

Shaking his head, Nick looked up straight into the eyes of a warrior, a beautiful bronzed warrior with a head of thick black hair that went past his ass. Speaking of asses, this warrior's was practically hanging out of the tiny loincloth he wore. Nick started to struggle, trying to get the beautiful warrior off him. "I come in peace."

The warrior cocked his head as if he didn't understand the white man underneath him. He ran his hands through Nick's short hair, looking puzzled. He squirmed around on Nick's groin until Nick's cock hardened.

The warrior sat back farther on his legs and looked at the growing bulge in Nick's jeans. He reached a bronzed hand out and captured the bulge in his palm. He squeezed and leaned down to sniff at the growing erection.

"I take white man to teepee. Be my wife." The warrior hauled Nick up a little roughly and pointed to the big black horse. "On, white man."

Nick bit his lip and looked at Lucky. "What about my horse?"

The bronzed warrior looked from Nick to his horse. He pulled a hank of rope off Nick's saddle horn and tied his hands together. Pointing toward Lucky this time, the warrior issued one command, "Up."

Nick mounted Lucky and waited for further instructions. The warrior swung up bareback onto his black horse, still holding Lucky's reins. He took them farther down

the creek, looking over his shoulder often. When they rounded an outcropping of boulders, Nick saw a magnificent teepee.

The warrior stopped beside the teepee and slid off his horse. He pulled Nick off Lucky and pulled him by his tied hands into the teepee. Nick looked around at the inside of the warrior's home. It was a lot bigger on the inside than it appeared from the outside. In the center a small fire was burning. A thick pallet of furs and blankets sat on the far side of the structure. Nick shifted from one foot to the other, not sure what was expected of him.

The warrior came toward him, brandishing a large, very sharp-looking knife. Nick held his wrists out to the warrior hoping he would be cut free. Instead the warrior split the t-shirt he was wearing down the middle. When he looked down at Nick's jeans, Nick decided he'd had enough of the knife. "I'll do it." Slowly he unbuttoned and unzipped his jeans. After toeing off his boots, he slipped the jeans and underwear down and off.

He looked at the front of the warrior's loincloth. It left no doubt the man was fully aroused. The warrior pointed toward the pallet. "Mine. You mine now." He pushed Nick over to the pallet and down.

With his hands still tied Nick looked around the mostly empty teepee. The warrior walked toward his head and grabbed his tied wrists. Pulling his wrists over his head, the warrior secured the rope to a stake driven into the hard ground. Left totally exposed, Nick tried to hide his face by looking toward the teepee wall.

The warrior knelt beside him on the pallet and ran a rough-skinned palm from his neck to his feet. Nick was a little upset that his cock sprang to attention with just one stroke of the warrior's hand. The warrior began his exploration again, only this time he explored everything. He started at his nose and traced the line with his fingertips. He moved around his face until he trailed his fingers down Nick's neck. He bent and bit the throbbing artery between his teeth. Nick fought the moan that tried to escape his lips.

The warrior worked his way down to his flat brown nipples. As he flicked the twin hoops with his tongue, Nick's nipples pebbled. The warrior looked up and smiled. God, he was devastating to look at. Nick's cock began to bob a little, seeking its own attention. The warrior raised one eyebrow and went to explore the erection between Nick's quivering thighs. He smelled Nick's cock for a long time before reaching out a hand and wrapping it around Nick's throbbing length.

"Nice," the warrior stated just before he wrapped his lips around Nick's shaft. The feel of the warrior's mouth was like nirvana to Nick. The hot, wet heat enveloped him and began to slide up and down on his cock. Nick knew he should remain still but his traitorous body was having none of it. He began moaning and thrusting up into the warrior's hot mouth.

Pulling off his cock suddenly, the warrior reached over for a small wooden bowl. He dipped his fingers into it and began rubbing the greasy substance over Nick's anus. The warrior inserted one finger at a time until four fingers were pumping in and out of Nick's ass.

Nick moaned and pushed against the fingers. He watched as the warrior withdrew and stood to remove the tiny loincloth. The cock that thumped the warrior's abdomen was thick and long and very aroused. Nick swallowed as the warrior dipped his fingers into the bowl again and greased his own cock, stroking it from base to crown.

Nick blew out a breath he wasn't even aware he'd been holding. The warrior turned Nick over so he was on his elbows and knees and, without so much as a how-do-you-do, rammed his thick cock deep into Nick's puckered hole. The warrior grunted as he pumped hard and fast into Nick. The feel of the warrior's length pumping him so hard had Nick ready to come in no time.

He fought his restraints and pushed back into the warrior. His balls drew up and a zing of lightning traveled from his sac to the tip of his cock as he spewed his seed onto the blankets below. The warrior came with a mighty war cry deep inside Nick's ass.

The warrior bent over Nick's back and bit him hard on the shoulder. "Happy anniversary, baby."

About the Author

I've been a reading fanatic for years and finally at the age of 40 decided to try my hand at writing. I've always loved romance novels that are just a little bit naughty so naturally my books tend to go just a little further. It's my fantasy world after all.

When I'm not being a mother to a five-year-old and a six-year-old, you can usually find me in my deep leather chair with either a book in my hand or my laptop.

Carol welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at www.ellorascave.com.

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