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The Russos: Episode Five
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## Also By D.J. Manly:

Connor's Storm

**Melting Ice** 

The Russos: Digital Soap

# Dedication:

To my readers.

# The Russos: Episode Tive

### Previously on The Russos...

**7** Trake and Angelo get into an argument at the hospital, and Johnny finally comes out of the coma. Tony overhears a shocking conversation between his father and his uncle he just can't forget, while fighting an attraction to Drake senior. Frank holds a party at his house to celebrate Johnny's recovery, and Tony gets high and loses all inhibitions. Drake senior is disturbed by Tony's behaviour. Janet and Mac make love, and Janet is afraid that her ex will find out about it.

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### And Now...Episode Tive of The Russos

**3** andy sat across the table from Tom, puffing on a cigarette.

He wrinkled his nose in distaste. "Are you ever going to give that up?"

"What do you care?" she demanded angrily. "You want out of this marriage. If I get cancer, you won't have to watch me die."

"What an ugly thing to say," Tom muttered. "But then...I've seen a side of you that..."

She sighed. "Ya...ya...ya. Whatever, Tom."

The waitress came over, and they ordered coffee. She left.

They couldn't meet in town. Too many eyes were on them, and now it wasn't only the people in the town who were watching. Lately, a few reporters from the United States were spotted hanging around, asking questions about the Newton family. Although they hadn't directly approached her yet, Sam's mother called her yesterday to tell her she had been asked to give an interview. How these reporters found out who she was and how she was connected to all this, she'd never know.

But Sandy needed to talk to Tom. So she suggested they meet in a neutral place, forty miles out of town. They met at a highway diner, ironically called *The Last* 

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Stop. It was half-empty, and no one knew them there.

She wasn't prepared for how hostile she was feeling...or how wounded Tom looked.

The coffee came. They were alone.

Tom stared into his cup, then sighed. "Why was this necessary?"

"The meeting? I wanted to tell you that I'm going out to L.A. I wasn't going to tell you, but I decided that you deserved to know."

He nodded. "Can I ask why?"

"To save our son from that life, that's why. Don't you care anymore, or now because he knows you're not really his father...do you...?"

"How dare you suggest I don't care?" His blue eyes were brilliant with anger. "I love Tony, and I hope one day he'll forgive me for lying to him all this time. I hope he remembers the good times we had and that he was always my son...always." He swallowed and looked away, tears in his eyes. "This could have all been avoided if you had told him years ago. He would have known that I was his stepfather, but...it might have been better. Now he's confused and bitter, and I would be too." He fell silent, blinking back the tears.

"Are you finished with your speech?" Sandy murmured, raising the coffee cup to her lips.

He played with his own cup, turning it this way and that.

"Have you started divorce proceedings?" There was a lump in her throat.

"No," he breathed.

"Can't we..." She paused. "Maybe when I come back

from L.A. with Tony, we can all sit down as a family and work this all out."

He met her eyes. "But we're not a family anymore, remember, and what makes you think Tony will come back with you?"

She didn't reply.

"You're in love with someone else, Sandy. You've always been, and I was just too much of a fool to see it." His voice cracked with emotion.

"I'm not still in love with—"

"You are. You never stopped loving him, and if he had come after you, you would have left me in a minute and gone with him. But he doesn't want you, Sandy, he never has." Tom gave his wife a cruel smile.

Sandy felt like he had turned a knife in her heart. She returned a bitter smile of her own. "I have his son. Drake could never give him that."

"Drake?" Tom raised an eyebrow. "Are you insane? What are you talking about, Drake?"

"Johnny is in love with his brother. That's why our marriage failed, and that's why I don't want Tony with him. He will corrupt him, destroy his morals...everything I've taught him."

"In love with...have you lost your mind?" Tom laughed. "You truly are mad."

"You don't have to believe me." She withdrew another cigarette from her package and lit it. "I know it sounds insane. It sounds insane because it is insane, but I don't really care if you believe it or not. I just want you to know that I am going to go to L.A. and bring back our son. I want you to check on the house when I'm

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gone so we don't get anything vandalized or stolen. If you do want to sell the house later on..." She stopped.

"We can discuss all that later." His voice was hard. "Maybe you'll want to..." he stopped.

He couldn't believe that his marriage was coming to an end. He also couldn't believe his son was gone, and that he missed him so much it hurt. All the years spent with this woman were a lie. She had held him in her arms, made passionate love to him, whispered his name in the dark and all that time she was still in love with her ex-husband, the father of her child.

He stood up. He couldn't bear to look at her right now. He loved her still. "I'll watch the house. I'll move back in while you're gone. When are you leaving?"

"I wanted to go at Christmas, but I booked too late." She crushed out her cigarette. "I'm going in mid-January instead. I don't know for how long. I'm hoping to go and come back right away with Tony."

"Okay, do what you want. Call and remind me a few days in advance when you're leaving. I've got to go now. I have a patient coming in this evening."

She said goodbye to him and watched him leave. He would change his mind about the divorce. He had to. Once Tony came home, they could all sit down and sort this all out. Things would be as they had been. She would make everything all right again.

She ordered more coffee. It would be so easy to destroy the lives of Johnny and his brothers. She had nothing against Pepi, but she would have enjoyed watching Drake's career go up in flames. However, she had to stay focused. Destroying the Russos was not her goal. She would only threaten to go to the press if Johnny tried to stand between her and her son.

She knew what was best for him, and being out there in that wild city with his father was definitely not it. He had to come home. Tony would listen to reason, and so would Johnny...or there would be war.

\* \* \* \* \* \*

Sophia called the hospital at nine that morning, only to be told that Johnny was not in his room. They had got him up out of bed and taken him for a walk down the hallway. She told them she would call back later, but to let him know she wouldn't be coming to the hospital today.

She didn't feel well this morning, and had declined Drake's offer to drop her off to see Johnny on his way to the studio. Tired, she curled up on the sofa in Drake's living room and switched on his widescreen television.

She must have dozed, because she was startled by the answering machine switching on and then a female voice saying, "Hi, baby, guess you're out. Probably at the studio. I miss you already. Last night was...well...wow...you know. You're wonderful, and you have the greatest cock."

Sophia didn't think she should be listening to this, but she didn't have a choice, really. The female voice over the machine kept on discussing the details of a passionate sexual encounter she had engaged in with

her son the night before, then saying, "Call me, okay?" she rang off.

When Sophia had recovered from the graphic language the young woman had used, she decided it had to be Francine, the lawyer. She had liked the woman, but she had no idea she could be so vulgar. Anyway, the bottom line was that Drake had found someone again, and that it looked pretty promising. Now if only Johnny could find himself some nice girl.

She tried the hospital again, and was transferred to her son's room.

He answered on the second ring. "Hello?"

"John, dear, it's Mama. I'm sorry I didn't come today. I didn't feel very well this morning."

"That's okay, Mama. I understand. Don't feel you have to be here every day. I was up walking."

"So they told me. How nice, dear. A good sign. It won't be long, my darling, and you'll be up dancing around on stage again."

He laughed. "Ya. I miss it. Have you seen Drake?"

"This morning. We had breakfast together. He's gone off to the studio. I might be living in his house, but I hardly see him. He didn't come home all last night. He's seeing that Francine woman now. Nice girl."

There was a silence.

Johnny gripped the phone. That bastard. Is that why he had seen so little of him recently? Here he was in the hospital, and Drake was banging that lawyer bitch.

"Johnny, are you still there?" Mama asked.

"Yes. How do you know that Drake is seeing that

woman?" Johnny demanded.

"I just do, that's all. Now, dear, if only we could find some nice girl for you to..."

"Mama, stop it!" Johnny snapped. "I don't want some nice girl. I'm gay. I told you that before. I don't like girls...women...I like men."

Sophia's voice trembled. "You know that's a phase you're going through, and all it takes is the right girl to..."

"Mama, if it's a phase, it's the longest fucking phase in history!" He lay back on his pillows and laughed.

"No need to use foul language, dear," Mama complained. "You're just tired now. I'll see you tomorrow, okay?"

"Sure, Mama," Johnny sighed.

She hung up.

God, how he hated this bullshit. It had taken him years to tell her he was gay, and then when he finally did, she either told him it's a 'phase', or pretended not to hear him. She'd pulled that last one more than once.

Johnny stared at the receiver. Drake and his lawyer. Christ. Wasn't there anyone Drake encountered who didn't end up taking him to bed? Did he sleep with his plumber and electrician too? Maybe his family doctor also had sex with him during his annual checkup.

Damn him!

He started to put the phone back on the nightstand, but then hurled it across the room instead.

He must have closed his eyes, because a few minutes later, Janet stood in front of his bed.

"I didn't see you come in," he said. "Where's Tony?

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Did he go to the studio today?"

"No. He's going to ask Drake about going tomorrow. He's here. I just wanted a few minutes alone with you. What happened to the phone?" Her eyes went to where it lay in the corner of the room.

"Mama happened," he muttered.

"Oh. Want me to pick it up?" Janet asked him.

"No. Don't bother." He studied her for a moment. Her shoulder-length blond hair was tied back, and she was wearing jeans and a light blue sweater. Such a pretty woman.

"Jan?" he said as she came closer to his bedside.

"Ya?" she replied.

"Is Drake fucking his lawyer?" He met her eyes.

She looked a little baffled for a moment, and then licked her lips. "Francine Thomson, you mean?"

"I guess."

Janet studied his face, then let out a sigh. "Could be. I don't know. Who said he was?"

"Mama did."

"You'll have to ask Drake."

"I would, if I ever saw him."

"He's really busy now in the studio." She paused. "Johnny, I need to ask you something and I want you to be perfectly honest with me, okay?"

Johnny nodded. "Okay. What is it?"

"Mac has...well...he wants to marry me, and..." she began.

Johnny's face burst into a smile. "Janet, that's wonderful. I knew that Mac would..."

"Listen, I haven't said yes. Johnny," she came closer

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and took his hand, "we had a thing a few years back, and —"

"When we were on tour, and Angelo came with us that summer. You spent quite a while on the tour with us."

"You knew?" She gasped.

"We all knew. Mac would walk into practices singing, for Christ's sakes. We knew he was getting it somewhere," Johnny teased.

Janet blushed. "Then Drake also knew?"

"Of course."

"Why didn't he say anything?" Janet asked.

"Why would he? He was happy for you. He'll be thrilled if you marry Mac."

Janet let go of his hand and sank into the chair beside him, suddenly quiet.

Johnny studied her. He knew what she was feeling; that mixture of relief and disappointment merged together. He felt close to her. He always had. "Janet," he sighed, "I know it's hard to let go, but Drake is never going to..."

"I know that." Tears ran down her cheeks. "If I marry Mac, it will mean that it's finally over, and God...Johnny, I..." She stood up and leaned over his bed.

He held her, her cheek pressed firmly against his. "I know, I know..."

"I'll love him until I die." She straightened and walked over to the window.

"It doesn't mean you can't love Mac too, does it?" Johnny asked her from his bed.

She watched the fans in the parking lot, swaying to music. "I do love Mac, Johnny. I just can't seem to let go of the last little drop of hope inside me that he'll decide to come home after almost eighteen years. Isn't that tragic?"

"Not any more tragic than loving someone in a way you have no right to, knowing it's wrong and yet not being able to change it."

Janet sucked in a breath. It was the first time that Johnny had ever said it so directly. It was the first time he had been truly honest with her. He didn't need to say who he was talking about; they both knew. She turned from the window. "Thank you for that."

"For what? For saying what should have been said years ago? For admitting that I'm to blame for destroying your marriage to my brother?"

Janet shook her head. "It wasn't all your fault, Johnny. Drake didn't want this marriage either."

Johnny nodded. "Drake doesn't know what he wants, so he keeps running and running. Anyway, doesn't matter." He swallowed. "Marry Mac. Drake won't be upset. I know part of him will be relieved. He won't feel as guilty about things anymore."

Janet walked back over to the bed.

"He does care about you, Janet," Johnny continued speaking. "He always will. He wants you to be happy. Mac can love you the way Drake should have."

She nodded. "Thanks. I'll go and get Tony. I have an appointment at the hairdresser's this afternoon. I'll drop by later." She kissed him goodbye and left.

\* \* \* \* \* \*

Tony was surprised to see Angelo emerge from the bathroom, his hair wet from the shower, a bath towel hitched around his slim waist, when he arrived back at his aunt's house that evening.

Angelo nodded a brief hello and then disappeared into his bedroom, closing the door.

Tony walked back down the hallway and into the kitchen, where his aunt was busy cooking pasta for supper.

"Your long-lost son is home," Tony told her.

"Really? Ask him if he's staying for supper, will ya?" she threw back at him as she began taking plates down from the cupboard.

"Aunt Janet, would you mind if I went to hear him play tonight?"

"No. Did he say it was all right?"

"I haven't asked him yet," Tony replied. He went back down the hallway and knocked on the door of his cousin's bedroom.

"Come in," Angelo called back.

Tony stood just inside Angelo's room, which was a mess, clothes everywhere. Angelo, on the other hand, looked good enough to eat.

He was in the process of pulling a black belt through the loops of his jeans; they were tight and fit him like a second skin. He hadn't put on a shirt yet. His chest and back were smooth, with just the right amount of muscle tone. That long black hair of his was combed back from his face and just beginning to dry, fanning out over his broad shoulders. With his hair slicked back in that way, Tony could see the features of his face quite clearly. He had high cheekbones and a square jaw, full lips and aquiline nose and the beautiful chocolate-brown eyes of his father, fringed with long, curly black lashes. He had just enough of his mother in him to save him from being his dad's double.

Angelo was studying Tony now in return. He took out his blow dryer and plugged it in, waiting to turn it on. "What is it?" he asked, sounding a bit impatient.

"Where are you playing?"

"The Rock Mansion, downtown," he replied.

"Would it bother you if I went tonight to listen to you play?" Tony asked him. He felt nervous suddenly.

Angelo shrugged. "Be my guest," he said and turned on the blow dryer. "It's a free country."

Tony assumed that he was being dismissed. He turned to leave when he heard his cousin call out over the sound of the dryer. "I have to leave in about twenty minutes. Be ready if you're coming with me."

Tony ran downstairs and told his Aunt to put some supper aside for him. "I'll eat later. I'm going with Angelo in twenty minutes. I have to change."

Janet had no time to respond. She smiled as he flew out of the kitchen.

A few minutes later, her son walked in, wearing a red T-shirt with his extremely tight pants, and kissed her on the cheek. "Hi, Mom."

"Hi, Son." She kissed him back. "Don't you ever eat?"

"I'll grab something."

"How's the recording coming?" Janet sat down at the kitchen counter. She had put the pasta on hold for the time being.

Angelo sighed. "Dad's such an ass sometimes. I mean, he makes us go over and over things, and we don't have the time. We've got to be finished by the end of the week, but at the rate we're going...I don't know."

"Your dad is a perfectionist, Angelo, and he is a professional. Put a little trust in him. The Russo Brothers aren't where they are for nothing. They've been on top a hell of a long time. Don't you think your father has something to do with that?"

"Of course he does," Angelo sighed. "I'm just sick of going over the same stuff and then working at night. I think I'm beat." Angelo placed his head down on the counter.

Janet reached over and stroked his silky dark head. "Poor baby. Did you tell your dad?"

"Of course," Angelo lifted his head. "He's pleased, thinks I'm learning some great valuable lesson about hard work."

She tried not to laugh. "The recording will be over soon, and then you'll just have your own music to worry about."

"Thank God."

"I picked up some papers on U.C.L.A. last week. I put them on your bed. They have a good music program there. Maybe..."

"Mom," he sighed and stood up. "I'm not going to U.C.L.A. Dad never went to music school, and look at

him."

"I know, but..."

Tony walked into the kitchen at that minute with a new pair of black jeans on, and a dressy red shirt.

Angelo ran his gaze over him. "Wow! Where are you going, to see the Queen?"

Tony blushed. "No. I just thought that...what is this place like, anyway? Am I overdressed?"

"It's a sleazy gay bar," Angelo replied with a casual laugh. "Still want to come?"

A look of concern crossed Janet's face. "A...gay bar? Maybe Tony isn't quite prepared for—"

"Ya, I do." Tony cut her off. "Don't worry, Aunt Janet, I'll be fine."

"Ya, they'll only eat you up in there, kid." He grinned.

Janet hit her son in the arm. "Stop that. You look out for him, Angelo," she insisted.

Tony blushed. "I don't need him to babysit for me."

Angelo laughed outright. "Come on. I'm taking my bike. I have an extra helmet in the garage. Bye, Mom." He headed out the door.

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Tony followed on his heels, taking the helmet from him. He got on the back of the bike and placed his hands on either side of the seat.

Angelo pressed the remote garage door opener and started the engine. He looked back at Tony as he put on his helmet. "You better put your arms around me. You'll fall off that way."

Tony nodded and timidly placed his arms around his cousin's slim waist. He moved up closer to him, his body pressed against his. He sucked in a breath as the bike took off.

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Janet watched them from the window, a little concerned. She knew that Angelo was responsible enough not to let anything happen to his cousin, but she had a feeling that her nephew had never been to a gay bar before. She hoped that everything went all right.

\* \* \* \* \* \*

It was almost eight o'clock at night when Drake and Francine came off the elevator at the hospital. He had taken her for dinner, and they were on the way back to her condo when he said he'd like to stop and see his brother for a few minutes.

"I haven't been in a few days," he told her as she went to take a seat in the waiting area. "I won't be long."

She watched him walk down the hallway, his long legs covering the distance quickly. She had been a little disappointed when he said he wanted to stop at the hospital. She had been hoping that he was just as anxious as she was to be alone with her. All through dinner, she kept thinking that if they hadn't been in a restaurant, she would have ripped off his clothes and eaten him instead. Now she was sitting in a hospital

waiting room, horny as hell.

She knew she was being selfish. After all, Johnny was his brother, and he had gone through a lot. Drake had told her that the recording was taking a lot of his time and that he had not seen Johnny in a few days. But why now, when she wanted him so much?

Damn, hurry up, she thought.

Drake stood looking down at Johnny for a few minutes. He was asleep. He didn't want to wake him. The large bandage he usually wore had been exchanged for a smaller one, and some of his hair was growing in.

What a beautiful face he had, the face of an angel. A face that hadn't changed much since when he was a boy. "I love you," he whispered, leaning over and running his fingers along his cheek.

Johnny opened his eyes. "Drake?" "Hey," Drake said softly. "How ya doing?"

Johnny took him in, the long black hair, the beautiful dark eyes. He was wearing a pair of black leather pants and a silk shirt with little guitars on it. He had bought that for him in Brussels two years ago. It was a beautiful shade of plum with silver threads running through it, and had cost a small fortune. It looked wonderful on Drake. It hung just right across his square shoulders and broad chest. He had it tucked in, and it billowed out at his slender waist.

"Where have you been?" Johnny demanded. "Why do you torture me like that? I think you enjoy it

sometimes."

Drake sighed and stood up straight. "What's all this? You know I'm busy in the studio. I thought you'd be happy to see me. What are you giving me shit for?"

"Are you fucking your lawyer?" Johnny asked him, his voice sounding strangled.

"What?" Drake's dark eyes widened.

"You heard me. Mama told me. Is it serious?"

Drake shook his head. "Johnny...listen to me...you have to stop this. Francine and I...well...it's just sex, you know. It's nothing serious. She's nice and she likes me, that's all. Now why don't you just..."

"You couldn't even wait until I got out of the goddamned hospital!" Johnny turned his face away.

Drake's eyes were filled with rage now. "Ya, and how many lovers have you thrown in my face, Johnny? The night of Mac's birthday, who in hell were those guys that came with you...friends...pen pals...who?"

Johnny's eyes filled with tears. He turned his head and looked at him. "I had to get your attention somehow. It's the only way I knew you still cared. You don't want her...you want me. Why don't you stop hurting me, and hurting yourself and..."

"I've got to go," Drake said hastily, turning away from him.

"That's it, run away. You've always been so good at that, Drake!" Johnny was crying now. "Are we going to keep doing this until one of us goes mad?"

Drake stopped at the door. He didn't turn around. He couldn't look at him. "I'm sorry if I hurt you. I don't

mean to but...this has never made sense, Johnny. Please, stop this."

"How can I stop loving you? Tell me how and I'll be glad to do it. I had that dream again..."

Drake turned around now and looked at him. "What dream?"

Johnny was wiping his eyes. "About our sons."

"Oh, for Christ's sake," Drake snapped. "Tony and Angelo will never be as stupid as we are."

"They're only cousins, not brothers. Tony is attracted to him. In fact, he's really attracted to you."

Drake swallowed. He knew this already from the night of Frank's party, but he didn't think Johnny knew. "Why do you say this?"

"Because he told me he thinks you're just about the sexiest man alive. He's got stardust in his eyes."

"It will pass. It's a crush."

"Maybe, but he told me that in a year or so your son is going to be...I think he said 'torture to look at', meaning he finds him attractive. Tony is innocent. That innocence would appeal to someone like Angelo. What if circumstances lead them into each other's arms? What then?"

"It won't happen. I'll talk to Angelo, if you like."

"And tell him what? Will you forbid it? That will make it worse."

Drake sighed. "I don't know what I'll do. Forget it, Johnny, okay? You worry too much. I've got to go. See ya soon."

Johnny called to him, but the door swung closed. He was gone.

\* \* \* \* \* \*

Tony was dizzy when he stepped off Drake's bike. Wow. That was a ride. His cousin handled his bike with expert ease, but he drove fast and took corners sharp. Tony's stomach was rocking and rolling as he followed Angelo through the parking lot.

"Are you all right?" Angelo laughed. "You look kind of green."

"Oh...I'm fine," Tony replied, his voice a little high.

Angelo laughed again, heading for the back door in the alley.

Tony could hear the rock music blaring out of the speakers inside and stopped.

Angelo turned around and looked at him. "What's wrong?"

"It's just that...I've never been to a...bar like this...a gay bar. I'm a little nervous, that's all," Tony looked around him.

Angelo stifled an urge to moan. His first reaction was impatience, but he forced himself to be understanding. "Look, if you don't like it, I'll take you home during intermission, okay? This bar is pretty tame, really. I mean, it's a gay bar, but anyone is welcome, so you get straight people as well. There's no leather or open sex or anything like that, although it is a cruising bar. You will see men kissing and dancing together, some women too. Guys will come on to you and ask you to dance. Just say no if you don't want to. I know the bouncer. His name is Sam. I'll ask him to keep

an eye on you, okay? I'll introduce you to him. If there's any trouble, he'll take care of it."

Tony nodded. "Okay, let's go inside before I change my mind."

It was still early. The place was only a little over half full. Drake took his cousin to a table up front and told him to sit down. There was a huge stage directly in front of him equipped with a set of drums, keyboards and a lot of speakers and cords. On the left-hand side of the room was a dance floor; on the right was a bar. The centre of the room was filled with wood tables and chairs.

Angelo left him and then returned. With him was a huge black man wearing a pair of overalls, who took Tony's hand and grinned at him. He had to be six foot six and weigh at least three hundred pounds.

"Hello there, sweetheart." The man engulfed one of Tony's hands in his. He had a soft voice that Tony couldn't believe was coming out of this huge man. "Don't you worry, you'll be quite safe under Sam's watchful eye." He winked.

Tony blushed and thanked him as he walked away.

The waiter came over, a good-looking guy in black pants and a white shirt.

Tony ordered a beer.

The place started filling up. It was almost eight. People were already dancing to the music coming from the sound system. Tony drank another beer.

Finally he saw Angelo walk out on stage carrying his guitar. There were cheers and whistles. Two other guys walked out on stage with him, a short black guy who sat behind the drums and a tall California beach boy type who moved in behind the keyboards. His cousin plugged in his guitar and adjusted his microphone.

Finally, he said, "Hey everybody, welcome. Tonight, we're going to rock and roll!" He struck a chord on his guitar, and the music filled the bar.

They did songs from all the top bands. They were good, real good. Angelo knew just how to move, just how to excite the crowd. He played brilliantly, and his voice had incredible range, just like his father's. He could go from a deep baritone to a higher pitched raspy sound that was sexy as hell.

Tony was mesmerized by him. He was far too good for this club. Tony kept waiting to hear something from the Russo Brothers Band, but Angelo sang everything except compositions from his own family. The set ended. The three guys walked offstage. Ironically, Drake Russo's voice started singing 'Wasted Moonlight' over the loudspeaker.

Suddenly, Tony realized that he was no longer sitting alone. There were two men sitting on each side of him.

One of them leaned in and whispered in his ear, "My friend and I think you look like the rock star Johnny Russo. We'd like to live out a fantasy with you. How 'bout it?"

Tony went rigid.

The guy on the other side placed a hand on his thigh. Tony tried to stand up, but they held him in his seat.

"Don't run away, baby," the other guy said. "I can show you a real good time."

Tony was about to protest when he felt the guy's tongue in his ear.

The other guy placed his hand between his legs. "Nice."

He didn't even see Angelo approach. All he knew was the guys' hands came away quickly as Angelo yanked one of them up by the arm.

"Is this your action, baby?" The guy on the other side asked.

"Ya, it's my action, so back off."

The guy placed his hands up defensively, and then ran his gaze over Angelo. "You're hot. How 'bout we have a little foursome?"

"Ya," the other guy added. "I could really tune your clock."

Angelo laughed. "You couldn't even find my clock," he muttered. "Get out of here."

The guys wandered off.

Angelo looked at Tony, and discovered that he was laughing. "What's so funny?"

"You couldn't even find my clock?" Tony howled.

"Okay, okay, but what he said didn't make much sense either." Angelo took a chair beside him.

Tony nodded. "I got his drift."

Angelo grinned. "Are you enjoying yourself?"

"You're too good to be playing here," Tony said.

"Thanks."

"Why don't you play some Russo Brothers? People here would like it."

"I know, but Dad wants me to do things on my own, fine. I'm not playing his music either."

Tony noticed the determination in his eyes, and he had to respect that. "Okay. Angelo, I want to apologize for saying what I did at Frank's party about our fathers. It was a little off the wall, and..."

Angelo sighed. "Stop saying things and then apologizing for it. Either say it or don't."

"Okay. I won't say it. I..."

Angelo met his eyes. "Even if it is the truth."

Tony felt as if he had hit him in the stomach. "Are you sure?"

Angelo nodded. "Let's leave it alone now, okay?"

"But how can you...how can you just..." Tony felt short of breath. "I think I need air. I've got to go outside." He got up and stumbled across the room.

After a few minutes, Angelo followed him. He found him in the alley, quietly staring up at the sky.

"Are you all right?" Angelo asked him.

"How could it be? They're brothers," Tony almost pleaded.

"I don't know. It's been going on a long time, Tony. I think they actually made love once or twice...I don't know, but it's not a constant thing. I think they've just always been in love with one another."

"But they're brothers!" Tony protested again.

"Stop saying that!" Angelo replied angrily. "I know that. I can't explain it. Just drop it."

"I can't just drop it. It's not natural...it's...it's incest," Tony objected. "You've always known this?"

"No, not always. I think I figured it out in my teens. There was a lot of jealousy between them. Whenever one of them was involved with someone, the other would be jealous, angry. They touched a lot. Like one time, I walked backstage and found your dad rubbing my dad's back. Dad was lying on the sofa with his shirt off and Uncle Johnny had straddled him. He was massaging him in a way that...well, it wasn't a brotherly kind of massage. It was very erotic, sensual and eventually I figured out that they were deeply attracted to each other in a sexual way."

"Did you ever talk to your dad about it?" Tony asked.

"When he was stoned once I did, but he never really told me much, except once he said the Russo family was cursed."

"Cursed?"

"Ya. I assume he was referring to his feelings for Uncle Johnny. I don't know. I try not to think about it."

"Do you think...that a...a curse can carry over to the...the next generation?" Tony asked, not looking at him.

"What? I don't know. I don't believe in curses, for Christ's sake. Look, I have to go back inside. I have another set to do."

Tony reached out and grabbed his arm.

Angelo met his eyes.

"If I asked you to be my first lover, what would you say?"

Angelo blinked at him, and then he actually laughed. "I'd say you'd had too much beer."

"No. The beer may have given me the guts to ask you, but it's something I've been thinking about for a

while. There will be no strings attached." Tony released his arm.

"Why me?"

"I think I'd be more relaxed, less shy. It's safer than going out and doing it with a stranger. I know you'd be gentle. You wouldn't hurt me."

Angelo softened. He reached over and touched his cheek. "Tony, that's sweet, but your first time shouldn't be so calculated and...it should be exciting, and with someone who really turns you on. Someone you really feel romantic about."

"Like your dad," he said softly, not realizing what he had said until the words came out of his mouth.

Angelo's mouth hardened. "Right, like my dad. Why don't you ask him to break you in?" He walked back inside the bar.

What was wrong with him? Did everything he said have to come out like that? He closed his eyes. His father and his uncle were passionately in love with each other, and he had romantic notions about his own uncle. Was it a family curse, as Drake had told his son? It certainly seemed like it.

He went back inside and ordered another beer. He enjoyed the music, and his cousin began to look more and more sexually alluring as the evening wore on. By midnight, he had taken off the T-shirt and moved down closer to the crowd. Some of the spectators even reached over and touched him, or wiped some of the sweat off his chest.

Tony got up to dance with several guys. The bouncer called Sam was watching more closely now, and Tony

was feeling great. He was probably the only virgin in the whole bar, and yet he was alive with sexual tension. He was surrounded by good-looking men in various stages of dress, and the best looking man in the place was the one who would take him home tonight.

When the set ended, he was talking to several guys at the bar. The beer was going down easy now, and he found that he could flirt with these guys without any hesitation.

When he felt Angelo step up behind him and place an arm around his shoulders, he looked up at him and then back at the three guys at the bar. "How would you like to take this one home tonight?" he slurred, pressing himself back against his cousin's hard chest.

"We should all be so lucky," one of the men said, reaching over and taking some of Angelo's hair between his fingers.

Angelo gave the man a stony stare. He let go and backed away.

"Well, coming?" Angelo said. "We're out of here." Angelo took Tony's arm and pulled him across the room.

"Tonight, he's all mine," Tony shouted to the three men at the bar over Angelo's shoulder. "He'll be in my bed all night long."

"Oh, come on, for Christ's sake." Angelo clicked his tongue in irritation, dragging him outside. "Was that really necessary?"

"No," he giggled, "but it was fun. Did you see them eating their hearts out?"

"Ya, ya. You're ripped," Angelo sighed. "I don't

even know if you're going to be able to ride on the back of my bike."

"I'd rather ride you," Tony moaned, moving him up against the wall in the alley. He pinned him there for a minute, running his hand over his thigh.

Angelo looked down at him. "Tony, back off. I'm telling you. I'm not going to be your teacher. I don't want any part of your little games."

Tony reached up and ran his hands over his hair. "I want you. You're goddamned beautiful, and you know just what to do in bed, don't you?"

Angelo pushed him away. "How in the hell would you know? Let's go home, Tony. Get on the back of the bike and hold on. I'll drive slowly."

Tony wrapped his arms around his cousin. He laid his head on his back as Angelo started the engine. Within seconds, his hands moved down to his thighs and then deeper, to his inner thighs.

Angelo swore at him and took a hand off the handlebars. He tore one hand away from his crotch and moved it upward. "Stop it!" He barked.

A few seconds later, Tony was fumbling with the zipper on his pants.

Angelo yelled at him to stop it again. They were in the middle of traffic. "Christ, do you want to have an accident?"

"No one can see," Tony told him. He had managed to slide his hand inside Angelo's jeans and was caressing him. There was no way that Angelo could take his hands away from the handlebars long enough to take Tony's hand out of his jeans, and there was

nowhere to pull off right now. He was in the middle lane of the expressway.

Angelo closed his eyes for a second as Tony fondled him. He opened them just in time to realize that he was about to crash into a vehicle in front of him. He swore. His cock was throbbing. He couldn't believe this was happening. It was true that he had had some pretty wild sexual experiences, especially when he was Europe, but this was suicidal. He moaned a little as Tony kept stroking him.

Tony was whispering in his ear. "God, you're really hung. It's so big. God, I want you. I want you right now, here, in all this traffic."

Angelo squirmed a little on the seat. His pulse was racing, and he struggled to keep his mind on the road. His eyes kept wanting to close. He licked his lips. His mouth felt dry. The tension was building, blood filling his organ. He was totally erect. He swore again.

Tony laughed from behind him.

Angelo turned off the freeway and took the road that would lead them home. As soon as they hit a dark neighbourhood street, Angelo stopped his bike.

He turned around to scream at him but as soon as he opened his mouth, Tony pulled him forward and pressed his lips on his. He was kissing him as if he was drowning, and only his kisses could save him. Finally his hand slipped out of Angelo's jeans and he pulled his body around to his.

Angelo finally managed to pull away. "What in hell is wrong with you? You almost got us killed back there! You're plastered. I should kick the shit out of you!"

Tony smiled at him. "Take me home. Take me to bed. I'm tired of being a virgin. I want to be like everyone else. If you don't do it, I swear I'll go out tonight and find the first presentable-looking stranger. God, you're hung," he moaned, his hand sliding down Angelo's thigh. "You're gorgeous, too."

Angelo rolled his eyes. "You're so full of shit. You're drunk out of your mind. Just keep your hands to yourself until we get home, okay?"

"Does that mean you'll do it?" Tony asked him, running his hands over his shoulders. "Does that mean I can put my hands where I want to when we get home?"

"I'll consider it," he muttered. "Let's go home." He started up the engine and headed up the street. He was so worked up now, anything or anyone would have done. He needed time to cool off and think straight. He'd take the long way home, and then talk Tony out of it later. Maybe he'd pass out.

Let's hope so.

Tony was walking on his own when they went into the house. His mother's car was gone. Where in hell was she? Angelo was hoping she'd be home to put Tony to bed.

As soon as they got in the door, Tony was all over him, but Angelo knew he could handle him. He was bigger than he was. He took him around the waist and forced him down the hallway to his room.

"I want to go to your room," Tony mumbled, trying to turn around to pull him into his embrace.

Angelo forced him down on the bed and pinned his

arms there for a minute. "Now, you listen. You're drunk. Even if I was to consider your offer, I'd want you to be sober. Now, go to sleep."

"You don't like me? I don't turn you on? I'm not your type?" Tony whined drunkenly.

"Oh, you're my type, all right." Angelo smiled at him. "You'd be anyone's type. You're young, innocent, sweet and you're unbelievably willing, but I don't take advantage of young virginal boys when they're drunk."

"I'm not jailbait. I'm legal."

"I know that, Tony, but I said no."

"But I won't have the guts when I'm sober, and my whole body is on fire for you right now." His eyes were pleading.

"My body is on fire, too," he whispered softly. He closed his eyes. "Another time."

He did try to break away. He let go of Tony's arms, only to be pulled down into them.

"I'm not that drunk, Angelo. I really want you. Help me. I'm scared of doing this with a stranger, and I'm afraid I'll become a dried-up old virginal man sitting in my rocking chair, dreaming about sex."

Angelo laughed outright. "I don't think there is much chance of that," he said, settling down into his arms and lying with him. He let Tony reach over and kiss his mouth gently. He closed his eyes.

Tony let his hands wander over the length of his body. "Can I take off your clothes?" he breathed.

"If you ask me real nice."

Tony sat up and pulled off his own clothes. Then he reached over with trembling fingers and began to

remove Angelo's.

It was going to happen, finally, and with a beautiful man, a man more beautiful than his fantasy could have imagined. On top of that, that man was the son of *the* Drake Russo. It seemed unbelievable, as if he had been given a gift suddenly from heaven.

\* \* \* \* \* \*

Angelo felt Tony move his hands over his naked body, exploring it completely. He slowly circled both his nipples with his fingers, then bent his head forward to lap at them with his tongue. "Um, they get so hard," he said softly.

Angelo's flesh was coming alive, his cock lifting up onto his belly, his nuts tightening like a vise. He tried to be patient, exercise restraint, let Tony do what he wanted to do.

He was kissing him suddenly, moving his lips down his belly to his cock. "I want to suck it, take it into my mouth," Tony said softly.

"Then do it," Angelo hissed softly. "Suck it."

When Tony's lips folded around his cock, Angelo felt the scrape of teeth. "Ouch," he said, "pull your lips over your teeth."

"Sorry," he mumbled.

"Tighten your lips around it, grab the base, and move your tongue around...ahhh...yes..." he grunted, "like that. Go on, that's it."

As Tony sucked, Angelo reached down and took his

erection into his hand. Tony moaned as soon as he touched him. Angelo placed a hand on Tony's head and urged him off his cock. "I'm going to cum. Stop for now."

Angelo moved over on top of him and began to kiss him softly on the mouth, then the throat, then to his nipples, reaching a hand down between his legs to massage his balls, then his cock. Tony was easily excited, and had come already.

"I'm sorry," he said, "I'm sorry."

Angelo laughed softly. "It's okay. It comes with practise." He moved his mouth down to Tony's sex now and began to run his tongue along it, paying careful attention to the head.

"Angelo, Jesus," Tony cried out.

Angelo chuckled, reaching over to his nightstand and pulling out some lubricant. "Roll over."

"What...are you...ah...going to do?" Tony stammered.

"Don't worry. I'm not going to fuck you. I'm just going to..."

Tony grabbed his hand. "I want you to...to fuck me. Please."

"No," Angelo said. "Turn over."

Tony turned onto his stomach.

Gently Angelo inserted a lubed finger up into his anus. He massaged slowly, causing Tony to cry out, his entire body beginning to shake. Then Angelo inserted two, pushing until the inner roll of muscles gave way and released. He reached the prostate, and pressed.

Tony brought his hips upwards and moaned.

"You're going to take to this like a duck to water," Angelo teased.

Three fingers, and then he began to move them in and out as if they were a cock.

Tony cried out, his breathing coming in gasps. "Fuck me. Put your cock there now. Angelo, please." Tony reached around and grabbed his cock, which was hard as rock. "Come on, baby, please. I'm ready." Tony turned around as soon as Angelo withdrew his fingers from inside of him.

He reached up and pulled Angelo down to him. He began kissing him passionately, running his hands over him, then he lifted his legs. "Put them up over your shoulders. I want to see your eyes when you put it in," Tony told him.

Angelo ran his hands down his legs, then lifted them. "Are you sure?"

"Umm, yes. Go."

Angelo entered him slowly. He knew it was going to hurt like hell.

Tony let out a cry, then a moan as Angelo went deeper. He cried out, "Yes, yes, go, fuck me. God, you feel good. Harder."

Angelo lost control then.

When Tony came, which was shortly after him, he shouted. He held onto him, and at one point, Angelo thought he actually bit him. He was lost inside his mouth and his hands and his touch.

When they finally broke apart, Angelo was trembling inside. To be his first was a great responsibility. He had never taken someone's innocence

in that way. Oral sex was one thing, but intercourse was quite another.

"It's what I've feared most and wanted most," Tony told him.

Angelo kissed him on the forehead.

"It was beautiful. Thank you." Tony's arms slipped around his waist. He was touching him again.

Angelo closed his eyes.

"Please," Tony said. He turned him around and pulled him on top of him. He was kissing him again, running his hands down over his back.

All Angelo's resolve was melting away.

"Please, take me again," Tony moaned against his mouth. "It's only you I want."

\* \* \* \* \* \*

"What's wrong, Drake?" Francine asked him the next morning.

He had made love to her last night as if he were distracted by something. Maybe it was over already.

He was up, dressed and standing out on the balcony of her condo.

She wrapped her housecoat around her and came to stand beside him, then put her arms around him.

He didn't answer. Instead he turned around and kissed her on the forehead. He hated it when Johnny acted like that. Why did Mama have to say anything, anyway? He felt weary. Now that Johnny was getting better, he was beginning to feel like he had before the shooting.

"Ever consider ending it all?" he said, turning to look out over the ocean now.

"What?" she asked, shocked. "Do you feel like that?" He nodded. "Often."

"God, why?"

"Because I have this pain that will never go away until I die. There's nothing I can do about it."

"Would you actually do it?" she breathed.

"Only if my pain grew more unbearable than the thought of what my death would do to him. Do you understand?"

"I don't think so. You mean you couldn't kill yourself because it would hurt...him...too much? Who is 'him'?"

"The man I love."

"Oh." She felt as if someone had let the air out of her. She knew he had bisexual tendencies, had slept with both women and men, but he had never told her that he was in love with a man before. "If you love him so much," she said bitterly, "why aren't you with him? Does he not feel the same?"

He turned around and shook his head. "It's complicated...very complicated."

"Are you breaking up with me?" Francine moaned.

"I told you...warned you not to get involved, didn't I?" Drake sighed. "I bring pain to everyone I touch. I'm cursed."

"What in hell are you talking about?" Francine's face was wet with tears. "I didn't ask for marriage. We've made love twice. Did I do something wrong?"

Drake shook his dark head. "No. I just think that I should get out before you become too involved, and..."

"How generous of you!" she spat, walking back inside.

Drake closed his eyes. How could he make her understand that he cared, but he could never love her? She felt too much. He knew that last night as soon as he held her in his arms. It wasn't just sex for her. She had that look in her eyes. He felt her tremble as soon as he touched her. He knew he was doing her a favour by getting out now.

He walked inside. He glanced at her, sitting stonefaced on the sofa. "Goodbye, Francine." He went to the door.

Suddenly, she was there, on her knees, begging, pleading for him not to go.

He felt sick to his stomach, weak in the knees. *Please, don't do this to me*. Tears were in his eyes. He couldn't bear to see the pain he caused. He picked her up and held her. "Francine," he whispered, "I'm so sorry, forgive me...forgive me." He broke away from her, fumbled to undo the lock and literally ran down the stairs. He drove away, pulled the car over and then sobbed quietly for a few minutes. "Johnny, Johnny...if only I could end this misery. If only I could drive this car off a cliff and finish it right now, but I know if I ended my life, I'd also end yours.

He wiped his eyes and headed for the studio. They had to finish recording that CD today.

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When he arrived, his son was already there, sitting alone in the studio at eight o'clock in the morning.

"What are you doing here at this time?" Drake asked as he walked in.

"Couldn't sleep."

"Ah. I thought Tony was coming along today?"

"He's still sleeping. I left a message for uncle Pepi to pick him up later." He avoided his father's eyes.

"Is everything all right?" Drake asked.

"Why wouldn't it be? I'm tired, that's all."

"How's it going with that band you're playing with?"

"Great. I hear Uncle Johnny is walking," Angelo said.

"Yeah. I can't wait for him to get back to work," Drake said. "I need caffeine. Want some coffee?"

"Okay, thanks." Angelo nodded, looking over some sheet music.

Drake walked down the hallway toward Kathy Young's desk. She was the main receptionist. She came on to him heavy duty at a Christmas party a few years back. She was married now to one of the studio musicians.

"Hello, Drake," she said with a smile. "You're here early today. How's Johnny?"

"Better," Drake said, pouring two cups of coffee. "Is Frank around?"

"Not until this afternoon."

"Tell him I need to speak to him before he takes off."

"Sure, hon." She smiled.

Drake smiled back, then ran into Mac, walking down the hallway toward him.

"Hey, buddy," Drake said. "Want some coffee?"

"I need to talk to you. I tried yesterday, but you were being such an asshole about the music..." he trailed off. Drake could see he had something serious on his mind.

"Okay. Sorry about yesterday. You know how I get."

"I know and we love you for it—usually—but okay, here it is. I'm going to come right out and say it. I want to marry Janet and I think she might agree, but she really needs you to approve." Mac took a breath.

Drake almost dropped the coffee. "Let me give Angelo his coffee, okay and...eh...well...talk." Drake walked back into the studio to see that Pepi and Tony had arrived. Tony was sitting up in the sound booth. He smiled and waved down at him.

Drake handed his son his coffee, waving back. "I'm just going to talk to Mac a few minutes and then we'll get going."

"No hurry," Pepi sang. "I can live without your father's bitching for another few minutes, can't you, Angelo?"

Angelo laughed. His father made a face at his youngest brother and then followed Mac out into the hallway.

Right away, Drake said, "You never needed my permission to be with Janet. What is all this?"

"I loved her even when you married her, did you know that?" Mac asked. He looked down at his shoes.

Drake went white. "No. I didn't. But there is no reason why..."

"Janet still thinks you wouldn't approve of..."

"Mac, I would be thrilled if you married Janet. I wouldn't have any hard feelings about that. I love you and I love her. I would never stand between you. You are my dearest friends. Janet is the mother of my child. I want only the greatest happiness for both of you. I'll talk to Janet, I promise."

Mac nodded in thanks. "But what about you, buddy? When can I expect to see you happy?"

Drake lifted his shoulders slightly. "That remains to be seen."

They walked down the hallway together, back toward the studio. Mac placed a hand on his shoulder. On the wall hung several pictures of them, going back several years. They were all smiling. Johnny always stood to his right, Pepi to his left, Mac at his shoulder. No one questioned what lay beyond the smiles.

The recording went well that day. Drake did little yelling, and everyone was in a pretty good humour. They took a break at lunch and ordered in pizza. Tony came down from the sound booth and joined them.

Angelo left the room when Tony entered it and although few people noticed, Drake did. He narrowed his eyes as Tony came over to stand beside him.

His nephew smiled at him. "You guys were great. It's going to be a good CD."

"I think so. Thanks. Glad you enjoyed it. What's with you and Angelo anyway?" Drake asked.

"Me and Angelo? Nothing, why? Are you jealous?" Tony grinned flirtatiously and picked up a piece of pizza. He took a bite. "Um...this is good." He lifted it,

insisting that Drake take a bite out of it.

Drake was feeling very uncomfortable. He tried to put him off, but he insisted. Pepi and Mac were looking at them, so Drake took a bite of the pizza anyway and muttered that it was good.

"You know," Tony said, "I think I'd like to come and spend the weekend with you, Uncle Drake. We haven't had much time together. We could take a swim in that indoor pool of yours. It's heated, isn't it? I didn't bring any trunks, but if it's only going to be the two of us..." He trailed off, giving him a slow smile.

Drake cleared his throat. Wow. He was coming on heavy duty. Where in hell was this coming from? "Your grandmother is there at the house right now, Tony. We'll do it sometime later on, okay?"

"Grandmother does go to bed sometime, doesn't she?" Tony nudged him. "This weekend is good."

"Well...I...I'll have to let you know," Drake said, turning around to engage Pepi in conversation.

Tony finished the pizza, gave his uncle an appreciative look and then walked out into the hallway.

Angelo was sitting on a bench at the end of the corridor drinking a Coke.

Tony walked over to him, sliding his knees in between his open thighs.

Angelo gave him a shove backward. "What in hell is wrong with you? Someone could see us."

"I don't care who sees," Tony smiled down at him. He went to caress his hair. "This is L.A."

Angelo pushed his hand away.

"You didn't have to get so angry this morning, and

you didn't have to take off so early," Tony sat down beside him.

Angelo took another sip of his Coke. He said nothing.

"You were wonderful last night. I really mean that," Tony said softly, next to his ear. "What else do you want to hear?"

"Look," Angelo stood up. "You got what you wanted from me last night. You begged me to take your innocence, and I did. You're not a virgin anymore, so there's no more mystery. Now you can go ahead and screw the whole city of Los Angeles if that's what you want. Just leave me out of it, okay?"

"I can't believe it. You're jealous," Tony accused him. "It was only supposed to be sex, that's all. I thought you were mature enough to handle it."

"Mature enough to handle it?" Angelo retorted. "You're calling me immature? Do you remember what it was you asked me this morning?"

"Yes, I do. I remember quite clearly. I asked if you'd mind sleeping with me a few more times just to give me some experience. I thought you would jump at the chance. You had a good time last night, didn't you?"

Angelo sighed, ignoring his question. "You don't ask a guy to practise with you so that you can be good enough to sleep with someone else! It's damn insulting."

"What's insulting about it?" Tony demanded. "You happen to be a good teacher. That's not an insult, that's a compliment."

"Well, in that case, maybe you should practise with

someone else until you become good enough to sleep with me."

"Don't be cocky!" Tony sneered.

"It's not my job to make you a pro so you can have sex with my father, for Christ's sake!"

"I never asked you to do that!" Tony protested.

"That's your intention."

"You don't know that, and what makes you think you could make me a pro anyway? I might have said you were a good teacher, I never said you were a pro."

"How the hell would you know? You have nothing to compare me to."

"I will soon," Tony jeered.

"Anyway, fuck you!" Angelo met his eyes. "We both know what you meant this morning. So get away from me before I watch you fly across this room." Angelo brushed by Tony and headed back into the studio.

Drake noticed how angry his son was when he came back in the room. Something had happened. Something had drastically changed. It frightened him.

Johnny's dream came to his mind, but he pushed that away. No. He was imagining things. But one thing he hadn't imagined; L.A. had certainly had an effect on his nephew, and he wasn't so sure that it was a positive one.

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A few weeks went by. Angelo had the house pretty well to himself. His mom spent a lot of her time at Mac's. Dad had been by last week to talk to her about everything. It looked like Mom and Mac were going to be an item. There was even talk of marriage.

Tony had spent some time at his father's. When he wasn't there, he was running around in bars. Angelo had said little to him since that night. He knew he was sleeping around, partying every night and with his Mom staying at Mac's, Tony was pretty much doing what he pleased. Well, why not? He was of age. It was his business.

The whole situation with Tony distressed him, but he was pleased about his mother's relationship with Mac. He raised a glass to them down at *The Rock Mansion*. His Uncle Pepi had come down to listen to him play that night and he had a drink with his nephew in between sets.

Angelo had quite a bit to drink that night.

"Hey, why don't you slow down, boy," his uncle said. "You have another set to do."

"Ah, come on, Uncle Pep. We have a lot to celebrate. The CD is done, the doctors say that Uncle Johnny will be able to go home maybe even in time for Christmas, which is only a week away. Mom and Mac are getting married in the summer maybe. Tony is fucking my father. Hey...eat, drink and be merry, tomorrow you die!" He laughed and threw the liquor to the back of his throat.

"Angelo, what in hell...Tony is not sleeping with Drake."

"Well, he wants to, and if he isn't, it's only just a matter of time. If he's not sleeping with Dad, then Dad's the only man in L.A. he's not sleeping with!"

"What's happening with Tony?" Pepi asked. "Do you want me to talk to him?"

Angelo laughed. "I happened to him. He asked me for something and I foolishly gave it to him. It's like a drug. I gave him a taste, and now he's an addict."

"Sex?" Pepi asked. He drained his glass now. "Did you have sex with Tony?"

"It doesn't matter. It was a mistake. I knew it at the time. I regret it now. I'm so stupid, and you know what's worse?"

Pepi shook his head.

"He used me to prepare him to sleep with my dad. He didn't want Dad to take his innocence. He wanted to be some experienced young stud for Dad and an ignorant little piece of shit for me." He drained his glass and checked his watch. "Anyway, forget it. I got to go do the second set. Anything you want to hear?"

"Yeah," Pepi laughed, "Play 'Pissed off and Frustrated' by the Angelos."

"Very funny," Angelo replied dryly and disappeared backstage.

A few minutes later, the three guys that made up Company Angelo came out and started playing.

Angelo began with a song called 'Leader of the Band', which they did an excellent job of.

Before the song was over, Pepi felt someone tap him on the shoulder. He turned around.

It was Tony. "Hi, Uncle Pepi."

"Tony? Hello," Pepi said.

He wasn't alone. There were two guys with him.

"This is Frank and this is Luke, two friends of mine.

Guys, this is THE Pepi Russo."

Frank and Luke were thrilled to meet him. Pepi invited them to sit down. What more could he do?

Angelo noticed the appearance of Tony and his two friends immediately, but he was too much of a professional to be thrown by it.

"We tried to get here for the second set. Did we miss much?" Tony asked his young uncle, ordering beer for everyone, including Pepi.

"No. They just started," Pepi replied, thanking Tony for the beer.

"That's my cousin up there," Tony told the two guys.

"He's Drake Russo's son, isn't he?" The one called Luke asked.

"Ya," Tony nodded.

"He looks just like him," Frank interjected. "What a babe!"

Tony leaned over and said something that Pepi couldn't hear in his ear. Frank laughed and then transferred it to Luke. They both looked at Angelo now with what Pepi interpreted as naked lust.

Pepi moved his chair closer to his nephew as Angelo began to do 'Satisfaction'. Frank and Luke insisted on getting up to dance. Tony was about to join them when Pepi placed a restraining hand on his nephew's arm. "Can we talk a minute?"

"I'll be right along," Tony told his friends as they left the table.

"What is it?" Tony's eyes strayed to the stage as Angelo moved into the chorus of the popular Stones tune. "He's good tonight, isn't he?"

Pepi nodded. "Ya. He's good every night. He's got it, hasn't he?"

Tony raised an eyebrow. "What is this about?"

"What are you doing here with those guys?" Pepi asked.

"I came to see Angelo play, and my friends also wanted to see him. What's the problem?" Tony took a swig of his beer.

Pepi sighed. He had seen this all before. He felt like he was having déjà vú. This was something his father would have done. God, it could be Drake up there and Johnny sitting next to him instead.

"Do I have to spell it out for you? You came to see if you could piss him off. You want him to be jealous, is that it? You want to play games. Have you been sleeping with Drake?"

Tony shook his head. "Of course not."

"But you would, if he was willing? What are you trying to do, Tony, make up for the fact that you haven't led a wild life in the past? Are you using protection out there?"

"Do you think I'm an idiot?" Tony threw back. "Look, Uncle Pepi, I appreciate your concern, but I assure you that coming here tonight was completely innocent. I had no ulterior motive, okay?" He stood up and went to join his friends.

He was dancing in the most suggestive of ways, and Pepi saw Tony look over at the stage to see if Angelo was watching him. When he thought he was, he would rub his body against one of the men he was dancing with. The set ended, Angelo walked off the stage. Tony waited for him to appear at the table. He didn't.

"Isn't he going to say hello, at least?" Tony turned around in his seat and looked at the stage.

"Apparently not," Pepi murmured.

After a few minutes, Tony got up and walked backstage.

No one stopped him. It was dark back there. He felt his way down the hallway. He could hear voices; one of them was definitely his cousin's. He knocked and then walked in.

Angelo looked up at him. The other two guys nodded at Tony and then left the room.

"Hey, stranger. You were good tonight," Tony smiled at him. He was wearing a short brown leather jacket that he had just bought and a pair of faded jeans. Angelo noticed that he had one of his ears pierced, and there was a small gold stud in it.

He thanked him and then stood up.

"My friends would like to meet you. Maybe the four of us could go for a drink somewhere?" Tony suggested.

"Which one do I get?" he asked sarcastically.

"Do you want to come or not? Pepi could come too."

"Ask him. He won't come."

"Will you?" Tony asked.

"Sure. Let's go."

Out in the parking lot, Pepi declined the invitation to go with them and went off in his own direction.

The one called Frank suggested Angelo leave his

bike and they all go in his car. "We'll bring you back later," he said, looking him over, "to pick it up."

Angelo nodded nonchalantly as he followed them to Frank's 1997 blue Toyota. He climbed into the back seat beside the one called Luke. Tony sat in front with Frank.

Angelo settled back in the seat and surveyed the situation. He knew they were going back to someone's house. Both Luke and Frank were good-looking guys who were out for a good time; there was no question of that. Luke lit a joint and passed it around. They all took a few puffs from it.

Angelo was estimating how long it would take for the one called Luke to put his hand on his thigh. It took three and a half minutes. He had guessed five.

Frank finished off one joint and lit another. Angelo was getting high on the fumes. Tony turned around and smiled at him, then his gaze moved to Luke's hand and its position on Angelo's thigh. The smile faded.

"Something wrong, Tony?" Angelo asked. Tony was not hiding the fact that he didn't like Luke's hand on his thigh. Interesting.

"Luke, can't you wait until we get back to Frank's? It's not fair...getting a sneak preview," Tony teased, but there was anger in his voice.

The joint came around again to Angelo. He inhaled and then felt Luke's lips on his throat. Whoa. Here we go. He handed it to Luke. Luke took a quick puff and pushed it toward the front.

"You have a beautiful mouth. In fact, baby, you have a beautiful everything. I bet you're dynamite in bed."

Luke's hands were all over the place now, and the pot had done its job. He wasn't protesting as Luke pulled Angelo's T-shirt out of his pants and placed his hands on his naked chest.

"He is dynamite in bed," Tony turned around and grabbed Luke's arm, pulling him forward. "My bed," he said.

"Greedy, aren't we? Thought you said we could share him?" Luke growled.

"Sharing him doesn't mean starting now. Wait!" Tony commanded.

Angelo raised his head and looked at him. "You made this decision for me?"

"We're going to have a little fun, that's all. There's nothing sinister about it. You won't touch me anymore, I thought maybe you..."

"Oh right, get me stoned and in a crowd. Great, Tony, just great!" He wanted out of the car. He was about to say so when Frank pulled up into a driveway.

"Isn't everyone pissed off at everyone now?" He asked, turning around and looking at Angelo. "You are sensational looking, but you don't have to do anything you don't want to do...except with me," he laughed.

"Gee, thanks," Angelo sneered.

"Go in the house," Tony said, "you and Luke. We'll be in soon."

"Sure you will," Frank scoffed as he and Luke got out.

Angelo shook his head. "Oh, no, you don't. Forget it, Tony." He sat up straight, preparing to get out as Tony crawled over into the back seat.

"Just listen to me. I only want to talk," Tony moved closer to him.

"Talk?" Angelo laughed. "Okay, talk, Tony. What is it? I'm tired, stoned and horny. I don't feel like talking, and neither do you."

"I can't get you out of my mind. I can't go to sleep at night and all these others...well, it's not working. There's something you did to me, sorcery, I don't know what, but no one else does it like that, and I do have something to compare it to now."

It didn't matter that in Angelo's mind, it was the pot that was talking, not Tony. Tony was kissing him now and he had no power at all to fight him. He was stoned and the kissing felt so good. He was so hot he swore they were going to fog up the windows. He didn't care. He didn't care about anything.

Tony was ripping off his shirt, sucking his nipples and frantically trying to dig his cock out of his pants. He struggled to get his own pants off, then straddled him. Roughly, he fondled Angelo's cock, causing him to moan with a combination of need and discomfort. Tony kissed him deeply while he positioned his cock at the entrance of his anus. No lube, and no condom.

Angelo tried to protest, but there was no time. Tony had brought himself down on his cock and was guiding it in and out of his ass, his head thrown back, tongue moving over his lips. "Oh yes, oh God, yes, Angel, you got the cock of a goddamned Angel...so big...so... ahhhhhh...yes...yes...yes...

They must have fallen asleep out there in the car because when Angelo woke up in the morning, his clothes were in a heap on the floor of the back seat and Tony was in his arms. He was stiff and he felt like hell. He nudged Tony and reached for his clothes.

Tony rubbed his head. "Oh, God, I got a headache," he moaned. "What time is it?"

"A little after eight," Angelo said, pulling on his jeans.

Tony looked over at him, his long black hair messy, his eyes still sleepy, and smiled. "You weren't very tender last night."

"I'm sorry," he managed, clearing his throat. "I guess I wasn't in a tender kind of mood. You didn't give me a chance to be tender. You were into rough trade...no condom on top of that. Not bright."

"Its okay, I liked it bareback like that. I promise I used a condom with all the others."

"That's comforting," Angelo sneered.

"In fact, I liked it a whole lot," Tony replied. "I could get used to making love to you every night of my life."

Angelo's eyes opened up and he looked at him. "Don't say things you don't mean," he told him in a low voice.

"But I do mean it. I..." he smiled. "Never mind. Come on, let's take the car and go get your bike and then we'll bring it back here. Will you drive it?"

"Ya, okay, at least I'll try," Angelo nodded and went to get out of the car. Tony reached over, placed a hand on his arm and then kissed him. It was a tender, good morning kind of kiss. It lasted far too long.

Angelo smiled at him, dazed by the kiss. He was exhausted, he had a headache and he needed a shower,

but he couldn't remember being happier in his entire life. God, it was a feeling that frightened him.

\* \* \* \* \* \*

Christmas Eve was to be an exciting one. Drake was having his house professionally decorated for the festivities, and Johnny, after four months in the hospital, was finally coming home.

Tony sat at his uncle's house on the morning of Christmas Eve with a cup of coffee in his hand. The decorators had come and gone. Soon the caterers would be here. Drake had invited almost two hundred people tonight. It was to be some party.

He had spent a great deal of time with Drake lately, trying to get to know him better. He hadn't given up on his desire to sleep with him, but he had put it on hold for a while. His few attempts had gotten him nowhere, and he didn't want to piss him off. He discovered that Drake was a fun guy to be around. He liked to joke and tease, and he was dead serious about his music. He was teaching Tony how to play the guitar.

Tony did attempt to question him about his relationship with his father a couple of times, but he got nowhere fast. Drake didn't seem to want to even discuss his childhood. There was a lot of pain in his eyes at times. Tony backed off.

Today, Drake was in a great mood. His brother was coming home from the hospital. The house looked wonderful with its eight-foot white Christmas tree decorated with real candles and red satin bows. There was garland draped over the sweeping staircase and mistletoe everywhere. There were tons of brightly wrapped gifts under the tree and the new CD was on sale in time for Christmas, which would definitely ensure its success.

Sophia had gone Christmas shopping with Pepi that morning and he was alone with his uncle, who was still in his robe at ten in the morning. He had spent last night helping him wrap gifts, and it had been fun. His grandmother had baked Christmas cookies and they had all decorated them. Pepi, Mac and Aunt Janet had come over later as well. Only Angelo stayed away. He was working.

It seemed that Angelo worked all the damned time lately, and he seemed distant after that night with Luke and Frank. With Christmas coming up, Company Angelo was booked solid. He wasn't even going to be able to attend his dad's Christmas party, which disappointed Tony.

Tony looked at his uncle now. He was opening his mail. He looked happy and relaxed and young. His long dark hair kept falling into his eyes and he pushed it away. The long, tattered blue terrycloth robe made him look sexy, even if it was the most un-sexiest piece of clothing he had ever seen. He threw his legs up on the coffee table and opened another card. "Shit, I get so many I don't what to do with them all," he was saying. "Open some, will ya?" He reached around and pushed a bag toward him.

"Are these cards from fans?" Tony gasped.

"No. My fan club handles those. These are just from people I've known, worked with, met. Show biz people,

celebrities."

"Wow, this one's from that actor...eh...Kyle Montrose. Shit. What do you want me to do with them?" Tony asked.

"I don't know. Maybe put some on the mantle. Get some tape or a string and put them around somewhere."

"Uncle Drake," Tony said suddenly, finishing off his coffee. "Is Dad happy?"

"Your dad?" Drake looked over at him. "Why do you ask?"

"How come he's alone? How come you're alone? Do you think I'm going to end up like that?"

"I wasn't always alone and no, I don't think you'll end up like that. Now, I'm going to take a shower and get dressed. Do you want me to drive you back to your aunt's later?"

"Ya, okay. It was fun last night, thanks."

Drake went to take a shower.

Sophia came home a few minutes later with parcels. She was tired. She sat down beside her grandson and kicked off her shoes. She explained her exciting yet hectic morning shopping. "It's madness to go shopping today."

After a few minutes, Tony sucked in a deep breath and then asked her if she thought his father was happy.

"Of course Johnny is happy. All three of my sons are happy."

"I don't think so, Grandma. I think that Drake and Johnny are especially unhappy. There is so much pain. I don't understand it. Pepi seems affected by it, too, although not in the same way. What was Uncle Drake and Dad like as kids?"

"They were normal boys. I brought them up right!" She seemed angry. "They are happy. If only they would find some nice woman and settle down. Damn it. They both need that."

Tony said nothing. He knew his dad was gay and Uncle Drake seemed to swing both ways. A nice woman wouldn't cut it for Dad, but he guessed Grandma didn't know that.

When Drake came out, fresh from the shower, he looked so handsome, so much like her Drake that she actually felt her heart skip a beat. She walked up to him and held him. "My baby," she said.

"Mama," Drake protested. "What is it?"

"Nothing. You're so handsome, just like your father."

"Mama, I don't look anything like Papa. I never did."

"I mean...your grandfather, of course. Johnny looks like Papa."

"I look like no one," Drake laughed, grinning at his nephew.

"What have you been telling this poor boy anyway, Drake?" Mama demanded suddenly. "He seems to think my boys are all miserable. Are you unhappy, darling?"

Drake sighed. "Mama, it's Christmas. Forget it. I'm fine, and I haven't been telling Tony anything. Now I'm going to drive him to Janet's and I'll be back later, okay?"

He gave her a kiss on the cheek and left with his nephew.

In the car, Tony watched him as he drove. He was a fast driver but cautious, used to driving in L.A.

When he asked him out of the blue if he and Angelo had been sleeping together, it took him by surprise. He entwined his fingers and grimaced. "Who told you that?"

"No one. I have eyes."

"It was only twice, and I was the one who was the aggressor both times."

"Why?"

"I wanted to lose my virginity, and I was less afraid to do it with Angelo." His face went crimson.

"Why the second time?" Drake asked, glancing at him as he entered the freeway.

"I was stoned and I wanted him. He was stoned too."

"I see," Drake replied.

"It's no big deal, Uncle Drake, really," Tony offered.

"Yes it is. It's a really big deal."

"Why, because we're cousins? Cousins are no big deal compared to brothers!"

"What did you say?" Drake demanded.

Tony placed a hand over his mouth. Dear God. He didn't say that, did he? Dear God.

Drake slammed his foot on the brake and screeched the car to a halt right there on the side of the freeway. Cars blew their horns as they went by.

He grabbed Tony by the collar. "What in fuck did

you mean by that?"

"I know...I know, and so does Angelo," Tony blurted. "You and Dad...you're in love. You even made love once. I know that..." Tony was crying. He couldn't help it.

Drake's eyes were dark with unexpressed emotion. He started the engine and carefully manoeuvred the car back out on the Freeway.

They drove in silence.

Tony knew Drake was very upset. "Let's go somewhere, talk about this. You need to talk about it. Please, Uncle Drake, tell me how you could be in love with my father when you're brothers."

Drake drove to one of the parks. He pulled the car to a halt and got out. Tony got out after him. They walked for a long time through a walking trail in the woods before Drake said anything.

Finally he turned around and met his eyes. "You'll think we're sick. You'll judge us, and...."

"No," Tony shook his head. "How did it happen? Have you always felt this way?"

"It's madness." He sat down on a bench. "It started long ago and it never stopped. It has destroyed our lives. Your father wants me to overlook the fact that we're brothers, but I can't. He doesn't care. He wants me to be his lover. He wants us to be together. I want that too but I can't deal with it. It's too much for me."

"Did you ever try to..."

"Seek help?" Drake laughed. "There is no cure, Tony. Your father goes to therapy still. We were destined to be lovers, but we were born wrong. We weren't supposed to be brothers. It just worked out that way. It's a curse, and it doesn't matter who I'm with, it never lasts because it's your father I love. That's all there is to it. It will be like that until we die."

Tony reached out and took his hand. "I feel sad for you, Uncle Drake, and sad for my father."

"Hold me, then," he said softly, gathering Tony into his arms. They sat there on the bench a long time like that.

By the time they reached Janet's, there was a new closeness between them. Mac was there, and he and Drake immediately started discussing the sale of the new CD.

Janet poured them each a drink.

Tony excused himself and went to his room. He heard some noises coming from the room next door so he left his and went to his cousin's. He knocked.

Angelo answered.

"Hello," Tony said. "I didn't know you were here. I guess I should wish you a merry Christmas, since you won't be around tonight."

"Thanks. Same to you." Angelo was wearing sweatpants and a T-shirt, and he was in the process of cleaning up his room.

Tony stepped inside. "Can I help?"

Angelo moved to get by him, and their bodies brushed close together for a moment.

Tony felt a rush of heat permeate his skin. "Sorry," he breathed.

Angelo looked back at him and smiled. "For what?" "Being in your way, I guess. So, same place tonight?"

"Nope. A better place called *The Crystal Room,*" he said. He was putting some papers into a garbage bag.

Tony couldn't help but watch the way his damp hair caught the sun from the window or admire the way his body looked even in sloppy sweat pants.

Tony went to slide past him now and as he did, Angelo turned around. They were face to face, standing too close. It was Angelo who reached out and caressed his cheek.

Tony wasn't prepared for how that simple touch would affect him. He closed his eyes, and felt Angelo's chest crushing against his. He was in his arms, and Angelo's mouth was coming down hard against his. It was a deep and well-intentioned kiss, the kind of kiss meant to lead somewhere.

This one didn't. Angelo released him. "Merry Christmas, Tony." He gave him a heart-wrenching smile and then turned back to his chore.

Tony reached for the doorknob, feeling a little unsteady on his feet. "I'm not in love with you, you know," he murmured aloud.

Angelo froze for a moment and then looked back at him over his shoulder. "Good," he said, giving him a brief smile, then turned away again.

Tony left the room. He had no idea why he had said that. He just suddenly felt like he had to. Goddamn it. He came out here an ignorant little jerk, and asked one favour of his good-looking cousin. He asked him to help him not be so ignorant. He did that.

Now he was free, free to sleep with who he wanted, fulfil every fantasy. He wasn't going to ruin it by falling

in love with him. If he was to fall in love with the guy just because...oh, it was stupid. He just wanted him to know that sometimes he said things like the last time after making love in the car, he told him he wouldn't mind doing that every night with him. But people say things in the heat of the moment, didn't they?

The guy did know how to make love. He was damned good at it. He hadn't found anyone quite like him, but that wasn't everything. He wasn't going to be that little jerk anymore. He wanted to be sophisticated. He was too young to limit himself to just one guy, not when he had just discovered the pleasures of sex.

Angelo had left his room now. He was with his parents and Mac in the kitchen. He could hear them talking. Tony let them be. He was a little tired, so he laid down to take a nap.

The phone woke him. He got up and answered it. The house seemed empty.

"Tony?" the voice said.

"Dad?" He recognized Tom Newton's voice immediately. "Dad, I've missed you. How are you?"

"Fine. I've missed you too, Son. I just couldn't let Christmas go by without calling. How are you? Tell me everything."

"Dad is getting...well, *Johnny* Dad is getting out of the hospital today. We're just getting to know one another."

"I'm glad. Are you thinking of staying in L.A.?"

"I was. I wanted to stay with Dad for a while, go to school here."

"I think I should warn you that your mother has

other ideas. She's planning on coming out there after you in January. She is determined that you are coming back with her."

Tony sighed. "Oh, no. Can't you stop her? Talk to her, Dad, tell her I..."

"We're getting a divorce, Tony. We're not living together anymore. I'm afraid I have no influence on her anymore."

"Oh, Dad, no. I'm sorry." Tears streamed down his cheeks. "I'm so sorry. I feel responsible for all this..."

"It's not your fault, son. She still loves your biological father," he said.

He talked to his father for another few minutes and then hung up.

He was really bothered by the idea that his mother was coming out here after him in the New Year. Thank God his dad would be out of the hospital. Tony had already discussed the possibility of going to school here with Johnny. He was delighted. Actually, they would both live with Drake for a little while until Dad got strong enough to live on his own, then they would move into his house. He was really excited about that, and his mother could do nothing to change it.

He was feeling pretty bad about his parent's divorce and told Janet about the phone call when she returned from doing some last-minute shopping herself. She was a sympathetic listener as always, and tried to ease his mind by saying that his mother couldn't make him go home if he didn't want to.

At seven, they got ready for the party. He dressed up in his red silk shirt and black dress pants and went to stand in his cousin's room. The room had been cleaned and picked up but it smelled like him, a mixture of vanilla-smelling shower gel and some musky aftershave. He laid his head on his pillow for a second and then scolded himself and walked down the hall to the kitchen.

On the counter in the kitchen sat two little giftwrapped boxes. One was marked Mom, the other Tony.

His aunt suddenly came out to stand beside him. She wore a simple black dress with pearls and black velvet shoes. She looked wonderful.

"Don't you look nice," she told her nephew.

He returned the compliment. "Mac's a lucky guy."

That pleased her. "What's that?" she asked, looking at the boxes.

"This one is yours, that one is mine. From Angelo, no doubt."

"Should we open it?" Janet giggled.

"Why not?" Tony replied.

He waited for his aunt to open hers. It was a gold charm on a slender gold chain. The charm was shaped like a wedding bouquet. Tears welled up in her eyes. "My sweet son," she murmured.

"It's beautiful," Tony murmured, tearing open his. As soon as he looked at it, he closed the box and sat it on the counter. A lump settled in his throat.

"Are you okay, Tony? What is it?" Janet asked.

He pushed the box over to her. She opened it and stared at it. "I don't understand. What's this supposed to mean?"

It was one half of a gold heart welded onto a chain.

"Don't you see, it's half a heart, Aunt Janet. It's a broken heart."

She shook her head. "Yours, or his?"

"I don't know. Maybe both."

"Are you going to tell me what has been going on between the two of you? I know I've been with Mac a lot, and—"

"Do you remember your suggestion to me that I go to Angelo for help with my...questions about things?" Tony lifted an eyebrow.

"Yes?" She said suspiciously.

"Well, Auntie..." Tony placed an arm around her. "Your son was extremely helpful, if you get my drift, and I demanded more help from him than..."

Her eyes widened. "Tony...he's...your..."

"Cousin, which doesn't mean a whole lot to people nowadays. We're only cousins, Aunt Janet."

She sighed. "Okay, you're right. Cousins are...well, I guess it's okay, not the best, but okay. It was just once?"

"Twice, actually, and it would have been more if it was up to me. He didn't want to. It's complicated. I said some things I shouldn't have. I didn't expect it to get too heavy, and I don't know. Things don't make sense. They don't go the way they should sometimes."

"And now?"

"Now I hate him for making me want him, that's all." Tony let out a strangled sob. "It's not love, just lust, but all the same." He reached for the heart and threw it across the room. "He knows just how to get to me. Damn him. I just want to be free and have fun. I'm sorry, Aunt Janet, I know he's your son, but does he

have to be so...so...I don't know...so desirable and impossible at the same time?"

Janet shook her head. "We'll have to talk about this later. Let's go. Your dad should be at Drake's by now, and everyone is going to have a fit if we're late. Why does everything around here have to be so complicated? Why can't they be simple sometimes?"

Tony dried his eyes and nodded. "I don't know. Forget it for now. I'm ready," he said, but before he left, he bent down and picked up the charm. He placed it around his neck. He had a feeling that Angelo had the other half.

This concludes Episode Five of The Russos.

Stay tuned next month for the exciting Episode Six:

- Sophia confesses to Janet
- Johnny tells Drake the news
- Angelo slugs Tony
- Tony crawls into bed with Drake



## Meet Angelo- - Drake Angelo Smith-Russo Junion:

Everyone calls him Angelo, his middle name, and he goes by his mother's last name Smith. Angelo Smith has a fairly good relationship with his father, although he finds it hard to be the son of such a popular man. His mother, Janet Smith, has managed with Drake's help to try and give Angelo as normal upbringing as possible.

When Angelo was old enough, he toured with the band, but has remained basically a very well-balanced individual. He tries not to dwell on the craziness.

He plays guitar and wants to be a musician like his Dad. He resents the fact that his dad wants him to make it out there on his own and won't welcome him into the band.

When Book 1 opens, he is in Europe travelling. He resembles his father in looks, and in his desire to play music. He is mainly gay with some tendency to sleep with women. Angelo has a bit of a complex where his father is concerned, a conflict that will heat up when Johnny's long-lost son arrives.

## D.J. Manly

Manly is fast acquiring a reputation for pushing the boundaries of male/male erotic romance. A reviewer once said of Manly's work that it was enough to give the reader "...third-degree burns in an air conditioned room..." and that's putting it mildly. If you adore gorgeous men who can't get enough of each other's bodies...if you like rich plots laced with steamy sex, thick and rich with aching need and glorious adoration and love...Manly's books will satisfy the craving and leave you panting for more.

"If I wouldn't enjoy reading it, I wouldn't be writing it," says Manly. "I like to tease...but I always please..."

To check out books by D.J. Manly, you can visit the website at djmanly.com, and take a taste...if you dare.

"Fair warning, I've been told that it's highly addictive."

D.J. .