

A red jumpsuit is hanging from a dark line against a dark, textured wall. To the left of the jumpsuit, a black lantern hangs from the wall. A wooden bench is visible at the bottom of the frame. The scene is lit from the right, casting a strong shadow of the jumpsuit and the bench onto a lighter-colored wall on the right side.

cabin fever

ba tortuga

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Cabin Fever

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By BA Tortuga

Chapter One

Walker had learned a couple three things in the past six months.

One. When a sheriff in Texas said, "Ride on out of town", a sensible man rode.

Two. Them that cheated at cards carried sidearms and were a faster draw than he was.

Three. Mountains looked closer than they really were, whether or not the Comancheria were riding you hard.

Four. Winter started a lot sooner and harder than he'd been led to believe once a man reached those mountains.

Five. Every tree in these damnable woods looked the same.

Every one.

He'd been wandering for days, looking for a way through the mountains, looking for the pass that the map he'd bought in El Paso swore was right where he stood.

"You thinking about jumping my claim, boy, there's something you ought to know. I'm a damn good shot, I have the drop on you, and I'm a damn sight bigger'n you to boot."

The deep, bear-like voice came from behind him, along with the sound of a rifle cocking.

Walker took a deep breath, hand sliding for his gunbelt, puffing himself up as big as he could as he turned. "I'm just passing through."

Six. Mountains looked to be a favorite place for lunatics and mad men.

"You pass anywhere in the next few days you'll freeze solid, friend. It's fixing to snow, and hard." The barrel of that same said rifle practically pressed his nose. "And the only reason you should pull that pistol is to hand it over."

"I ain't looking for trouble." He lost his pistol, he'd starve. Walker stepped back, shaking his head. "No trouble at all."

"Good. Then you can keep it, but I swear, boy, the first time you look like you're going for it, I'll make you eat it."

The rifle lowered enough that he could see something besides the bore, and he got a good look at the man holding it. Tall, wide, dressed in dungarees and a rough shirt, along with a heavy coat and boots, the man had a wild red beard and a mass of curly, brownish-red hair. Set deep in the brush were a pair of twinkling green eyes.

He nodded, kept moving backward. He should have kept his old nag instead of going for supplies. He should have listened to his Pa when the man called him a durned fool for leaving the fields.

"You're gonna land on your butt, son." Sure enough, his down-at-the-heel boot clunked against a rock, nearly sending him sprawling. "What are you doing here?"

"Like I said. I was headed west. Hoping to get work. Maybe work some land." Maybe work the rails with the Chinamen. Something. Anything.

"Uh huh. Well, and like I said, you'll never make it to the next town before hard frost." God damn it if the first flake of snow didn't fall on his nose right then, breaking through the trees.

He bit back his sigh, his worry. "I knew I shoulda kept that nag..."

"So you should have. You'll not make it, son." The big man sighed. "Come on, then."

"Pardon?" Come on where? Surely if he walked it hard, he'd find a spot

"I can't leave you out here to freeze. You ain't even got a decent coat, nor boots. Come on, now. You're bound to be hungry." The rifle lowered all the way, the big man actually turning his back and heading off into the trees...the ones that all looked alike and would look even more so with snow on them.

Walker found himself following, balancing his pack more surely so that his pistol was in reach. Everything was getting grey, the clouds heavier minute by minute.

The snow filtering through the trees felt wet, heavy, starting to weigh on his light coat within minutes. He'd swear the air went colder than a witch's tit in no time. He was shivering by the time they got to a small cabin set on a high point, the trees around it cut and burnt.

He must have walked right by the place and never even looked at it. "How long you been following me?"

"Long enough. You wandered in circles near an hour 'fore I stopped you. You ain't much on maps, are you son?" The place had a cot, a table with one bench, a washstand that looked like his momma might have owned it and a potbellied stove that threw out the most lovely heat he'd ever felt.

"I got a map. I was just lookin' for something." An hour? Shit, Marthy.

"Well, if it was Guanella Pass you're off by a good three miles and four thousand feet thataway." He got a keen look as the man pulled off his coat and shook out his beard. "What's your name?"

"Hansom. Walker Hansom." Three miles. God help him, he was worthless as tits on a boar hog

"Horace Grady." One big paw reached out for his, pumping it until his arm hurt at the shoulder.

"Howdy." Lord love him, his hand near disappeared in there, the idle strength stunning. "I'm right sorry to be a bother."

"Well, you'd be sorrier to be dead, I'd wager, young as you are. I expect you're hungry." The cabin seemed too small for the big frame, but Horace managed just fine, and soon enough he had a plate of beans and warm biscuits, all taken from the little cast iron warmer on the back of the stove.

Oh. Warm. Good. He moaned out his thanks, eating with a hunger, his stomach near clenching as the food hit it like a stampeding bull.

"Slow now. Don't want you bringing it up on my floor." A cup of coffee ended up next to his elbow before Grady went to put more wood on the fire.

"No. No, I wouldn't." He wouldn't. That would require horrible things like moving.

Standing.

Not eating another bite.

"Just slow it down." He got a wink, Grady settling on the cot, one knee drawn up for his arms to lean on. The man's feet were just huge. Like a giant in his momma's stories.

"Yes, sir." He nodded, slowed, the taste of the coffee enough to bring tears to his eyes.

"Where you from, son?"

"Virginia. Tobacco country."

"Must be damned cold to you then." Those eyes, they laughed at him.

"I wasn't expecting it to be winter yet." He blushed, looking away from that regard.

"Well, of course not. Comes earlier up here. Soon as the first snow really settles in I'll take you down into Georgetown. I got an extra pair of snowshoes."

"Snowshoes. When will the snow stop?" Snowshoes.

That big head tilted, eyes half closing as Grady listened to the wind. "With this storm? Could be two days. Could be two weeks."

"Two weeks." His mouth was opening and closing like a catfish in a basket, drowning in air.

"Yessir. That first snow can be a real deep one." There was that twinkle again, just shining through. "Well, I need to get some chores done. You'll pull your weight if you stay, but for now you can sit a spell, warm up. Don't let the dog worry you none. He's not friendly, but he's too lazy to bite."

He hadn't even noticed the indeterminate-breed hound laying on the floor half under the bunk.

"Thank you. I'll be no trouble." None at all and if he had any pride he'd stand and help. Head out into the snow and follow the huge man. As it was, it was all he could do not to land on his dirty face as he gave into the warmth, the feeling of being fed, and slept.

Well, well, well.

Horace Grady had set himself up right well for a winter alone, with no one but Scar for a companion, if a man could consider a snoring, moaning in his dreams hound company. Horace didn't figure he could, really.

But now he had the boy. Well, not a boy; he seemed a good age to be on his own. The innocent blundering around in the woods, though...well, Lord Lord. What on earth was that lad thinking?

Right now he wasn't thinking. Walker, that was his name. Walker was sleeping the sleep of thin air. It'd probably be days before the lad was ready to do any real work. He'd be weak as a kitten until his body got used to being so high up.

Sighing, he stirred the simple stew he'd put together, watching both of his boarders sleep the sleep of the just. Time to get them up. Grabbing up a pot and a spoon, Horace pounded away, bellowing at the top of his lungs.

"Supper!"

Muddy, bloodshot eyes shot open, head rolling on Walker's shoulders like a drunk. The lawn shirt was twisted and rumped, open at the throat and at the bottom where the buttons were loose.

"Come on, boy. Time to eat. You may not think you're wanting to, but you'll need it."

He got a dazed nod, but the lad started moving, heading straight outdoors to do his business, coming back shivering and wide-eyed. "It's still snowing."

"It's only four hours or so since you came." Four hours, a goodly batch of wood chopped, and his second pair of snowshoes half strung. Dishing up, he surveyed his guest, enjoying a nice long looksee.

"Oh. It felt like I've slept days. Sorry, I had a long walk." Walker was solidly built, obviously not a layabout with the fine hint of muscles in the chest and arms, the skin a deep nut brown to match the rough-cut hair.

"It's high here." Oh, what a lovely, lovely lad. Horace grinned, hiding in his beard. "Here you go."

"Thank you." Fine, square hands, too, small enough to be quick, strong enough to be good and male.

Not like his big paws. Though sometimes his hands were good at things. Chopping wood. Lifting a heavy gold pan full of rock and water. Covering the butt of that pretty boy on the Barbary Coast with bruises.

"Right welcome. This is a long way from Virginia, son."

"Yes. I was doing fairly well until I hit Texas."

There was a quick smile, a hint of mischief, of playful trouble.

"Were you now? You're a bit of a ways off there, too. Must have been some trouble." Oh, he liked that smile. He surely did.

"Just some card games gone off. Some sheriffs misunderstanding things. I was...becoming too recognized."

"So you're trouble, are you?" Horace grinned again, practically rubbing his hands together.

"No, of course not. I'm more...misunderstood." The lean cheeks went red, eyes on the table.

"Naturally." He wondered how they'd misunderstand one another once cabin fever set in. Horace ate hearty, dumping his plate in the washtub before pouring some hot water in the wash basin.

"When you're done you can come and help me."

He got a quick nod, the plate scraped clean before the lad came close enough that he could smell pine and male, a hint of smoke and leather. "I can wash up. I've some tack I can add to help for a day or two."

"That's fine, boy. Fine. But I need you over here now. The washing up can wait." His voice had sent soldiers scrambling once. Horace expected it would be plenty stern enough for Walker.

He got a wide-eyed look, Walker's feet following orders straightaway, before the lad even knew what was what.

That was a fine thing. Horace handed over a small pair of silver scissors, the one thing he had left from his mother, bless her soul. "Trim me down, will you? I need to shave."

"Oh. Yes. Yes, I can do that." The scissors were taken, fingers sliding over the filigree. "Do you want to sit?"

"I'd best, hmm?" Otherwise the lad's arms would get tired. Silly vanity, wasn't it, but he wanted to show off some, see what Walker thought of his face without all that fur.

Walker was surprisingly gentle, the touch of fingers and metal pulling not at all, bright eyes focused on the work.

His eyes had closed as he let the little luxury of touch sooth him. It felt damned good.

His chin was lifted, Walker beginning to hum, fingers tracing his jaw, carding through hairs before snipping them short.

At this rate he might let the lad shave him, too. A happy rumble rose in his chest. He loved to have someone else shave him, hadn't had a good one since the barber in Georgetown, some five months ago.

It was nowhere near long enough before Walker stepped back, hands offering the scissors over. "There. All trimmed."

"Thank you, Walker." A little praise went a long way. "My razor and strop are over by the door."

Oh, yes. Walker was turned and moving before looking back at him. "Would you like them over there?"

"Yes, please. And there's a wee tin of soap." A good lather would help a great deal. His beard had bristles fit to a porcupine.

"Has it been long since you've shaved?" Everything was gathered, brought over to him before Walker went over to the stove for water.

"Months? Shit, boy, I don't know how long I've been up here this time." Scratching the ruff left over, he settled more comfortably, waiting to see what Walker would do.

"Oh. I've only been gone from home since the turn of the year." Walker looked about, head tilting. "Do you have a bit of glass to shave by? I have a bit, if you need."

He stroked his chin, pretending to consider. "I do, but it will be hard to see under, with all the whiskers still there. "I think I'll need you again, lad."

"I...I haven't ever shaved another man. I'd hate to cut you, truly."

"I won't let you. Come on now, don't be shy." Lowering his brows, he scowled a little, "S'the least you can do, hmm?"

"Of course. I...Lord, I hope you have skin like leather. I even cut my own chin once a month." Those fine hands took the razor and strop, metal sliding and hissing as he worked it.

"I have fine skin, thank you." Tanned leather, for sure, but he wasn't going to admit it. "You'll do right fine."

He presented his throat, just tempting.

Walker wet his hands, then lathered them before reaching to touch his throat, fingers slick and sliding, catching on the stubble.

He purred under the touch. Lord, it had been too long. Too long.

"Be still, now. I don't want to cut you." Walker moved behind him, the lad hot and strong.

"I wouldn't want you to either." He breathed in deep, then shallowly through his nose, willing the lad to please him, to have a steady hand.

The strokes were short, tentative, too careful to be comfortable, but Walker didn't cut him, didn't nick his throat.

The shave could be cleaner, but Walker would learn. For now it was enough that the lad wanted to do a good job.

Throat and jaw, cheeks and chin -- they were carefully shaved, only the slightest nick in the cleft of his chin.

He waited until Walker silently turned to rinse the razor the last time before he reached out, letting his hand just rest at the small of the lad's back. "Thank you. That's much better."

The muscles there rippled and shuddered, just alive beneath his touch. "You look fine. A gentleman passing, even."

"You think so? I'll take that piece of glass now, if you would." He hadn't looked in a long while. For some reason now it mattered.

"Oh. Let me find it." Walker sat, the ragged knapsack opened and searched through. He caught glimpses of this and that -- a folding knife, a bit of lawn, a book. "I used it just the other morning. I swear it hides... Oh. Oh, here."

It was a little round piece, edges sanded and all, not cracked a bit.

"You should make a frame for this, lad. It's too damned sweet to chance breaking." He wondered about Walker's family even as he looked. Well, now. He looked right well, despite the chapped skin. "You done a good job."

"It suits you. And it had a frame once. I sold it for some coffee and beans."

"Well, I can teach you how to make a new one, if you like. Won't be silver..." That had to be why the thing had sold.

"Silver's only good for hanging in a shiny house and selling for grub."

"And it turns black." He liked the boy. He really did. Horace handed the mirror back, letting his fingers rub Walker's, but not enough to surprise him into dropping the mirror.

Walker laughed, and that sound held all the mischief and deviltry he suspected. "Yes, and naughty boys spend altogether too many hours polishing it with the cloth. It was my ma's best punishment."

"Was it? Mine took a willow switch to me." Something low in his belly heated at the thought of Walker and a switch. Gracious yes.

One hand covered the brown homespun, fingers spread to cover the curve of those buttocks. "That would sting like fire."

"Yes. It does." Staring at that round bottom, hard with muscle once the cloth clung to it, gave him thoughts he ought not have yet, so Horace looked away. "Stings worse when you know you've earned it."

"Yes, well the secret there is to never earn it, I suppose." The sack was tied closed, those eyes twinkling. "Or to never be caught doing it."

He threw back his head and laughed, clapping his hands, making the dog woof and sit up for the first time all day. "Yes, indeed. Now, I think it's time you learn to string snowshoes."

Walker nodded, chin set and stubborn. "I can tie fishing nets. I can learn that."

"If you can tie nets, you're more'n half way there. Come on, for this we'll go out to the lean-to. Bring that rope, just in case."

He got a quick nod, "Just let me grab my hat."

He got his own coat, got one of his heavy shirts for Walker to wear. It would be too cold out there for lawn. He'd teach the boy to string those shoes, but Horace decided then and there not to let Walker use them. Not until he'd explored all of the possibilities that naughty twinkle and willing mien afforded. Yes, indeed, it would be interesting indeed to see what happened when cabin fever set in.

The snow came down and down, just piling up and around and after three days Walker began to wonder whether or not it was ever going to stop.

He spent the nights warm and happy enough, curled upon the floor by the stove near the dog, dreaming of dances long ago in the Baker's ballroom, of warm summer nights on the river.

When he woke, though, it was to the scent of wood smoke and coffee, Horace stomping about, cussing the cold.

"Up and at 'em, lad! We need to go hunting today."

Horace's face, broad and beardless thanks to him, appeared over his, upside down.

He blinked up, hand dropping to hide his stiff member as his blanket was pulled away. "Hunting? Deer?"

"No, lad. If we were going to hunt deer we would have been up hours ago." Hauling him up with one careless twist of one arm, Horace smacked his bottom and grinned hugely. "There's beans and jerky for breakfast."

He grabbed his pants, thumping himself good and hard before shaking out his shirt. "What are we hunting then?"

"Rabbits. Squirrels. Anything we can put in the stewpot, huh? That and we won't have to waste ammunition." Horace's wide chest was lightly furred with reddish brown hair, well muscled from hard work. The man had arms the size of most men's legs. Soon enough, though, Horace covered it with his shirt, pulling his suspenders up.

He ate quickly, nodding over the plate, the beans spicy and good. "Trapping. I've done that. More fishing though."

"I've traps, yes. But I'm a mean shot with a simple rock, as well. All you have to do is hit the little critters in the eye." With that twinkling smile, Horace could be joshing him. Perhaps.

He raised an eyebrow. "You just throw rocks?"

"I have a sling you can use, if you like." One fuzzy eyebrow went up and down, Horace standing with his hands on his hips, waiting. "Fishing's right like work here in the winter, but oh in the spring and summer..."

He stood, scraping his plate off. "I bet this place is right pretty in the spring. I'll follow you."

"Get that coat." They'd fashioned one of Horace's shirts and his own coat into a garment that afforded heavenly warmth when he went out. Now, if they could only fix his boots. Still, the showshoes he'd labored over kept him mostly above the snow. Horace clapped his hat on his head and shrugged into his coat, whistling up the dog, Scar, who actually got up off the floor and came running.

He was developing muscles in places he'd never had muscles before, thighs hard and strong, belly tight as he worked to keep his balance, keep atop the snow.

The dog disappeared to the tops of his ears and the tip of his tail, that was how much it had snowed. Nearly two feet. He had never seen such before. Horace strode ahead of him like a man born to it, whistling a jaunty tune.

He struggled along in the man's wake, heart pounding in his chest before they lost the cabin in the tree line. "You know how to find your way back?"

"I do. Snow's let up a little, I can find landmarks. The rope to the privy is more because you don't put on the snowshoes to go there, do you?" Sometimes he thought he caught a hint of Irish in Horace's voice, a trace of old country. It made him wonder. "There. There's our first trap. Careful now."

Walker nodded, eyes sharp, watching. He could hear his father's voice, admonishing him to be sure, be careful, be smart for once. He was learning to be sharp again and again.

The trap came up empty, but at least he didn't do some fool thing like set it off. Horace clapped him on the shoulder, nearly knocking him down. "Well, we'll try the next."

He watched how to reset it, how to make it work. "How many are there?"

"I've three. Any more than that and I would forget where they are." By the time they got to the next one, he was shivering, but Horace seemed in a fine mood and in fine health.

He kept his teeth tight together to keep them from chattering, his very bones shivering and chilled.

"Ah ha! We've got us a rabbit, lad!" Turning, Horace grinned at him, the grin fading as he looked close. "Good Lord, boy. Whyn't you say something?"

"I...I...I...I'm fine. Fine. A r...r...rabbit?" A fat brown one, good for a stew.

"You're like to freeze to death." Carefully easing the rabbit out of the trap and resetting it, Horace came over and rubbed one hand up and down his arm. "Good God. Come on, then. Let's get you back."

Compared to the giant that Horace was, he felt lean, near a shadow. He stiffened his resolve, not falling behind, forcing chilled muscles to move, to work.

They skipped the third trap as he put one foot in front of the other, doggedly trudging on. He passed right by the cabin in his haze, stopping only when Horace grabbed him, yanking him back.

"Oh, lad. I never thought. Inside with ya."

Walker blinked, nodded, following direction, following that voice. Inside.

Inside was warm.

The heat hit him in waves, his face and hands beginning to tingle straight away. He stood like a child and let Horace unstrap his snowshoes and pull off his boots before dragging him over to the stove.

"Sorry." He shuddered, fingers opening and closing again and again, eyes just watering.

"You'll speak up next time." His coat, his trousers and his shirt all came off, Horace stripping him down. He couldn't imagine how getting his clothes off might make him warmer.

He finally stood in his longjohns, the red knit close to his body, almost like a second skin. The walking and working had changed his shape.

The open stove door threw out heat aplenty, right on his cold bottom, relaxing his tight muscles. As he watched, dumfounded, Horace began to strip down too, pulling off clothes and dropping them willy-nilly.

The snow must have addled him, driven him into a dull silence, a stillness. He didn't understand.

When he simply stood there Horace grabbed him, pulling him to the large corner cot, pushing him down. Then that big body came down atop his and the blankets and quilts on top of Horace. Oh. Oh, warm.

His body went tight, the sensation almost too good to bear, then relaxed, an embarrassing sound making its way out of him.

"There now, that's better isn't it? I forget you've not been here like I have, lad. I surely do." Legs like tree trunks tangled with his, Horace's weight pushing him down into the mattress. It felt like down and straw mixed.

"Better." He closed his eyes, hands curling against the warm skin, cheek pressed close. "Lord have mercy, you're warm."

"I never feel the cold. I'll sweat like a lathered horse come summer." The world shifted as Horace eased off to one side, still covering him but not crushing. Once big hand stroked him from neck to buttocks.

"I grew up in tobacco country. Never been this cold."

Never.

Course, he'd never been this warm, either.

"No, I reckon not. You'll be good and warm here soon. Not shivering anymore, are you? And we'll have fried rabbit tonight and stew tomorrow."

"Sounds good." He could breathe now, think some, wiggle his toes. "You've been a good friend, Horace, especially to a stranger."

"A man gets lonely. It's been some time since I had someone to jaw with." The motion of Horace's hand slowed, the fingers tracing the bumps of his spine.

He shivered, a flush of heat filling him as he nodded. "It could be lonesome up here, so high."

Whiskers brushed his cheek as Horace nodded. "Yes indeed. And I scare some folks."

"You gave me a fright on first meeting. Reckoned you'd blow me to kingdom come."

"You have to watch for claim jumpers, lad." Was it his imagination running mad or was Horace lingering on his bottom?

"Just looking for a pass to the West." He shifted, pressing away from that hand which ended him against Horace's body.

The offender moved up to rest at the small of his back, Horace shifting against him so that tendrils of cold air snuck under the quilts.

He moved closer, moving away from the cold and its touch.

A low rumble sounded, vibrating in Horace's chest. "Now that's nice, lad. It surely is. The good thing about winter in the woods is you can rest the day away if you like."

"It is. You're a stove, all on your own." Resting. Yes. Yes, that sounded better than pleasant.

"And you're much finer than a brick or a bedwarming pan." The chuckles bounced him about as the shook Horace's chest.

He snorted, laughter catching him up. "I'm taller, sure enough, and less likely to chafe your ankles."

Laughter warmed as well as anything in the world. Especially when it was shared. Horace soon sobered, though, whacking his bottom lightly. "You'll tell me, from now on, when you're having problems."

"I was on your heels. Weren't a problem for you." Wasn't going to be a greenhorn, neither. Not if he could help it.

"Woulda been if I had to carry you when you collapsed. The cold leeches your strength, boy."

He bristled a little. "You're not as old as that. I'm full-grown."

Just because he wasn't a mountain troll come down to eat children.

"In this case it's not a matter of age, lad. It's a matter of experience." Oh, smug. Horace sounded entirely too satisfied with himself.

The temptation to stick his tongue out surprised him. Amused him. Lord have Mercy. "You lived here long?"

"Oh, I've had this claim nigh on two years. I go down into town a few times a year." Somehow Horace pulled and snuggled just so, and one rock hard thigh slid between his own.

Walker blinked, shifting and gasping a bit. "Two years. You've done a lot."

He prayed his johnson didn't step up, pay attention to the warmth.

"Well, there was a good clearing here already, they took some timber out to help with the railroad. And the lean-to was most made already. But the summer is a good time to work. Long daylight."

He nodded. "I worked the fields most my life. There's nothing like that dinner bell at the end of a day."

"Yes indeed." Oh, Lord. Horace moved again, like he was unable to stay completely still, and the muscles of Horace's thighs flexed, rubbing at him.

His body betrayed him, his sac wrinkled, shaft throbbing and beginning to fill. Oh.

Oh, that was.

"I should stoke the fire."

"Are you still cold?" He got rolled to the bottom again, Horace pressing down, ever down, giving him such a sensation. He could not even fathom it.

"I." He tilted his hips, trying to push farther into the bedding. The motion dragged his shaft along Horace's skin, making things all the worse.

"Oh. You're shaking. Lord, boy, why didn't you say you were getting cold again." Oh. Oh, he was never going to survive it. Horace pulled his face into the hollow of one big shoulder, the scent of woodsmoke and sweat doing the oddest things to his stomach.

"I don't. I." His lips moved against Horace's skin, the action making his muscles shudder like a new calf's. "I'm not."

"Not what, lad? Speak up." Horace's lips moved against his skin as well, right under his ear, hot breath stirring the hair at his nape.

"I...I'm not cold." Oh, saints forgive him, he was hard, near to shaming himself.

"Oh, well then." He thought Horace might ease away, backing off him as he did. Instead Horace pushed up on one arm and pushed the other between them, hand sliding down to cup his shaft. "This must be the trouble then."

The sound that left him was a squeak, a startled, devastated little sound. He tried to roll away, skin burning with the raw horror of being noticed. "I...I meant no harm. Give me a moment in the snow, it will cease."

"Why would I want it to do that?" Perhaps the cold had addled his brain. He could not begin to understand the smile on Horace's face.

He blinked up, shook his head. "I. I will. I cannot. I."

Walker closed his mouth with a snap. He heard tales of persons lost in the snow, their minds broken and shattered. That much be the answer. It simply could be no other.

"Aye, you can, boy. You will." It must be Horace that was cracked, though, for touching him that way, that great paw starting to move, up and down, up and down.

Shudders started deep within him, his breath panting as if he'd been sent to run the rabbits from the rows.

"That's it. That will warm you like nothing else, lad. You feel good." Good. Such a paltry term. Mortified, ecstatic. The hair on Horace's chest rasped against him, the strong arm muscles moved against his belly, and that maddening hand simply kept going.

"Please." He wasn't sure what he begged for, what he needed, but to stay where he was led further into madness.

"Yes. It's all right, lad. Let loose. Come along now." That last stroke...Horace's thumb.

Heat flooded him and poured from him in a way it never had, except in the dark of night into his own hand, cry muffled in his fist in fear of being discovered abusing himself.

Horace praised him, voice like a low rumble that he couldn't quite distinguish. All he knew was that the tone soothed and eased him as his muscles unclenched, and that Horace had soft lips, pressed where they were against his forehead.

Eyes squeezed shut, he stayed where he was, stayed still and held, unwilling to begin thinking again.

"There now. That even worked up a sweat." A rough kiss dropped on his throat, Horace heaving up off the cot and wrapping him in the covers again, holding in the body warmth they'd created while he went to the washbasin to clean off.

A sweat. Perhaps he had a fever. Perhaps he...

Perhaps.

Lord forgive him.

Chapter Two

The boy looked...bruised. Oh, not his skin, though there was one he'd bet the lad didn't know was there, right on that white, firm bottom, the exact size and shape of his hand.

No, the mood came from Walker's confusion, his inability to understand the abrupt change in circumstances. How darned lovely it was, too.

"You warm enough, boy?" He glanced over to where Walker huddled before the fire, wrapped in a quilt.

Those pretty eyes flashed up at him, looking like a colt that had felt the bridle for the first time. "Yes. Yes, I'm warm."

Horace put on his most stern look. "Are you afraid of me now, boy?"

Oh, that got him a firm jaw, a set look. "I'm not afraid."

"Good. That'd be a damned shame. Your company is right congenial." He got out the checkers board and set it up on the barrel he used for an occasional table. "Would you like to play?"

Walker nodded and stood, the quilt folded and placed on the end of the bed. "Surely. I've played with my brothers many evenings."

"I haven't played in some years. Scar isn't much for it." Admiring the way Walker's newly strong muscles played under his shirt, Horace turned the board a bit, trying to hide his glee, made more difficult by the loss of his beard. Still, it had made the loving easier, without all that hair.

"No? He seems wily enough to play a good game. He'd be a pup to beat at cards." Walker's rough-cut hair was beginning to curl at the nape, just a bit, just enough to wrap around a finger.

Those curls begged to be a few inches longer so Horace could hold them, use them to guide that hot little mouth. He watched as Walker made the first move, making his own bold opener, testing the lad. Perhaps they would play for stakes sometime soon.

"He's too lazy to get in too much trouble though."

"Sometimes that's for the best. I never been able to manage it long -- lazy, that is." Walker wasn't a shy player, not at all.

"No, I've not noticed you are. That's good. I'm not one for lying about too long, even in the dead of winter. Which hasn't hit yet, mind." He could imagine long days and longer nights when the snow covered the front door, testing the limits of Walker's lovely pale skin. The lingering stiffness at his crotch swelled a bit just thinking on it.

"What do you do then? Cut wood?" Those long fingers moved over the board, choosing a piece. There was a scar on the top of one hand, curved and clean-cut.

"I do. I mend things. I make myself plates and bowls." Time for his next assault. Horace reached up and stroked the scar. "Where did you get this?"

Those cheeks went fire-engine red, damn near glowing. "A fight with the preacher's son back home."

"You're a scrapper, lad, that's for sure." He let his fingers slide down between the bumps of Walker's knuckles, tracing the tender skin before pulling back to make his next move.

"I, uh. I just don't like people treating their horseflesh wrong." Walker's fingers traced along the same path his own had.

"Oh, I can't abide that. I hope you whupped him." Whippings. Yes indeed, his johnson had an interest there.

"He had the whip to start with, but I thrashed him well and good. His daddy didn't take kindly to it neither. Or his brothers." Walker chuckled, lips quirking as he moved.

"No, I imagine not." Such spark, such fire. Horace shifted, pushing one leg out to the side to give him more space.

Walker was relaxing, focused on the game, eyes calm now. Horace imagined the lad'd talked himself into believing it was a dream, something brought on by the cold.

His knee bounced, his eagerness to prove the lad wrong difficult to ignore. His sock-clad foot slid along the outside of Walker's. "You're good, lad."

He heard the tiny gasp, saw those cheek pink some as the square chin dipped. "I reckon I'm lucky you found me, cold as it is out there."

"Oh no. No, no, lad. I'm the lucky one."

Because Walker was the most responsive thing he'd met in a month of Sundays.

"You?" A man could get caught in those eyes, the curiosity, the focus, just like a wolf in a trap.

"Surely. I've been...lonesome." He put just enough wistfulness into the words, his toes wiggling against Walker's foot.

Walker blinked, shifted in his chair. "You... it is very quiet here. Would be hard to get a wife."

"I've ever preferred the companionship of other men, Walker." He held those eyes, trying to make sure the lad understood. No sense pussyfooting.

Walker swallowed, staring at him. "You prefer... womenfolk are trouble, my pa says."

"Well, I'm surely glad my father thought my sainted mother was worth the bother. But I've not found one yet who would take what I dish out." He jumped three spaces, Walker's distraction working for him.

"I've never courted any. I liked being out in the fields." Walker blinked down at the board, lips twisting as he tried to regain the board.

"Did you like being with the other boys, lad? Did you look at them?" What a delightful notion that was. Walker and some other youngun, fumbling in the rows of tobacco.

"I... 'Tis a sin." Ah, a sin, but the lad nodded, didn't he?

"A sin, eh? Oh, lad. You've no idea what really constitutes a sin." Horace knew, though, and he would happily teach.

"I listened to the preacher tell. Ma even read from the Bible to us, when the river was high."

"The preacher would have us believe that anything that feels good is a sin. Even apple pie." For a moment he thought longingly of Miss Annie Polk's apple pie. She'd be serving it now, at the boardinghouse down in Georgetown. "King me."

"Damn." Walker kinged him, leaned over the board to focus. "The preacher gave a talk once against peaches. Can you figure? Sweet little peaches that the tinker brought up to trade."

"You know what they say peaches are like, don't you, boy?" He grinned, waiting to see if Walker made the connection.

Oh, that confusion -- that he could slurp up like one of those sweet peaches. "Peaches?"

Those eyes landed on his grin, then he saw it dawn on the lad, that mouth forming an 'o'.

"Yes, peaches." He smiled wider, licking his lips.

"I..." Walker shifted the board, hands unsteady as he straightened the pieces. "Your play."

"Right you are, lad." The pieces clicked and clacked as he moved backward with his king, jumping more of Walker's checkers. "I've not had peaches in an age."

"You've played checkers, though. If we were playing for keeps I'd be running for my life."

"Oh, I used to play with my granddad, didn't I? He was a wily one." Those hot cheeks made him want to see if Walker's bottom would take on the same color 'ere he paddled it long. The bruise he'd left told him that one of his hands would span one cheek, tanning it perfectly.

"My brother played some. Taught me poker, too. Not so much as them in Abilene did, but he taught me."

"Poker. Well, there's a sin, now." He winked, taking yet another man. "All that subterfuge."

"Cheating, you mean. I swear, there's more of that than anything."

"True enough. I prefer to win on my own merit." Not that he was above a little more confusion, though, running his toes up Walker's shin.

Walker made a peeping sound, chair creaking on the ground. "'s not the table leg, Horace."

"The table leg wouldn't interest me, lad. You do. Oh, look there. Won't take but two more moves." He grinned, stroking back down again.

Walker rolled his eyes like dice, trying to make a come-back, but it was too late.

The game ended triumphantly for Horace, but he didn't crow on it. That'd be rude. "Too bad I didn't make a wager on it."

"Now I'll know better than to do it." He got a quick smile, a wink, Walker not a foul loser, not cross.

"I've talked myself out of ever getting a forfeit, eh?"

"Played yourself out, mayhap."

Horace put on a sorrowful look, not too much out of the way of his real feelings.

"Too bad, then. I would have liked to bet you for a kiss."

"A kiss? You. But I. You." Walker took a deep breath, closed his lips. "You tease something fierce, Horace."

"Do I?" Planting his elbows on the table, Horace leaned close, his foot slipping and sliding. "Who says I'm teasing?"

"You must be. I. Men do not... not with one another..."

"You think not?" Sitting up, Horace pushed his bench back, holding out his hand. "Come here, lad."

Walker's hand slid into his without thought, the warm skin supple and smooth.

Pleased with the lad's willingness, Horace tugged, pulling Walker down on his lap, stroking the fine belly. He would show the boy what men did together, oh yes he would.

Walker looked at him, much like a rabbit before a snake, stunned and still. "I. I shouldn't."

"Hush now. There's no should or shouldn't here. Just now and silence and us." He let the edge of command creep in, let his voice push Walker to obey.

Those lips parted, but no sound left them, just a faint little gasp.

"Yes, good lad." Horace couldn't wait any longer. He bent to take his reward, covering Walker's mouth with his.

This gasp he felt, Walker's breath pressing into his lips, buttocks clenching where they sat on his thighs.

Horace ate the gasp up, one hand sliding to push Walker's bottom, letting him rise and fall in a parody of fucking.

The hand still held in his was clenched tight, Walker's free hand fluttering like a bird unsure where to land.

"Mmm. On my shoulder will do, lad." He chuckled, pressing first the one, then the other hand to his shoulders so Walker could hang on. Then he bent Walker back over his arm and kissed with intent, tongue pushing into the lad's mouth.

There was a heat pressing against his belly, through homespun and lawn, a need Walker could not deny, could not misunderstand.

His own need rose high and hard, pushing up against his flies. So sweet. He'd known the lad's mouth would be like this, hot, wet, open for him.

It was like training a filly -- half eager, half fright, all covered with the constant back-and-forth of running or staying, bucking or following the hand that led it.

So, like a fractious colt, Horace soothed Walker with sweet touches, rubbing his back, his thighs and chest. In between kisses he murmured, praising Walker's beauty, his willingness to please.

Walker eased for him, just as he wished, following his lead, his will.

He dipped into Walker's trousers, pushing the buttons through the holes, searching inside with his fingers. So hard, so needy without really knowing why. Delicious.

The hands on his shoulders clenched, a cry sounding, and Walker's hips jerked away, pressed close.

"Shhh. S'all right, lad. I promise. Such pleasures we'll find. So pretty, you are. So good." Unable to resist, Horace bent to fasten his lips to Walker's throat, sucking hard.

Walker went still, chin lifting. Then the long prick throbbed in his touch, moving in steady jerks against his palm.

"So proud." Letting his thumb graze the tip, Horace stroked Walker again and again, kissing and licking the mark he'd made.

It wasn't long, not at all, before Walker was crying out, heat spraying over his hand, painting his wrist and Walker's belly.

He'd delayed his own gratification before, but he wasn't willing to now. Holding Walker close, Horace opened his own trousers, pulling his cock out to stroke it, not forcing anything, only showing.

Walker watched, eyes fastened, lips parted and licked again and again, in time with his hand.

Spreading wider, he pulled at his cock, thumb nudging the skin at the end, slipping it back and pressing the slit. His breathing came hard, his lungs working like a bellows.

Those hands at his shoulders squeezed, rolled his skin, matching his rhythm.

He rumbled, heat crawling up his spine, his cock throbbing hard as he came, the willing touch of Walker's hands more than he could stand.

Walker stared at him, holding on to him, naked prick still half-filled, skin dotted with his seed.

Horace deemed it best not to speak right away, instead bending to kiss once more, his wet hand coming up to rub over the purple spot on Walker's neck.

The lean body in his arms relaxed, almost as if the lad was unwilling to fight longer.

Now. Yes, now he could speak. "Lovely, lad. You're simply lovely."

"I have never." Walker swallowed. "I don't understand this, Horace."

"I know. I don't mean to upset you, lad, but you take to it so well." He smiled against Walker's throat before raising his head to look into those pretty eyes. "Better than anyone I've known."

Walker's gaze clung to him, the lad nodded, taking in his words.

All he did was stroke that flushed cheek and mumble some more, the tone more important than the words. "Don't want you getting scared, Walker. I promise, you'll not have any reason to fear what we do, will you now?"

Walker shook his head, relaxing further into the touch. "No. No, it... it felt like heaven itself."

"There you see? There's so much to show you, lad. So much." He just rocked them a little, rumbling low in his chest. Soon, so soon Walker would be ready for the next game.

Horace was pretty damned sure it wouldn't be checkers.

Walker learned to walk the trapline. To find his way back to the cabin in the dark. To hold his own in checkers and make squirrel stew.

To push close to Horace in the dark and share perversions -- kisses and touches that were sure to condemn them both, but were too tempting to avoid.

He brought an armful of wood in, pushing his thoughts aside. Surely it was worse to think of such things in the light of day.

"There you are, lad! Oh, that ought to last us until morning and beyond. Come on, let me help you spread it to dry." Horace just took up all of the space and more than half of the air, surely. The man had taken to clubbing his hair in a queue at the back of his neck, leaving that oddly fine face bare for him to look at and shave and kiss...

He shook himself, focusing on the wood, the work, instead of the rich, good smell of Horace's skin.

Horace's hip bumped his as they moved together, working seamlessly. Supper smelled fine, some sort of bread baking that wasn't biscuits, Horace humming a bawdy tune.

"The skies are grey again. I think the snows are starting again." He was learning the signs, learning the smells in the air.

"Aye, likely." He got a shrewd, sideways look. "Are you wanting to go down into town then, before they start?"

"Town?" Oh, he hadn't thought of leaving. Hadn't at all.

"No? Excellent, lad. Good." One big hand clapped his back. "I don't want you too either."

He nodded, smiled up. "We work well together."

How could he leave so soon, knowing the pleasures they shared would be forever left behind?

"We do." Slipping an arm around him, Horace pulled him close and bussed his cheek. "Glad to hear you think so too, lad."

He cursed his cheeks, which still burned at their intimacy. "The bread smells good."

"I thought we'd have real bread, and since you were chopping I had time." A faraway look came into Horace's eyes. "My mother used to make this. Brown, hearty bread."

"You can make real bread? I can only make biscuits and johnniecakes." He had put him his stores with Horace days ago -- the little wrapped bit of butter, the sack of coffee, the salt pork.

"I can. Not the fancy kind the rich folks eat, but brown bread I can master." He jumped as one big hand landed on his bottom, smacking lightly. Horace made himself completely familiar nowadays.

He rubbed his hind end, tongue sticking out at Horace before he even thought on it.

"Oh, ho! You just think you'll get away with that." He got a wild grin, Horace pulling the bread out of the wee oven on the back of the stove and setting it aside before wheeling and advancing on him.

He'd seen looks like that on wolves, hunting prey, and he scrambled back, looking for footing.

"You'll not get away from me, lad." The grin stretched, Horace's hands flexing.

"I might. I'm faster than I look." He looked from those huge hands to those bright eyes and back again.

"Oh, I've no doubt you're quicker than I am. But where will you go?" Now that was a good point.

He hit the rough-hewn wall, pressed hard against it. "You started this, Horace. You remember that, surely?"

Horace rushed him, bearlike paws wrapping around him, arms lifting him right up off the floor. "Of course I did, lad. All in good fun. Have I steered you wrong yet?"

He shook his head, flailing some, trying to keep his too-interested shaft from Horace's notice.

"You might have to have some faith on this one, though." The cot creaked under their combined weight as Horace sat.

"Faith? Horace?" He stretched, trying to work out what the man planned.

"Hush now." Usually those words preceded something earthshattering, and this seemed no exception, Horace turning him facedown over those strong thighs.

Walker went still and tense, stomach flipping over enough that it near tied itself in a knot.

The hand that settled at the small of his back felt heavy, warm through his thin shirt, the fingers stroking just a bit. "You're not scared, lad, surely?"

No. No. Not scared. Unsure. Worried. Heated all through. "Not scared, Horace, just... what will we... are you?"

"We'll do nothing that makes you feel bad, I swear. You're made for this, lad." The touch moved, the hand sliding down to cup his bottom.

He shifted, body pushing back into the touch. The most perverse sound wanted to leave him as his shaft rubbed against his clothes.

"Yes, you see? It feels good." A sharp smack stung his right cheek, not hard enough to hurt, just enough to tingle.

That made him wriggle, made the last of the worry leave him. His pa had thrashed him, but this...

This was not that.

No, this was nothing like that, the other side receiving a blow that felt exactly the same as the first, springing right down through his privates.

The blows made him want to move, to wiggle and rub himself against Horace's thigh shamelessly. He bit his lip, shivering. "Horace. Horace, I..."

"You what, lad? You want more, don't you." Two more blows fell in sharp succession, pushing him this way and that.

"I." Did he? Is that what is wished? His shaft seemed so. "I can't think."

"Don't think, Walker. Only feel." Oh. Oh, Horace's hand seemed huge, covering every inch of his skin, the blows softened only by his pants.

His heart pounded, throbbing against Horace, hips slowly beginning to move, rock beneath the blows.

Horace said hardly another word, setting to on him until the heat roared through him, until his muscles jumped and twitched.

Deep sounds pushed out of him, muscles clenching and releasing. Part of him insisted that he had to move away, pull away. The bigger part rubbed more furiously, need soaring.

"Let it go, lad. Just let it go. I want to feel it." Those words, so deep and rough after such a long silence surprised him, pushed him.

"Horace." He could say nothing more, just finding himself humping that thick thigh like a dog.

Just as the last blow fell, Horace raised his leg, the friction exploding along his nerves.

He spent with a sob, backside burning, body aching and convulsing.

Walker opened his mouth, the kiss necessary, vital. His shaft was still throbbing, so sensitive in the wet cloth.

He could feel Horace, hard against him as well, long and firm even through their trousers. Every push of that strong body burned his raw behind, the wool of his pants rubbing.

Oh, he wished for them to be bare, for their skin to touch again. Walker pushed toward the kiss, breathing in air that was all flavored with Horace.

"Mmm. Such a good lad." Horace put a hand under his bottom and lifted, kissing him again and again.

His backside burned, ached, stung and it was... So good. So very big.

With his other hand Horace drew one of Walker's down between them, pressing it over Horace's shaft where it strained.

His gasp sounded loud, fingers wrapping around Horace's heat, needing to feel, curious.

"Buttons, lad. Undo the buttons." That big voice rumbled, vibrating through him. It made him shivery.

"Oh." He pinked, looked down to try and remind his fingers to work, to move. They were holding Horace and didn't seem to want to let go.

"If you undo the buttons you can have it with nothing between." The big hand still holding him squeezed, giving him the most delicious pain.

"Yes." He whimpered, shifting in Horace's touch, sliding the buttons open and freeing Horace's flesh.

Hot and hard, Horace pushed into his hand, hips pumping up. "Good, Walker. Good."

Horace felt so hot, thick and leaking against his hand. He blinked down, watching, heart pounding like a newborn calf.

Straining out of the fly of Horace's pants, that thick shaft throbbed, moved in and out of his clenched fingers. Horace praised him, petted and patted him, face set in a grimace of pleasure.

He couldn't believe what he saw, couldn't begin to understand it, so instead he simply felt.

"That's it, lad. That...just that way." The growl made his heart jump. Horace just...he couldn't believe it.

He looked up, staring into Horace's eyes. "I never knew."

"You will. This and more. Harder, Walker. Touch me harder."

"Harder." He squeezed as if he were milking the cows, fingers rubbing, rolling, tugging good and firm.

"Yes." It was a mere gasp, the hot drops coming faster now, Horace's chest working like a bellows. Just as his thumb slid over the very top of Horace's shaft the man groaned, hips pumping as he shot, warm jets covering Walker's fist.

It was much like milking. So much. Yet... not. The thought made near-hysterical laughter bubble up inside him.

"Mmm. Are you laughing at me, lad?" There was no censure there, Horace sounding lazy and happy.

"No. No. I... I just can't stop."

"Sometimes loving has that effect. It makes you bubble over like a too-tight pot." Horace squeezed him, smiling against his neck. "It's all right."

He took a deep breath, leaning in. Oh. Better. Better. "Yes. Yes. All right."

"You're lovely, Walker. Perfect. It's going to be the best winter."

Walker was beginning to believe that.

Chapter Three

He got himself a little groan and that hand moved down, wrapping around the base of his cock and squeezing. Walker's ass tightened on his thigh, the muscles taut and firm.

Smiling against the lad's skin, Horace started stroking, needing that sweet body writhing on him. He needed Walker to stop worrying about silly things like sunshine and proper.

They found a rhythm together, Walker's touch echoing his. Walker seemed fascinated by the textures of his cock, fingers tracing the ridge of the tip, dipping in to gather the wetness in the slit.

Horace hummed his pleasure, encouraging Walker on to greater heights of pleasure, his thumb tracing the vein at the underside of the lad's cock.

"Horace." Walker leaned forward, forehead on his shoulder. That gave him a lovely view of that long, pale spine.

He touched with his free hand, sliding it down Walker's back, caressing every bump. The skin there was smooth as a baby's butt, untouched by the elements.

The heat there fascinated him, knowing that skin was red and bruised and his hand caused it.

Lord, but that skin took his marks like nothing going. It was too soon to work Walker like that again, though. He settled for cupping that fiery ass in one hand, upping the speed on the strokes from his other hand.

Walker almost stood, then settled back against his palm with a groan. "You're a temptation."

"Am I? I'm not near as much as you are, boy. You make me want to turn you inside out." His lips closed over the mark he'd made and he stroked back around to the tender insides of Walker's thighs.

"Not a boy." Walker dared to nip at his skin, teeth scraping just enough to sting.

"No? Well, you have teeth, don't you?" That little pain had him laughing, squeezing Walker's balls lightly. "I like it."

Walker actually chuckled, eyes flashing up to him. "You... Lord. I."

"Oh, lad. You have no idea." Horace took a kiss because he couldn't not when Walker's face was turned up like that, soft, bruised lips just a'waitin'.

That kiss went deep, Walker opening right up for the press of his tongue. One arm wrapped around his shoulder, the fingers around his cock pulling faster, harder.

The lad had the finest instincts. And after the practiced caresses Horace had taken from men he'd paid for this, it was refreshing as a dip in the snow.

He managed to turn Walker about a bit, got the lad straddling his thighs. Then, with a little encouragement, Walker had both their shafts together, hand moving up and down, squeezing them together.

Perfect.

Horace watched, torn between Walker's hand on them and the lad's face. The cock was flushed and dark, pretty as could be. The face was flushed too, and fascinated.

Walker jerked, rocking on his thighs, the heat between them making them both slick with sweat.

That was the solution to the stove. He'd just have to keep Walker both nude and busy. Horace added his hand to the mix, closing his big paw over Walker's much smaller hand. Oh, yes, he'd have the lad clean, and move the woodpile...

"Horace. Horace, I'll." Those lean muscles went taut as a bowstring, Walker's head tossing.

"Yes, you will. Over and over. Come on, love. I want to feel." He wanted to smell and taste, as well.

Walker's lips parted, the heat pouring over his fingers just so. Yes. The scent of male and desire and need was heady, filling the air.

Horace let the lad ride out every bit of pleasure before bringing their hands up to lick them clean. Sharing the taste with Walker.

"So wicked." Yes, but so very good. So very necessary. He noted Walker didn't pull away, either.

"Mmm. I have a wicked need, as well." He had not spent himself yet. "I think you should use your mouth."

That wide-eyed look was almost enough to make him spend, right then and there. "My? Horace?"

Clearing his throat, he nodded. "Your mouth. On me. You can get down on your knees, love, and I'll help you."

"I..." Those eyes searched his, the mixture of confusion and desire a pure addiction. "I've never."

"Then there's never been a better time to try." Horace grinned, hoping it wasn't akin to a rabid bear's snarl. His hands opened and closed on Walker's shoulders. "I'd like it so much."

Walker's mouth opened and closed, then the lad knelt between his legs, hands callused and warm on his thighs.

"That's it. That's it." He stroked Walker's hair, smiling down, his fingers massaging Walker's scalp. "Now get a feel for it. You can start anywhere."

"What if I hurt you?" Walker's cheek slid along his shaft, the hint of stubble rasping against him.

"You won't. You don't want to, so you won't." Poor lad. So unsettled. Horace couldn't be too sympathetic, though. His prick ached too much.

Walker closed his eyes, lips brushing the base of his shaft, the curls crowning it.

"Good lad." That deserved encouragement, so he stroked Walker's hair, murmuring soft words, the kind he thought women might like to hear, the kind that a confused lad would find sweet.

He could feel Walker relax, lean against his legs. Those hands and tongue stroked his shaft, so careful, so gentle.

Soon he would need a stronger touch, but for now he would let the lad learn his way. This was the first time, something to savor. Not to be rushed.

And he'd be damned if Walker didn't take his time. The lad was going to drive him mad, with the way that tongue slid over the wet tip of his cock, those fingers cradling his aching balls.

"Need more, lad. Need...unh." His words trailed right off when Walker sucked experimentally at the head of his prick.

That earned him another suck and another until he felt like his toes were going to break right off, they were curled so tight.

"Walker. Making me want so much." There. Let the lad see his need. Not that Walker couldn't feel it in his pulse.

Those eyes flashed open, staring up at him. So pleased.

Thank the good lord Walker started sucking harder as well.

"Sweet boy." All he could do was watch, his thighs shaking. The boy would undo him.

Walker's fingers shifted, rolling his balls in their sack and making him arch up, push deeper. Walker gasped, but did not pull away from him.

"S'good. Don't stop, now. Don't stop." Yes, that touch had him ready, so close to spending he could feel it up and down his spine.

A low groan vibrated him, balls to bones, and that was all she wrote, world tightening down to that pretty mouth and his prick.

Walker took him in over and over, such a quick study. So good.

Then Walker's hand slipped, fingers stroking the skin behind his sacs, nails just scraping.

Horace spent himself so hard that his head snapped back like he'd stepped aboard an ornery mule just waiting to buck. Felt like he'd been kicked in the belly by one, too. Damnation, that felt too good to be real.

Walker scrambled to get a bit of a shirt to wipe them both down, murmuring restless little words, humming against his skin. Fluttery feller.

"Shhh." Horace reached out with one hand and snagged the boy, pulling him over and wrapping around him. "Hush now. Time for sleeping."

It was right nice, the way Walker nodded and pushed close, legs tangling with his.

He could spend the winter this way with no complaints.

No, sir. No complaints at all.

Well, except for the stove.

Walker woke up burning hot, buried as he was beneath Horace and quilts. Lord have mercy, it was almost like this little cabin was a little piece of summer in the midst of more snow than he'd ever seen.

He scooted out from under Horace, naked as the day he was born. He couldn't believe the things they did, the things Horace showed him.

It was near as unreal as the snows drifted up outside, threatening to cover them all.

He stoked the fire some, hunting his unders and his britches. Naked. With Horace's handprint just faded on his backside.

Lord.

"Mmmm. You look fine in the firelight. Leave the clothes off." Stretching, Horace threw off the covers and lay back, hands behind his head.

"It's unnatural to be bare..." Well, now. That didn't make a lick of sense. Critters were bare-naked all the time.

"Oh, now, I can see I don't even need to answer that." He got a grin, bright as a chipmunk with a new nut.

"Well, no, but it's still a sin." He wandered back to the bed, hand over his crotch, looking for a soft place to light.

"Why?" Horace pulled him down on something decidedly not soft, all hard thighs and harder prick.

"Because. It's carnal pleasures. That's what the preacher says." He stretched out, his skin warming nicely with Horace's.

"Oh, does he, now? That's just because he don't get none." That red beard split, Horace's laugh booming off the walls.

"Ew. Brother Travis was a hundred years old and didn't have no teeth." His laugh joined Horace's as he grabbed the blanket and pulled it over them.

"Nothing wrong in what we do, son. Not a thing. Long as we both want it." One big hand dug under the blanket and cupped his bottom.

"Who wouldn't want?" The words sorta slipped out of him without him giving them leave.

"There you are." That touch was so sweet, fingers stroking his spine up and down.

He hummed, eyelids dropping some like an old hound needing a scratch. "That's fine."

"So are you, lad. Very fine indeed. The things you make me want." Yes, he had been privy to some of those already. What else could the man want, he wondered.

So, he took the bull by the horns and asked. "What all do you want that I could give you, then?"

"Oh, love. You have no idea. I have furs for my hands. I could stroke you all over. Or I could tie you with a cloth and smack your sweet backside with my razor strop."

Oh.

Oh, goodness.

The sound that came out of him wasn't even a little bit sensible or quiet.

"Oh ho! You like that idea, hmm? Someday soon you'll have your own ideas, I vow." Horace patted his bottom, just hard enough to sting a tiny bit.

"I." Did he? Would he? He was so far outside his home waters it weren't funny.

"Mmm. Yes, I think you do like it. We'll try that. We'll try other things as well. I'd love to bind you here..." That hand came around to cup his prick and balls.

"Why?" He would not squeak like a startled chicken. He would not.

Shiver and push into Horace's touch? Yes. But not squeak.

"Because you can't spend, lad. So it makes it all so much **more**." The look in Horace's eyes gave him shivers.

"Horace..." He couldn't imagine more. No, indeed. Couldn't imagine more at all.

"We should try that now, I think." The quilt went flying and Horace rose, damned fine, muscles all rippling while he made for the trunk along the wall.

He sat up, hands cupping his Johnson - which couldn't quite decide whether to hide or to throb and harden, damn it.

"Are you sure it's wise? What if it falls off?"

"It's not gonna be on that long, boy." That note had crept back into Horace's voice, the one that made his body stand up and take note, made him want to fall in and do whatever the man told him. Or fight.

The question was, just like always, which one did he do first.

"I'm not a boy."

"Uh huh. You're my boy, which is different." Somehow Horace made that sound logical.

"You sound like you plan to keep me." And wasn't that a thought, to stay here and make his home.

"I would if you'd let me." Horace shrugged, making muscles slide under his skin again. "We'll see come spring, eh? Here it is."

It was a long, long time 'til spring.

"Here what is?"

A tangle of straps sat in Horace's hand when he came back to the bed, dangling a little.

"Something I got in the city, lad. You know how those city folks are."

He nodded. "Yeah. Yeah, I had to get away from that. Them sheriffs didn't go for me."

"Oh, lad. In San Francisco it's so big they wouldn't even know you were there." The straps resolved themselves into some kind of harness. A small one.

"You've been all that way? Did you see the ocean?" Good lord. Who conceived of such a thing?

"I did and I have. Been twice. But I always come back here." Pushing him down, Horace spread Walker's legs, circling his balls with one strap.

"I. Are you sure you. I mean, honestly, I." His balls tightened, the leather cool and silken and strange against him.

"I'm sure." Another strap went around the base of his cock, and oh...when Horace tightened the straps and fastened them, it was just. Oh.

"Horace..." He reached down, fingers exploring, entire body going tight.

"Not too tight is it, lad?" Horace touched too, running rough fingers all the way around.

"I. No?" How tight was too tight? Things didn't belong down there.

They didn't.

"Let me test it out." Horace's hand closed tight on his prick, and that man just bent and wrapped hot lips around the head of it, sucking good and hard.

His head snapped back, the heat and pleasure and wet more than he could bear. His hips bucked up, pushing him deeper into Horace's lips.

Horace grunted, sucking all the way down to the straps and pressing hard. He could feel the hot breath, the wetness of Horace's tongue. He could feel every inch of his skin tingling.

His world tightened to that mouth, the heat around him and the rhythmic slide of his backside on the sheets.

Horace gave and gave, fingers sliding under his balls to lift them, just releasing the pressure the tiniest bit. Then his sacs dropped back on the harness.

Sounds poured from him that he never would have believed he could make - rough, desperate, ringing out like he was the most shameless man.

"Mmmhmmm." Encouraging him, Horace made fine noises as well, low, deep rumbles. Those hands urged him on, moving him in and out.

His fingers gripped the sheets so hard they ached, his legs splaying wide, begging for more, for release.

He couldn't release, though. Even when he gave his body leave, the straps kept him from spending.

"Horace..." He scrambled away across the bed, heart pounding, hands reaching for his prick.

"No." Grabbing him, Horace hauled him back to the edge of the bed. "No, not yet."

"I..." Gasping for air, heart pounding, he met Horace's eyes, searching for answers, questions, anything.

Those bright eyes just stayed on his, steady as a rock. There was nothing to fear there. Nothing.

"I got you, lad. I've got you."

Oh. He nodded, reaching out to stroke Horace's soft, swollen lips.

"Trust me," Horace said against his fingers, reaching out to stroke Walker's belly. "I won't lead you wrong."

"I do. It's big." So big, what Horace did for him.

"I know. Let's just sit a minute." Pulling him back up on those heavy thighs, Horace cradled him, letting him breathe.

Warm. Oh. He found himself curling close, resting, relaxing against Horace, tension seeping from him.

"That's it, lad. That's it. See how good it feels?" Yes, he could feel it now, building slower and easier, not so overwhelming.

Horace's chest was hot against his cheek, the hair there soft, catching on the stubble and tugging as he nodded.

Stroking his back, Horace hummed against his hair, rocking a little. "All you have to do is feel how good it is, lad. Not be afraid of it."

"I just. It was like being caught up in a storm." His hand started moving, started sliding over Horace's stomach, over the soft hair and hard muscles.

"Well, we'll take it slower. You just got to me, boy, all bound up like that." Horace chuckled, the sound bouncing him around on Horace's chest.

"Mmhmm." His cheek slid over one nipple and that little bit of flesh tightened, catching his attention. He rubbed again and again, abrading it.

"Mmm. Lad, you'd best watch it." Horace was wiggling, moving against him, cock prodding his hip.

His lips were next, soothing the pinked skin. "This is better?"

"It's all good, lad. I just didn't want too much too fast. You see?" One long finger and thumb pinched at Walker's nipple, sending sensation zinging down to his cock.

"Uh-huh." He shivered, shifting away from the touch and nipping the nipple near his lips.

"Oh, now. Are you trying to distract me, love?" Horace popped his ass.

He found himself caught between that sting and the pleasure in that single word and he nipped again before sliding away, wrapping the quilt about himself.

"Walker?" Brows lowering, Horace stared at him, concern in those bright eyes. "What is it, lad? What's wrong?"

"Nothing. Nothing, I..." He couldn't stay too far away, sliding to wrap them together in the blanket. "You make me want things, so many things."

"Good. It's better that way." Horace wasn't much for talking, he'd already found that out, but the big man was more than willing to comfort, letting him snuggle right into those muscled arms.

Of course, snuggling close brought his bound prick into contact with that heated belly and his hips rolled, rocking without him giving them a say-so.

"Your body knows what to do, lad." That laugh tickled his throat, Horace's breath warm and good.

"It sure seems to." He got his fingers tangled in Horace's thick hair.

"You see? You just have to trust in it, and in me." As if testing his grip, Horace tossed his head, grunting happily when Walker held on.

That brought him closer, kept him right there where they could move together. He did trust Horace, more than he could fathom.

"That's it, lad." Horace always encouraged, always loved on him so good. When he wasn't giving orders. Horace helped him move so they pressed good and tight, his bound prick right up against Horace's free one.

He couldn't stop moving, rubbing on Horace like a big ole cat. Every inch of his skin tingled, the need and pleasure and anticipation mingling all together in his head.

"Now, I think it's time we finished this little experiment." Horace grabbed their swinging pricks, pulling at them both in time, giving him heat and skin and pleasure untold.

He nodded, gasping and panting into Horace's mouth, holding Horace as tight as he could.

They rocked, the time for pulling back or talking over. Horace's body radiated heat better than any stove, making him sweat and pant and groan.

His thighs slid against Horace's sides, the rub of their skin together just making everything bigger. Better.

"Sweet lad. Sweet love." All of a sudden his cock was free, the straps sliding away, the tight grip on his balls loosening.

"Horace." He arched, bucking furiously, needing now.

Then the world shattered all around him, bright and sparkling and white around him.

"Sweet Walker." Horace arrived right behind him, adding hot spunk to his, coating his skin.

He shuddered, resting limp and worn and so happy in Horace's arms.

Horace just petted him, praised him, leaning them down until they lay on the bed, curling together under the quilt.

When he drifted off he could just vaguely hear Horace murmur, "Yes, boy. I think I'll keep you."

Chapter Four

Horace whistled as he chopped, the sound of the axe hitting the log making him feel like he was really getting some work done. There was nothing like chopping to make him feel like he could take on the world.

He needed more wood for Walker. So he could keep the lad naked. Oh, they'd had a few missteps, Walker getting shy on him and hiding a little. But he knew they'd get past that. Walker had the need in him, the desire for all things sensual.

They just needed to expand on that.

He hauled a load of wood inside, staring at Walker, who had put on *clothes*.

"I made up a stew with some of them taters." Walker was in the shadows some, hiding.

He frowned a little. "Sounds good, but what's wrong, sweet?"

"Nothing. Nothing at all." Walker ran his fingers through those sweet curls, the hair standing up all over. "You need help bringing in the wood?"

"Not really. But we could go for a walk." Maybe the lad just had cabin fever. A little romp in the snow might do him a world of good. Then they could come back to the cabin and Horace could put him through his paces.

"Yeah? I could breathe some sunshine and air."

"Well, this ain't a prison, boy. You can go out anytime you want. Let's go walk." He dug out snowshoes, determined to give the lad what he needed.

"I've been lazy. Bare naked." Walker bundled himself up, strapping on the snowshoes like he was born to it.

"You haven't been lazy." He gave the lad a slow, hopefully hot and not scary smile. "Naked, yes."

Oh. Oh, lord have mercy. It was a good thing that Walker didn't have the foggiest idea about the power of that smile that turned on him, a bit shy, but mostly heated.

And his. All his.

His hands clenched and unclenched while he tried to kick out the idea that he just needed to strip Walker naked now and skip the walk. The lad needed to get out. "Well. Shall we, lad?"

"Yessir." To his surprise, Walker touched his wrist, then bounced out to the snow, laughing aloud.

"Goodness." Horace put his feet down hard, thinking maybe he was a prison guard, if Walker was that happy to get out and away from him.

Walker turned around and around. "I just can't believe it. How white it is."

"It is that." All right, maybe Walker just had a little wonder in him. Horace thought that was better than taking blame or assigning it, after all. He wadded up a ball of snow and threw it. "Cold, too."

Walker caught it instinctively, sputtering and hooting as it exploded in his face. "Horace!"

It just took a second for Walker to respond, one mass of snow smashing against his shoulder.

Laughing, he swept a great armful of snow on Walker, flinging it with all his considerable strength. Oh, that made a pretty, white lad.

"Oh! I vow, that's cheating!" He found himself with an armful of man, Walker pushing him down to the ground.

He oofed, his legs flying up in the air, a shout of laughter escaping him. "Well played, boy!"

Those bright eyes shone down at him, then Walker gave him a kiss, full and deep, tongue pressing in to taste him before disappearing.

Horace made a surprised sound and kissed back, his hands closing around Walker's back to hold him close. And kiss him some more.

Lord, the lad was a fine mixture of need and reluctance and it was all for him. Walker pressed closer, shivering, murmuring his name.

"You sure you don't want to go back in, lad?" He reached down, cupping Walker in one hand.

"I think it would be warmer inside." Walker pushed toward his touch, groaning low.

"Yes." Horace lurched, yanking Walker up with him, brushing the snow off the lad's knees and his own ass. "Come along."

Walker tromped back inside, cleaning their snowshoes, drying them just like he'd been shown. Good lad.

Horace grabbed him then, unable to resist taking a kiss, lifting Walker right up off the floor.

Walker's lips were cold outside, but hot as blazes within and Walker opened right up to him.

Oh. He groaned, kissing harder, loving all over the lad. He needed like he had not been out in the cold at all. Like a raging fire.

Walker drank his moan right down, hands opening and closing against his shoulders, tugging him in close.

"Sweet love." He yanked Walker even closer, rubbing like mad, needing warmth and wet and sweet.

Walker's fingers slid inside his shirt, warming themselves on his skin.

Horace hooted and shivered. "You're something, lad. Really something."

"Something good?"

"Something fine." His hands moved of their own will, stripping off clothes, getting Walker naked again. It was an addiction, that boy's skin. It really was.

"Always stripping me down." Walker stepped closer, cuddling into him, half-hard prick snugged tight against his hip.

"That's because you're beautiful bare." Horace kissed down Walker's throat, his chest, the little nipples so hard they had to almost hurt.

Walker arched, moving instinctively toward his lips, begging for sensation.

He wrapped his mouth around one bitty point of skin and tugged, sucking hard. Oh, the lad liked that. Yes he did.

Deep raw little sounds poured out of Walker, those hands hard in his hair. Oh, delicious.

So sweet. God, that was...yes indeed. He moved to the other nipple, sucking hard at it, too.

"Horace." The sounds grew louder, Walker's cock throbbing like he was sucking at it, working it with his mouth.

"Mmmhmm. Feel that," he said against Walker's skin, nipping with his teeth. "Feel how good."

Each bite made those fingers squeeze him like a ripe fruit, Walker gasping and shuddering beneath him.

He curled one arm under Walker's buttocks, his other hand going down to touch that hot, hard prick. So wet for him.

Walker rolled toward his touch, humping his hand like a naughty puppy, shaft sliding through his fingers.

"The best kind, though." Yes, indeed. He needed to give Walker his head more often if it got him this.

Yes, he would definitely have to look into that.

The wind had started blowing a day ago, swirling around the cabin and screaming.

Screaming.

Walker moaned, pacing from the door to the window, trying to escape that sound that dragged down his spine, scraping like broke glass.

He might go mad.

Honestly.

Horace seemed not to even hear it, sitting calmly by the fire and whittling on a piece of wood, a scrap of cloth on his lap to catch the curls of bark. The man was an immovable damned mountain.

He watched the snow swirling and twisting through the glass, fingers opening and closing on the sill.

"What's the matter, boy?" Horace asked him, setting aside his carving. "Come here."

"It just keeps on and on. The noise. It eats at me."

"Oh. I don't even hear it no more." When he got close enough Horace grabbed him and pulled him down across those heavy thighs.

"How can you..." He shifted, sliding a bit. "How can you not?"

"I just don't hear it." Horace shrugged. "Maybe we need to drown it out."

"Drown it out?" Would they sing?

"Mmmhmm. We need to get you making some noise." Horace kissed his throat, fingers working at his heavy shirt.

Horace had the hungriest mouth.

Walker didn't moan, but his chin lifted, offering more of his throat.

"Mmmm." Horace almost drowned out the wind with that bass rumble, licking at his skin. Then biting a little.

Those teeth sent tiny jolts of lightning down his spine, settling in his balls.

"Mmm. See? That's helping already." That beard tickled his skin like crazy, rubbing against his Adam's apple.

"Hmm?" He gasped, torn between pulling away and pushing closer.

Chuckling, Horace kissed the beard burn on his skin. "Nothing, lad. Nothing at all. Like this?"

"You... I do, Horace. You make my skin tingle like there was lightning in the air."

"Mmmm. I like to make you tingle." Those bright green eyes danced while they moved close, Horace's mouth closing over his.

He lost the scream of the wind to the pounding of his own heart, his breath caught in his chest.

Big hands moving, Horace stroked him front and back, cupping his prick and his buttocks and sort of lifting him. Making every bit of him take notice.

Horace moved to the center of his world, Walker not able to do more than feel and beg and need.

He could feel Horace hard under him, the big cock pressing up. The man just surrounded him, overwhelmed him.

He would have reached down, stroked, but he couldn't think, could no more make his hands work than he could pull away from Horace.

Horace didn't seem to mind, just letting him ride it, biting his lower lip hard enough to sting.

His hips snapped, balls drawn up tight as a bowstring, near aching. Oh. Oh, he was gonna. Uhn.

Heat splashed against his belly, pleasure pouring through him.

"There, now. There. So pretty, lad." Horace was panting, face flushed, but Walker could tell he was nowhere near to finishing.

It was like his bones melted, just relaxed and easy all through. The firelight sparkled some in his eyes as he blinked and stared.

Horace laughed, the sound deep and merry. "What next, lad? I'm thinking your mouth on me."

His cheeks heated right up, but he nodded a bit. He could do that, loved the way Horace called out for him when he sucked Horace, licked the thick shaft.

"Yes. I think that will be fine." Those hands closed on his shoulders, helping him slide down on the floor between massive thighs.

His hands opened and closed around Horace's calves, his cheek brushing the soft, soft inside of Horace's thigh. The man smelled good, sorta rich and fine, tasted salty on his tongue.

"Mmmm." A low, bass rumble sounded, Horace resettling on his seat, pushing up. Heavy balls swung, so close, nudging his chin.

So soft. Walker closed his eyes, lips and tongue sliding over those wiry curls, the wrinkled skin that seemed to move against his lips.

Horace hummed, the sound happy and heated. The man moved into his touch, then away, just pushing and pressing.

His air was flavored with need, with the musk and salt of Horace's heat. Walker did his best, licking and nuzzling, tongue flat and pressing against the heavy sacs.

"That's it, lad." Urging him on, Horace stroked his hair, sweet and soft for such hard hands.

Those soft words made him ache inside, made him want to please Horace and hear them again and again.

He licked up along Horace's shaft, then wrapped his lips around the tip for a sucking kiss.

"Oh!" Horace jumped, prick twitching madly. That skin felt hotter than the fire, tasted bitter and addictive. "Again."

He sucked again and again, tongue stroking against the delicate, soft skin, pushing against the wet, salty slit.

Horace squirmed, making the most amazing sounds. Hands opening and closing on his shoulders, Horace pulled him farther down on the heavy cock, begging him with actions more than words for more, much more.

Walker did his best, trying to relax, to give Horace more, to give Horace what he needed.

Horace praised him, harsh sounds that were almost words pouring down on him. Then Horace bucked for him, shout ringing out in the little cabin as Horace spilled right into his mouth.

He swallowed and pulled, doing his best to breathe, to take all of Horace in.

Horace finally pulled away, moaning a little as that hot prick slipped from his lips. "Oh, lad. Have I told you how I adore you?"

Oh.

Oh, that.

His cheeks heated and he reached up for Horace, settling back in the man's lap.

Chapter Five

Horace had decided that it was time to further Walker's education.

The wind and snow still came, and while the lad was more trusting and easier in his mind, he was still wandering about like a lost soul. It was time to shake things up a bit.

Horace had a pot of grease, a soft pile of blankets before the fire, and a smile on his face as he stripped off his shirt and trousers.

"Come here, lad. I have something for you."

"Hmm?" Walker wandered close, not hesitating at all.

He held out a hand, crooking his fingers. "Come on, lad. Right here. We're going to have such fun."

"You look as if you've got wickedness on your mind." Walker's eyes were smiling, the lad's fingers curling around his.

Tugging Walker to him, Horace wrapped his arms around the lad, feeling the warmth of his body, the smoothness of his skin. "I do, indeed."

Oh, how sweet, the way Walker stepped into him, pushed into his touch. Walker had learned so much, so very much in such a short time.

Now he was about to learn more. Horace took a kiss, determined to get Walker loose and happy. He wanted in, inside the lad's body. But he would never hurt.

Walker's tongue slid against his own, the kiss long and slow, easy. Raising one hand, he cradled Walker's head, tilting him so that the kiss could go deeper, stronger. Sweeter. The taste of his lad spread through his whole body, making him tingle. He was fed one deep moan after another, Walker gone languid and heated in his arms.

"Sweet. Oh, sweet. You might make me forget myself." They needed to do more than rub, though. So much more.

Those warm, needy eyes near glowed with the firelight, shining up at him. "I swear, Horace, you heat me through."

"Good. It's a cold day." Just to keep Walker on his toes, Horace popped his ass just hard enough to sting.

Walker jerked, hips pushing close, shaft beginning to fill.

"Mmm. Yes, I think it's time to play." He let out a laugh, letting it fill the cabin with his joy. He smacked Walker one more time, just for good measure, before pulling them both to the floor.

Walker's cheeks were as pink as his handprint would be on that fine backside.

"There's no shame in liking what we do, you know." He didn't think that was the cause of the color, but it didn't hurt to remind the boy. Then he reminded Walker who was boss, leaning down to bite his shoulder.

"Horace!" Oh, that fine skin felt good under his teeth, the flavor of salt and male rich on his tongue.

"Yes?" Grinning, he licked over where he'd bit, feeling the bumps his teeth left there.

"I. That. Uh." Walker shuddered, hands opening and closing on his arms, heat beginning to build between them.

Yes, sir. That was just something else. He eased Walker onto his back, stretching out next to him, one hand sliding over the flat belly bared for him.

Walker's shaft curved toward his hand, the tip beginning to swell, to glisten with those first sweet, clear drops that proved Walker's need.

"Oh, that's a good lad." Hellfire, Walker made him want. Everything. Horace grunted, pushing his prick against Walker's hip.

"Not... not a lad." Walker's lips found his jaw, teeth scraping over his skin.

"No? Compared to me you are. I'm a crusty old bastard." He didn't feel old, though. He felt ten feet tall, able to scale mountains.

"Pshaw." That scrape became a nip, Walker pushing him.

Oh ho! Someone was bold. Horace rolled Walker beneath him, trapping him with his much bigger body. "You need a lesson in manners?"

Walker groaned, pushing and rocking beneath him, hands pushing at him even as the lad's cock slid against him.

Such a wonder, his Walker. So much natural need, and yet so timid. Horace let his hands and mouth wander, biting here, pinching there.

Every touch, every taste earned him a new sound, another sweet cry.

He found the grease after who knew how long, his fingers closing around the lid of the pot to twist it off. Two fingers got good and oiled before he slipped them down between Walker's cheeks.

"Horace?" Walker blinked and stilled, stared at him like a rabbit would look at a snake.

"Shhh. It's all right, love. All right." He soothed, licking Walker's lips, opening them for a kiss that curled his own toes.

It spoke to him, how the lad eased at his words, trusting him without question.

"There you go." He slipped his fingers along the crease, letting the slick work into the skin there, letting Walker feel how good that could be.

"You're all slippery." One of Walker's legs slid alongside his, opening the lad up. Such instincts.

"Mmm. And now you are, too. You need more, though." He got more of the grease, his forefinger touching Walker's hole.

"More." That tiny wrinkled spot tensed, squeezed tight against him for a moment before he distracted Walker with another kiss, a series of gentle strokes that relaxed.

He rubbed his beard on Walker's neck, knowing how that would make the lad laugh. Then he let his finger slide right into Walker, right past the ring of muscle that tightened up around him.

"Oh..." Walker's body rippled around him, sweet as anything, and he could imagine it, that tight heat holding his prick deep inside.

It made his blood race right through him, pooling low in his belly, in his cock. Horace moaned, pulling his finger out, only to push it in again. "Just like that, love."

"I. You..." Walker's eyes searched his face, tongue slipping out to wet those parted lips. "How you **look**, Horace."

"You're temptation made flesh, lad. Such a feast." Carefully, gently, he added another finger, his body thrumming at the thought of how it would be when Walker knew how to relax himself, how to take him easily.

"Full of you. Horace. I. You're **inside** me."

"I am. Just wait. There's more." Oh, he couldn't wait to see Walker's face then.

"M...more..." He wasn't exactly sure if that was a request or a question. Either way, Horace rewarded the word with a deep, sharp kiss.

His fingers moved in and out while they locked together, his mouth no doubt bruising Walker's, but he couldn't stop. Not for all the gold in the Rockies.

Walker began to move with him, hips rolling and bucking toward his touch like the lad was born to it.

Hell, maybe he was. He just didn't know it.

Horace hummed and kissed and licked and finally pulled his fingers out. "Ready for the next step, love?"

"I don't. Horace. Help me." One hand slid down, reaching for Walker's needy prick, even as Walker's eyes begged him for more. For something he wasn't even sure the lad understood.

"Shh. That's it. Touch yourself, lad. Keep that sweet bit hard for me." He rolled Walker to his side, moving to cuddle up to that sweet backside. It would be easier that way, at least this time. Oh, what he would give to have Walker ride him. Soon.

Walker leaned back toward him, the trust there heady, leading him to grab ahold of that tanned nape and bite, let his teeth scrape and mark. Horace licked and moved, his prick rubbing Walker's cleft, up and down, pressing between the muscled cheeks. So good.

Walker relaxed, pushed back toward him, the slow rocking matching his own movements.

"Yes. See how good that feels?" Now he was ready to start the avalanche. "Wait until I put it inside you."

"You. Horace..." Walker groaned, rippling against him. "You'll not fit."

"Oh, I will. You just have to trust me, lad." He rolled his hips forward again, pressing harder, making Walker feel him.

"I..." Walker lifted his face, staring up into his eyes. "You'll not ruin me? You swear it?"

"I would never willingly harm you. Anything I do is for feeling good, lad. I swear." He met those eyes, serious as a cave-in.

Walker held his gaze for endless moments, then Walker nodded, brought his hand up for a kiss.

That was it. That was his boy. Horace reached for the grease once more, slicking himself up more and more. He wanted to be in that hot body so bad he ached. Finally he figured he was as ready as he was gonna be. He set himself to Walker's hole, ready to push.

Walker was still against him, shivering like an autumn leaf, waiting for him.

"Shhhh. Right here with you. Gonna make you burn." He slipped one hand around to hold Walker's cock as he slid in a scant inch.

The heated flesh was flagging, but it jerked as he pressed inside, throbbing against his palm.

"That's perfect, love. Just perfect." He stroked and pushed and pulled and huffed, his body urging him faster and faster. He resisted, sliding in long and strong.

"Horace. Full." Walker groaned, body arching against him, thighs parting.

"Good? Are you all right?" He could feel Walker's muscles working around him, feel the tight muscles loosening.

"I don't. I don't know." Walker laughed a little, breath coming fast.

"Yes you do. You know. You love it." He could tell by the way that prick hardened right up for him again, by the way Walker started to move, all unaware.

The lad was made for this, so easily caught up with him, just like a rabbit caught in the eyes of a serpent.

Horace worked him good, pushed the lad to his limits, pulling on Walker's prick. So hot, so wet.

Deep, rough sounds pushed from Walker, damn near like a hymn, like a prayer without any real words but his name and please.

Rocking, humping, Horace finally let himself go. Not hard enough to hurt. Never hurt. But hard enough to feel the burn of it, to feel the thousand little stings.

They rolled, Horace covering Walker, that lean, muscled back slick and smooth against his belly as he took and gave and loved. Horace bit down on the skin he had taken before, sucking hard to bring up his mark. His. Walker was his. He wasn't going to give this one up. Oh. Oh, sweet lord. He could feel it, each suck caused those heated muscles to ripple around his prick.

His head snapped back and he roared, his prick throbbing as he shot deep inside Walker's body. It was too much. He just couldn't hold on.

Walker shuddered and shivered around him, the wetness coating his fingers proving that he wasn't alone in their need.

Making soothing little noises, he licked the back of Walker's neck, nuzzling in under the short hair. "Now, that was worth the wait."

"Full of you." Walker shifted beneath him as if it was impossible to remain still, body gripping and fluttering around his prick.

"So sweet." He rolled them back to their sides, stroking Walker's fine skin, his fingers feeling rough in comparison.

He could feel Walker blink, feel the lad's warm breath on his arm as Walker relaxed.

He pulled out when he could, turning Walker toward his chest, rewarding the lad with sweet kisses. The sweat dried on their skin, and he wrapped the blankets around them.

His fingers slid across the swollen, hot spot on the back of Walker's neck, and Walker moaned, scooted closer. "Feel that in my bones."

"Good. Want you to feel all we do for a long time." He grinned, feeling it split his beard it was so wide. "Can't wait to teach you the next lesson."

"How much more can there be?"

He laughed, letting it boom, his pleasure in his boy overflowing. "You can't even begin to imagine, sweet. I have so much to show you."

Walker's answer was a kiss, heated and heartfelt, and lord help him, it was answer enough.

Chapter Six

Things on him were aching that hadn't even ever *thought* to ache. It wasn't terrible, though, more... Heated.

Odd.

Made it impossible not to think about what him and Horace'd done, when every step reminded him.

Almost like after Horace'd... thrashed him and he'd shot off like a cannon. Lord save him, touching Jake Handly's leg that once in the pumphouse hadn't been nothing like this.

Nothing at all.

He went to gather another bucket of clean snow to melt, letting the icy cold cool his hot cheeks.

"Come on, lad!" Horace's voice boomed out into the winter day. "We need that hot water."

"Hold yer horses!" He rolled his eyes, filling the bucket.

"I would rather hold you. Are you going all shy on me again, boy?"

"No. No, I was getting the bucket full." Hold him. That. Well that sounded fine.

"Oh, good. I have plans..." The big man stood in the doorway, silhouetted by the sun and shadow, that red beard the one thing he could see clearly.

"Plans?" He couldn't hide his smile, not even a little. Horace made things in him warm and good, made him sure of what all they were doing.

"Indeed. I think your ass needs warming, hmm?" Oh, that voice. When Horace's voice went all deep and shivery it made goosebumps rise up like the snow never did.

"I got trousers on. It won't freeze." He plopped the bucket over the fire before heading over to those open arms.

"Mmmhmm. But it's lost all of its color." One big hand closed over his ass, squeezing, even as Horace dragged him up for a kiss. The ache inside him twinged a little, but it was a lot less of a hurt than it was a throb as his lips parted, letting Horace right on in. That kiss went deep as could be, Horace tasting him, tracing his teeth and lips. Hot. So hot. He never had to worry about being cold.

Things sorta got fuzzy, his mind caught up in that kiss, his eyes rolling with the pleasure of it.

"Sweet lord, you're a lover, lad." Horace picked him clean up off the ground and carried him right to the bed, sitting down. It had become his favorite position, straddling Horace's lap.

Walker found himself groaning as the position stretched him, made that ache inside him deeper, sharper. Lord help him but Horace turned him inside out.

"Mmm. Now where was I?" Horace asked, rubbing his ass, arching up slow and sweet against him. "I said I had plans, hmm?"

"You said." He rested his forehead against Horace's, staring into those green-green eyes. So wicked and warm, they set a fire to blazing in him and he'd stopped fighting the flames.

"I did." The grin widened, becoming positively huge. "I have something for you here."

Horace leaned back and pulled a box across the bed, a heavy wooden affair with metal bands.

"That your treasure chest?" His momma'd had a hope chest, but it was bigger and filled up with china.

"Something like that, lad. Maybe more of a toy chest." The lid fell open under Horace's big hand, and he saw a jumble of things he had no names for, but they sure did suggest a lot.

His eyes felt like that were gonna pop out of his skull and it was only luck that had his mouth closed. They looked like. Well. Like men. Pieces of men, at any rate.

The pieces that he and Horace had been putting to good use.

Horace laughed loud and hearty, squeezing him. "Look at your face, sweet. Like a babe in the woods, you are."

"I... Well, what do you expect, Horace? Those look like. Like." He motioned down toward the bulge in his trousers.

"They do. Imagine what we can do! I can't be in you and put my mouth on you at the same time...these will help." Those bright eyes watched him so close as Horace traced the cleft of his ass through his pants.

"In me? Those?" Some of those were as big as Horace, some bigger. He was going to swallow his tongue.

"Oh, yes. We'll start small, maybe this one." Those blunt fingers closed around a, well a, a something. A prick. Made out of something smooth and cool. Horace put it in his hand, let him feel it.

"Did you... did you make it?" His fingers started moving, touching, the motion easy and natural as breathing.

"This one? No. It was a gift. But I ain't never used it before." That seemed very important, somehow.

"No?" He looked up at Horace, breath sorta caught in his chest.

"No. Been waiting..." That faraway look that he saw every once in a blue moon appeared, then went just as fast. "Now I have you."

"You do. You swore to keep me." It was a vow he remembered often.

"I did, indeed." A sweet kiss landed on his mouth, Horace's beard rubbing at him. Then Horace put him off those heavy thighs, helping him stand. "Off with the trousers."

"I..." His cheeks went hot, but his fingers moved, sliding them down and off. He was fast losing his shame.

"There. Look how pretty you are, lad." Horace cupped his cock in one hand and he went up on tiptoes, chills sliding up and down his spine. Horace's hands were hot enough that he thought they might mark him. Again. Thumb rubbing over the tip of his cock, Horace smiled. "That's better. You're so fine, sweet. So well put together. It's a shame to hide it."

"Decent folks do." But he'd left decency behind, willingly. Easily.

"Well, a lot of what you think is decent folks is just a bunch of hiding and polite faces. Ain't nothing we do that's wrong, long as we both like it." There was an unshakable certainty there, one that just had him nodding.

"We both sure seem to." He stepped forward, adding his heat to Horace's, settling right on in.

"We do at that." Those big hands felt better with no cloth in the way, and Horace's grin made him tingle in places he'd forgotten he had. The kiss made it even better.

Horace drew him closer, hands sliding over his backside and squeezing in hard enough for him to feel it deep.

"Now, did we get oil? Grease? We'll need that." One finger pushed against him, right between his ass cheeks, making him rise up, muscles all clenched.

His throat worked, that ache waking up, becoming something bigger, something better. Something close to a burn.

"Oil, sweet. I need the oil." The man shaped thing trailed along his side, held in Horace's hand.

He nodded, shivering a touch as that smooth wood slid on his skin. He stretched for the little pot that Horace had brought over toward the bedstead, his whole body shifting on those broad thighs.

"There. That's it." The thing...well, Horace brought it around to rub against Walker's nipples, slip sliding, making him shiver over and over.

"Horace..." He closed his eyes against the sight of that shining wood, rolling and rubbing on his flesh. Obscene. It was the most obscene thing he'd ever seen.

"Hmmm? Oh, look at those little titties. Such sweet skin." The thing trailed down over his belly, bumping his cock below.

That touch made him bounce, the perverse sounds drawing him up tight inside.

"I've got you, lad. Got you..." Horace trailed off, lips on his throat even as Horace eased them around so they could stretch out on the bed.

His chin lifted, hand wrapping around Horace's hip and drawing them closer together. This was familiar. Right. Near necessary.

"We need that oil open..." Not that Horace was helping. No, the man was just driving him mad, stroking him with that fake prick and kissing his skin.

He fumbled with the cork, shifting on Horace's thighs. The soft hairs there tickled his skin, made his balls draw up tight in their sac.

"There you go, lad," Horace said when the bottle popped open. "Now, get some of that oil on here so I can put it in you."

Lord help him, his fingers were trembling like an autumn leaf on a tree. He wasn't scared a bit, but his heart surely pounded, his cock throbbing with his pulse.

Horace helped him, holding the fake prick steady, helping him with the oil. The smooth surface started to gleam the minute he poured a trickle of oil down its length.

He reached out, fingers sliding through the oil, rubbing the slick wood. Stroking it. Oh.

"Yes." Deep, raw, Horace's voice had him meeting those bright eyes, had him licking his lips. Horace bent and licked his lips, too, kissing lightly. "A little more."

Walker nodded, hand beginning to move in a familiar motion on the wood, warming the oil, the wood itself. His own prick throbbed in time, his eyes going all heavy-lidded as his body thrummed.

A low growl answered his movements, Horace shifting under him restlessly, cock rubbing up against him. A little more oil slid out of the bottle under Horace's guidance, making the wood so slippery, almost... it was as frightening as it was arousing.

His fingers left the wood, dropped to Horace's flesh, to that heated shaft that waited for him.

"Oh, lad, that's sweet. Hot." The oil helped ease the way there, too, letting his hand move easily up and down.

He nodded, forehead resting against Horace's shoulder, watching as Horace's flesh appeared and disappeared in his fist.

"Not going to distract me, lad." That came with a breathless chuckle, Horace slipping the toy

around behind his body, rubbing it up and down his cleft. Walker jerked, fingers tightening around the tip of Horace's cock, hole seeming to squeeze closed.

"Remember, sweet. Breathe. Let me in." The head of the toy seemed nothing like Horace, hard and odd where it pressed against him.

"s not you..." He moaned against Horace's lips, hand still working that hard cock.

"No. But it's my hand holding it. It will give me pleasure to see, to feel." Yeah, he could feel how wet Horace was. How hard and hot.

Walker nodded, took a deep breath and bore down a bit when Horace pressed up, the tip spreading him. His hole clenched around the wood, the hardness odd and unyielding, forcing him open.

"That's it. Just a bit more, lad. So good. You're doing so well." That voice poured over him like warm syrup, helping him loosen up.

Their lips pressed together, his tongue sliding over Horace's, his moan trapped in Horace's mouth. The wood pressed deeper, the tip brushing over something deep within him that made him jerk, eyes flying open. "Horace."

"Yes. Oh, my yes."

Sometimes fierce, sometimes gentle, Horace worked him, the wooden prick sliding in and out of him, pushing him higher and higher. He thought he might fly right off the mountain. He left off his stroking, hands landing on Horace's shoulders to steady himself, tremors just shaking him to the core.

"Close your eyes and feel it, lad. Feel how it moves in you. Feel my hand here." Those big, blunt fingers slid down to the base of the wood, right where it met his skin, tracing his opening.

Oh. Oh, that. He.

His fingers clenched tight, balls drawn up tight to his body. He leaned in, groaning low as his chest slid against Horace's.

Horace hauled him even closer with the hand not holding the wood piece, pressing the toy harder into him at the same time. That little spot got hit over and over, making him shake. Walker lost himself in it, moaning Horace's name again and again as he soared, forgetting everything but the pleasure inside him. Horace eased him over on the bed a bit more so the free hand could find his cock, pulling at it, letting him have another sensation on top of the one already making him writhe.

It felt like something in him snapped, drawing taut before pleasure just uncoiled, pouring out of him in a great rush.

Horace moaned for him, nuzzling his throat, holding him safe in those huge hands. So safe. Nothing could hurt him when Horace held him.

Horace watched Walker doze, his hand sliding up and down the lad's side. The wooden phallus still rested inside Walker's body, and Horace couldn't help but stare at the end that protruded. Lord, that was amazing. He did love this game.

Poor Walker had passed right out after he spent. The boy had an amazing well of pleasure to draw on, just like a huge vein of ore deep in the ground. Letting his hand slide farther down, he jostled the plug a little, just grinning like a fool. Walker arched, eyes not opening even a bit as the sweet lad rubbed against him.

"Mmm." A low growl escaped him, his hand cupping one sweet cheek of Walker's ass. Lord, he wanted to do so many things to that skin.

"Horace." Walker's voice was raw as anything and that ass pushed into his hand. He could do anything to the lad and Walker would follow.

"Love. You're such a sweet lad. I'm gettin' a bit too fond." He was. But that was his cross to bear.

"That ain't bad." Walker opened those eyes, looked at him.

"No. No, I suppose it ain't." He leaned down to kiss that swollen mouth, wanting to do all manner of evil to it, too. Walker worked him up like no one else. "You think you're up for some more play, lad?"

He felt Walker tense, squeeze the phallus inside him. It took a few heartbeats, but he got himself a nod, Walker's cheeks warm.

"Oh, good, because I'm flat out aching." His cock throbbed at just the thought of what they might get up to next.

Walker's eyebrows knit some and that callused hand reached for him, wrapped around his shaft and starting stroking. He stretched, his thighs and ass shifting on the bed. That felt so good that it might distract him. He couldn't let that happen, could he? Walker leaned in, fingers moving faster, dragging over the thin skin of his prick.

"You're trying to make me forget what I'm about, aren't you lad?" He reached around, jostled the wooden plug about some.

Walker's touch stuttered, those eyes wide. "I."

"Feels good, hmm? Feels so strange. So wide and hard." He knew how that felt. He'd tried it himself. Oh, not this plug, but he'd played.

"Yes." It was something special, the way Walker's mouth opened and closed, the way those fingers squeezed him.

"Love. That's fine. Just fine." His hips rolled, his hand moving on Walker's ass. Sweet boy. Walker had the smoothest skin.

"You... I was supposed to help you." Walker's lips traced his jaw.

"You are." His cock rubbed against Walker's palm, hot and wet, and his hands traced that sweet form. Good. So good.

"Mmm." They started moving faster, mouths pressing together in a heated kiss.

So much for his grand plans. His prick ached, and Horace knew he wouldn't last to play all the tricks he wanted to. So he closed his eyes and let the kiss, and Walker's hand, take him where he needed to go. After all, Walker was his, when all was said and done, and he could play as he wanted.

Right now he just needed to shoot. Badly. Horace moaned, his body shaking as he tried to hold it in. Just one more minute. Walker's thumb pressed into the wet slit of his cock, then the pressure disappeared, Walker painting their lips with his flavor.

"Uhn" His head snapped back, his hips rising all the way up off the bed, and Horace roared to the finish like an avalanche coming down the mountain.

He wasn't alone for it, not at all. Walker's mouth pressed to his skin, fingers rubbing his seed into his skin.

"Make me need so, lad. I swear. It's a good thing we have all the time in the world."

Walker nodded at him, lips heated and swollen, hips still moving against his thigh in a slow dance.

So responsive. Horace laughed, right out loud. "You're going to be the death of me."

"Don't believe it." Walker's mouth found one nipple, worried it.

"No? I swear it." He cradled Walker's head in one hand, holding him right where he was. That touch felt so necessary, tingly, making him oversensitive and needing more.

Oh, such a good lad. Walker sucked and nuzzled, teeth tugging just enough to make him ache, bone-deep.

"Gonna raise the dead, lad." His hand slid right back down, along the line of Walker's spine, right down to the base of the plug. Walker's ass clenched, then that sweet moan vibrated around his nipple.

Lord, lord, that made him want to do all sorts of things. Hell, he could. Why not?

Walker shifted, newly-hard cock rubbing on his thigh, leaving kisses that were hot as Hades. The plug shifted under his hand again, and he moved it in and out, letting the slide make Walker arch and purr. Then he pulled it out, easy and gentle, preparing the lad for himself.

"Horace." Those fine eyes were wide, needy, shining at him. "I'm real empty."

"I know, lad. I'm ready to fill you up again." His cock had risen again, hard and ready, and he was just amazed at that, wasn't he? How fast and deep he needed again.

"I need." Walker whispered the words against his throat.

"Then you can have me." Rolling, he put Walker atop him, his hands guiding that sweet bottom down on him, rubbing against Walker's cleft.

Walker stared down at him, sweet, swollen lips parted. A line of sweat rolled down Walker's chest, pink nipples drawn up tight.

"Ready, lad? Ready for me?" His cock rubbed and rubbed, pushing at that sweet hole.

"I am." He got a nod, a deep groan as Walker bore down, taking the tip of his cock in.

Horace thrust up, pushing into that tight heat, needing more and more as he went deep and seated, all the way to the base. Walker's head fell back, back arching as those rough fingers landed on his chest.

They rocked and rocked, both of them moving hard, praises falling from his lips. Walker was stretched, but not loose, just pulling him in, loving him in the best way.

"Horace. Horace, please." Walker's eyes near burned him, cock slapping his belly.

"Yes." To be so needy after they'd had so much was amazing. God, yes. Horace moaned, grabbing Walker's cock, hand swinging. That earned him a deep groan, Walker's backend going tight around him.

His prick throbbed, his balls drawing up tight, his belly hard as a board. "Goddamn, love. I need you to spend for me."

Walker's cry rang right on out, seed spraying against his fingers, his belly. Yes. Yes, just so.

Horace shouted as he spent, filling Walker far deeper than a plug could, giving the boy all he had. All he could give. Everything.

And, as in all other things, Walker took him in and held tight.

Chapter Seven

He wet the razor again, carefully scraping the stiff hairs from Horace's jaw. Every few days they started this waltz, Horace taking up that strop and blade and murmuring, "It's time, boy."

Each step was the same every time -- warm the water, strip off his shirt, make a lather as best he could.

Then he spent his time shaving and touching, feeling a little like a kid in the General Store, with all that face and neck to feel.

When he was done, Horace stretched and grinned, looking like a moving mountain. "Well done, lad."

The praise made his cheeks heat, warmed him down deep. "It's a good chore."

"It is." Those green eyes twinkled for him. "If you are not doing it for yourself, that is."

"I do a fair job on my own skin. 'sides, there ain't too much in the way of whiskers." Not like Horace and that heavy beard.

"Not on your face, at any rate." Horace winked at him, patting his thigh.

He snorted, tickled. "No. Them whiskers ain't for shaving."

"Oh ho! You think not?" Voice booming in that hearty way that meant Horace had been challenged, the man lifted him up, turning to sit him in the chair. "I think you're wrong."

"Horace, what nonsense are you on about?" The man had lost his good sense along with any decency.

"I am on about showing you that a razor is not just good for faces." The smile he got was purely evil in a beautiful sort of way. Horace reached down, one big paw on either of his thighs, spreading him.

"You're joshing me." Those hairs weren't for cutting. Those hairs didn't cut.

"I am not. Now, you stay right there, lad." Patting his prick, Horace turned away to get the razor, the strop, and his bowl of foam.

"What... Horace, you can't mean to..." Surely not. Surely it wouldn't. No.

"I said stay there," Horace said when he made to rise. "I'll tan that butt of yours if you don't."

"That'd move your mind away from this notion of taking a razor to me..."

Besides, the last time he'd plumb embarrassed himself all over Horace's thigh.

"No, it would only delay." Whipping up new cream, Horace got a pan of hotter water, as well, before coming back to kneel in front of him.

"Delay?" He scooted back in the chair, hands dropping to hide his curls.

"Yes, lad. I would still shave you. I would only beat you first. But if that's what you like." Quick as a snowslide, Horace set everything down, grabbed him up, and turned him over the knee.

"Horace!" His hands slapped down, his feet went to kicking as he tried to figure which end was up.

The whopping on his butt helped figure him, stinging like fire and making him squirm. Then that hand landed again. And again.

Words fell out of his mouth even as his hips jerked and rolled, near driving his hardness against Horace's thigh.

Horace talked to him, too, just praising his beauty, his sweetness, hand never let up on his bottom.

It was too much to bear -- the fire in him, on him, just everywhere -- and Walker shot with a cry that he reckoned would echo over the whole range.

"There. There, lad. That's good." One hand settled on his burning behind, soothing and petting. "That's it."

His breath huffed from him, his heart pounding as the room swayed around him. His skin felt tight, Horace's fingers raising tiny flames.

"Now, I think you might be ready to see my way of thinking, sweet." Easing him down so his sore bottom hit the bed, Horace spread him again, lifting his hips up.

His flagging prick jerked a bit, but his focus was on his burning backside, on the sweet ache inside him.

"Mmm. You're decadent. A treat, love, I swear." His prick got a quick stroke, his balls were lifted and studied.

Another moan escaped him, his sacs shifting like his balls were trying to either crawl up inside him or get Horace's attention.

"Now, lad, you'll have to try to be still." Like he could with Horace's hands on him and that heavy prick brushing him when Horace moved. And when the bristles of the shaving brush hit him it was like torture.

"H...horace." His muscles went tight, his fingers gripping the quilt on the bed until they shook.

"Shhh. Calm, lad. Think calm thoughts." Horace's breath felt hot as fire after the cool of the cream, and then he heard the razor dip in the hot water...

"Don't cut me, now." Calm thoughts, with Horace's blade down *there*.

Horace glanced up, eyes hot and serious. "I'd never hurt you, lad. Never."

Something in him, something deep and quiet, just seemed ache with that look and he nodded. "I know, God help me. I do, 'cause I keep following along, Horace, even when I can't understand this."

"Your body knows before the mind sometimes, sweet. Now hold still for me." The scrape of the razor over his skin had him wanting to shiver and shake, but he held his breath instead.

Walker closed his eyes, took one slow breath after the other. Sometimes the body knows before the mind.

The air felt odd, stirring against his newly bare skin every time Horace wiped foam away. The razor felt bright, shining in his mind.

His breath came faster, his shaft threatening to fill again, swelling.

"Oh, now. I'll have to be careful here, hmm?" The curls around the base of his cock were swept away under that sharp blade, and before he could even swear or shake it was over. Horace cleaned him up with warm water and a towel.

He squeezed his eyes closed tighter, his fingers itching to cover himself where he was so bare.

When Horace bent and rubbed his newly-trimmed beard and then the clean cheek above it over his privates, he about jumped out of his skin. It was too much and not enough.

"Horace!" His hands covered his bare skin, the feeling shocking him, deep down.

"No, no. No hiding." Peeling his hands away, Horace licked along his shaft, right down to the base where he burned and throbbed.

Walker twisted, his fingers twining with Horace's, his tender hind end leaving the bed.

"Sweet boy." Hot breath, and even hotter tongue, all of it dragged over his skin like there was no tomorrow.

Lights sparked behind his eyelids and sounds poured from him as the fire in his belly grew and blazed.

When Horace sucked him down, all the way to the root, his head liked to pop off, the fire burning out of control. And when that big paw cupped his clean-as-a-whistle balls...

Walker grunted, seed pouring out of him in waves so big they near to drowned him, left him shaken and limp as a kitten.

Horace rose between his legs, slick fingers sliding into his body, only to leave him and be replaced by the broad head of Horace's cock. "All right, lad?"

"Uh-huh." There was no resistance left in him, inside or out.

"Then I'm coming in." Grunting, Horace pushed inside him, harder than Walker had ever felt him, huge and hot.

He spread and spread, caught all up between the heat in his backside, the way Horace's skin pressed against him.

His sore bottom, his bare balls, the ring of muscle Horace slid in and out of, all of it felt alive, on fire, just aching.

"Horace." He wasn't sure what he needed, what he thought Horace could do for him, but it was all he could think to do, to call out that name.

"Yes, lad. Yes." One arm worked under him, scooping him up so he sat astride Horace's bent knees. That prick drove in and out of him and Horace kissed him so hard he saw stars.

Walker near lost his mind; all he was, Horace was holding.

Horace thrust into him again and again, but finally that great, shaggy head fell back and Horace cried out. Strong pumps of Horace's hips spanked his buttocks as Horace shot into him, filling him deep.

It was the only thing to do, to lean in like he'd gone boneless, let Horace hold him up.

They moved slowly, Horace pushing them down on the bed, stretching out beside him even as that thick shaft slid from his body.

Walker murmured low, melted and sated, staring into the fire. He was beginning to enjoy the snow.

Walker's bottom still had fine color, and his privates were still smooth as a baby's butt. He thought it might just be time to teach the boy another lesson.

Humming loud, he got his little bag out of the wardrobe, pulling out some very soft braided ropes. Some were small, some were larger, all of them he'd bought in San Francisco.

There'd been this one lad, with sloe eyes and a lean body, who had taught Horace all about such things.

"Walker, lad. Chores are done. Come here to me."

"Hmm?" Walker stood from where he was stirring the fire, fingers dropping to rub the sweet, shaved lower belly without even a thought.

"I said come here." He put a wee bit of extra command in his voice, needing to see Walker turn and walk to him without thinking.

Walker reached for his hand, moving close, eyes searching his. "Are you well?"

"I am. Just fine. I just need you." That hand felt hard and work-rough under his, and it made Horace smile. "I have a surprise for you."

One eyebrow rose, but Walker's hand didn't waver. "Your surprises never cease to amaze me."

"I know. You like them so." Horace grinned, feeling it fair split his face. Yeah, this one would be a fine gift, a fine surprise.

"You look like the cat with the cream." Walker came to stand between his legs, a bulge beginning to show in his trousers.

"Do I?" Maybe he was. More like the cat with the baby bird, but he'd not argue. "Let's get these off," he said, pulling at Walker's trousers.

Walker flushed, chin dipping. "Why do your surprises seem to start with my skin?"

"Because that is the finest gift life has ever given me." Horace smoothed his hands over shaven flesh, fingers cupping Walker's prick, his balls.

"Oh." Walker sounded shaken, but when he looked up, those eyes were staring at him, warm and wanton. Happy as a pig in slop.

"Mmmhmm. You like that, huh? So do I, lad. So do I." He smiled, rubbing his cheek against that sweet cock, his back bending down and down.

Walker made a low, rumbling sound, hands sliding down over his back, tugging at his shirt.

He let the lad pull his shirt off, pushing right in after to take a hard embrace, his body rubbing against Walker's.

Strong arms wrapped around his shoulders, Walker holding on tight and rubbing against him like a cat in heat.

"Are you getting ahead of yourself, lad?" His hands clenched on Walker's hips, pushing away so he could get some space to do his work. "Now, let me see if I remember how this goes."

"How what goes?" Walker blinked down at him, those pretty eyes dazed.

Laughing, Horace kissed Walker's chest before pulling up the smallest rope and dragging it in between those strong legs. "This."

Walker blinked down, head tilted like a pup faced with a bone. "What're you gonna rope with that?"

Oh, such sweet innocence. "Well," Horace said, pulling the rope taut and starting to wind it around Walker's heavy balls, "I thought I'd start here."

"Horace..." Oh, that was fine. Perverse as all get out, but so fine, pale skin contrasting with the soft rope.

"Yes. Sweet. Look at you." The skin pulled up under the touch of the silky fabric, and he was able to tighten the rope, just a tiny bit.

"I." Walker reached down, fluttering above that shorn skin, the rope. "Why are you..."

"Because I like the way it looks. And you'll like the way it feels." He could see how Walker liked it, the flush crawling up that fine skin.

The only answer he got was a soft moan, Walker moving closer, near crawling into his lap.

Oh, that sweet body tempted him so, but he wanted the rest. Horace tied the small rope off at the base of Walker's cock and took up the next, winding it around the tight, lean hips.

Walker's breath was coming in quick pants, those eyes wide and staring at him in delicious shock.

He met Walker's eyes, wrapping the tip of Walker's cock up against the skin of the lad's belly. "Not too tight?"

"I. I don't think so?" Walker's eyelids fluttered as his fingers teased the tip, just a bit. Just enough. "Horace!"

"Perfect." Then he wound the ropes so just an inch of skin showed between each round, tying them off just under Walker's nipples. He moaned. "God almighty."

Walker shivered, fingers opening and closing as the lad panted, watching him work with a stunned fascination.

The last knot went into place, and Horace pushed Walker onto his own two feet, turning him about. Admiring his handiwork.

Walker blushed a deep, sweet rose, muscles tight and moving against the ropes. "Horace. I. This is wicked."

"Entirely." Lord love him, the lad was a picture. Horace traced the lines of the ropes, feeling the difference between them and Walker's skin.

"You are shameless." Walker stretched, cock bobbing and jerking with every touch.

"I am. Didn't I say that?" He never said he had anything that even resembled couth. He was a rough man with heavy appetites. The pink glow he'd given Walker's behind looked fine as anything.

"Yes. It bears saying again." That sweet backside pushed right back toward his touch.

The ropes pressed in just enough to leave marks, but not hard enough to bind, and Horace bent to lick at the strips of skin he could see. His hand reached around at the same time to press against Walker's prick.

That hard shaft near burned his palm, the tip wet and leaking, wetting his fingers.

For all of his protests, Walker loved what they did. Horace knew it deep in his bones, and that hard prick proved it. Horace stroked what he could, the ropes playing a game with his hand.

Walker groaned, hands curling around his arms, entire body leaning toward his touch.

"Love. Oh, sweet love." Stay. That was what he wanted to say. Spring would be there before they knew it. But he didn't. Instead, Horace turned Walker around and licked at the head of the lad's cock.

Walker stumbled, his name ringing out, as well as a 'please' and a 'love' and a 'yours'.

Humming, he licked, sucked where he could, pulling at the ropes to make them tighten and release. Look at that beautiful color.

He could see the veins in Walker's throat throb and pulse. Hungry. His sweet lad needed him so badly.

"Here, lad. Let's get you more comfortable." He stood and turned Walker gently, helping him stretch out on the bed. Oh. His cock jerked and throbbed, and Horace shed his clothes, his body too hot, too tight.

Walker groaned, lips swollen and damp, parted as those bright eyes watched him in a near fever.

That mouth. Horace moved to the head of the bed, letting his knees rest on the bed, pushing his hips forward so Walker's fine mouth could reach him.

Walker's tongue slid over his slit first, then those lips wrapped around him, drawing him into that heated mouth.

Moaning, he moved his hips back and forth, rubbing his prick against the softest lips he'd ever felt. So careful with him. So wet and sweet.

Each sound -- each groan and hum and whimper -- vibrated him, made his toes curl and his balls draw up.

Poor, sweet boy. Walker was struggling against the ropes, trying to get to him. Horace turned, one knee on either side of Walker's head, and let Walker take him in while he bent down to lick and suck at Walker's prick through the ropes.

Those lips wrapped around his prick, pulling hard, sucking him as if Walker was starved.

His body shook, his muscles trying to get him closer, his mind fighting it so he didn't hurt the lad. No, indeed, he'd not hurt Walker for the world. He would bend and suck at those bound balls, though.

He felt Walker's cry around his shaft, vibrating and buzzing around him.

Grunting, Horace rotated his hips, filling Walker's mouth over and over. When he was as near to spending as he could be and not, he unraveled the rope around Walker's balls, cupping them in his hand gently.

Walker spread wide, tongue pressing into the slick of his cock even as that long shaft bobbed and the sacs in his hand grew tight.

He freed Walker's cock completely and took it all the way in, his lips sliding to the base where the smooth, shaven skin enticed him, excited him.

The lad humped up, pushing into his lips as Walker's fingers dug into his hind quarters, pulling him deep.

Horace shouted, his cock pounding, his blood rushing, and his mouth clamping down on Walker's flesh. Demanding that the lad come.

And in that, as in so much else, Walker did just as he demanded.

Salty and bitter, but just what he needed. Horace cleaned the lad thoroughly, licking at the softening flesh, kissing the tip as he pulled away.

"Did you like your surprise, lad?"

"Uhn." He'd take that as a yes.

Grinning, he rose and went to put another log on the fire, intending to keep Walker naked and playing the rest of the day. They'd done enough chores.

Surely he could think of another surprise.

Chapter Eight

The snow had stopped for a bit, lulling Walker into a peace with the sunny days and the illusion that spring was coming. It made the blizzard seem nigh unbearable when it hit, the clouds rolling in fast enough that it felt like a slap to the face, the wind near screaming through the trees.

Walker'd been out checking traps on his own, taking his time with it, when the storm hit and damn if it didn't like to freeze him still, with the sheer power of it. He stood there, staring at it like a newborn colt, legs shivery and heart just thumping in his chest.

A sound, like the roar of a grizzly bear, came to him, the broken syllables almost sounding like his name on the wind. Walker blinked, trying to understand, trying to see through the white. Something inside him pointed out that he ought to run, if it was a bear, but he couldn't.

"Walker! Where in hell are you, boy?" Oh. Oh, now. He knew that voice.

"I." He was standing right here. Right here. He did his dead-level best to head toward the voice, his feet just like lead.

"Walker!" He could see Horace now, looking like a bear, too, great and furry with his coat and beard, slogging through the snow.

"Yes." Yes, he believed he was still, although his mind was moving decidedly slow.

"Jesus Christ, lad. You had me scared half to death." Horace picked him right up, like a child, slinging him under one arm and trudging off.

"The traps." He'd been checking the traps.

"You shoulda woke me. Gonna tan your hide." Grumble, rumble. Horace felt warm, even in the snow.

"Uh-huh." He let himself relax, let Horace get him toward their little cabin, their fire.

The quiet inside was almost shocking. He could still hear the wind, but the absence of it so close...well, it was enough to leave him reeling.

"H...H..." He stopped, swallowed with a throat that felt too dry. "Horace."

"Sh. Come over by the fire, lad. Come on." Big hands moved him, turning him to the roaring fire, chafing his arms and legs.

"It. It came fast." He blinked, bone-deep cold turning to burning heat.

"It does out there." He tried to fight Horace when the man started stripping off his clothes, because that was only going to make him colder.

"C...cold. Cold, Horace."

"I know, lad. Poor frozen sweet. I'll get you warm." The fire felt good against his bare backside, but oh, the rest of him was one big shiver.

"We didn't finish checking the traps." He stepped toward Horace as soon as he could, searching for the man's heat.

"We'll wait out the storm, now." The huge coat came off, landing on the floor with a thump, and Horace disrobed for him, cold hands pulling him up against a warm body.

"Oh..." Warm. Warm. His entire body shook like a leaf on a tree, his teeth chattering violently.

"Don't fight it, love. Your body is warming itself." They tumbled to the bed, Horace pulling blankets and furs over them. He pushed close, snuggling in as closely as he could, near wrapping himself in Horace. "I got you, lad. I got you. No more wandering off without letting me take a gander at the clouds, hmm?" Kissing his cheek, Horace pulled him even closer, even tighter.

"Just wanted to get our traps checked. It was so pretty."

"It just changes fast, is all." Horace was so good to him, cradling him, helping calm his violent shivering.

"It does. It surely does." He was coming back to center.

"There you are." Horace tilted his face up to give him a kiss, that beard wet and chilly, but Horace's mouth warm as could be.

He nodded, wrapped his arms around Horace's neck and kissed his beloved man back with all the passion he could muster.

"Mmmmm." The low, rough sound that Horace fed him was like an ember that burst into flame. His shivering gradually calmed, becoming shakes of a whole other kind.

Horace's hands wrapped around his hips, keeping him close and warming him bone deep. Walker clung to the broad shoulders, a need beginning to bloom inside him.

"There now. There. I've got you, lad." Horace just repeated that to him over and over, starting to stroke his skin, hands running up and down his back, squeezing his ass and thighs.

"It happened so fast." Those thick fingers found a sensitive spot and Walker arched, moaning into Horace's lips.

"Always does. Sweeps down off the peak and just wraps you up in it. You're all right now. I promise." Yes, he was going to be fine, with Horace's solid body against him, those big hands spreading him, one thumb pressing against his hole.

"Yes." Walker pushed back into the kiss, tongue exploring the ridges of Horace's teeth, the soft heat of Horace's tongue.

He could feel Horace's smile against his mouth, could feel the rumble in that heavy chest. The way Horace reacted to him, the way they moved together, it all made him sweat. They rubbed and moved together, building a fire with their bodies, with their need. It was necessary as breathing, enough to make lights twinkle behind his closed eyelids.

"Sweet love..." Horace's voice was a caress all its own, rough and deep and full of need. For him. That mouth moved over his skin, leaving biting little kisses and tiny marks.

Each touch heated him more, made his nerves jump and jerk and burn. Those thick fingers started to push at him, opening him up, making room for what he knew would come. Horace's heated cock. Eager to be filled, he relaxed, stretched wide and allowed those fingers within.

Horace's fingers pushed into him, spreading him, easing the way. It was gentle, slow, not at all like Horace's usual demanding ways. He moaned into Horace's lips, legs sprawling under the heavy blankets that covered them.

"That's it, lad. That's it." That rough beard rubbed and rubbed, scratching his face and neck. He'd learned so much since he'd been here, learned to need and ache, to take in all that Horace wanted him to learn. Walker arched up, chin lifting to give Horace more skin, more to touch. Those lips slid up and down his neck, then back to his mouth, Horace's tongue slipping right in to taste him.

A fire started down deep in his belly, this slow, steady touching liked to set everything in him to throbbing.

Horace's words fell on his skin, hoarse and deep, turning up the heat even more. Like fire licking at him. Those fingers kept moving inside him, readying him for Horace's cock, the pressure enough to drive him right toward crazy.

"Almost there, sweet. Almost open enough. You were so cold. Scared me..." Oh. Oh, listen to that. He could believe that Horace loved him when the man talked like that. He leaned up, tongue sliding over Horace's lips. He'd forgotten all about the cold, now.

"Say you're ready, love." Lifting him, Horace let those thick fingers slide free, both hands going to his hips to settle him above that quivering cock.

"Please." He nodded, stretched and needy, wanting nothing more than to feel Horace within him deep.

"Now." Horace pulled him down, hard flesh pushing into him, spreading him so wide that he knew he'd break in half. So full. He couldn't imagine anything making him as full as Horace's prick. He cried out, eyes rolling back like they'd been thrown. His muscles tensed, clenching around Horace's flesh as it moved within him.

"So sweet. So hot." Horace bit down on the skin of his throat, making him shudder and shake. That would leave a bruise, one that Horace would trace and touch over and over until it faded.

They began to move faster and harder, their skin slapping, beginning to slide as they began to sweat. Horace was talking, praising him, but the words blurred in his ears when Horace moved

him just so, hitting the spot inside him that made thunder and lightning flash through him. He bit out Horace's name, his body jerking, bouncing upon that cock, needing that sensation again. Once more.

Horace gave it to him, just like that, smashing against that sweet spot, the broad head of that amazing prick rubbing and rubbing. The entire world tightened down to them, like the snow blanketed everything else and left them a little pocket. Horace surged in and out of him, one big paw finally sliding between them to touch him, cupping his cock and rubbing it, up and down. All the while that huge body bucked for him, shifted him, moved him.

Words poured out of him -- things about soon and please and love and now -- before his body had more than he could bear, seed pulsing from him.

"Yes!" Horace shouted it for him, holding him so close, kissing him madly. Then he felt that fine prick throb deep in him, pushing deep one last time before Horace's heat splashed inside him.

Walker found himself slumping down upon Horace, eyes heavy, limbs leaden.

"Sweet. You're safe now. Rest, hmm? I have something special for you later." The almost hard note in Horace's voice made him want to look up, but he wasn't sure he could. He was melted worse than spring thaw.

Horace got the bathwater ready, hot, but not too hot, a soft cloth and soap waiting.

Walker had scared him with that little trip out into the blizzard. Scared him good, and he wasn't too big a man to admit it. He needed to put his mark on the boy again, inside and out. And there was one way he knew he could.

Something he'd seen done once, had never done himself. Hellfire, he'd never wanted to. Now he did.

The lad still slept, warm and curled up in their bed, a lump under the pile of quilts and furs. Horace wandered over once his preparations were done, stroking the blankets away from that pale skin, cupping Walker's bottom with one hand.

"Wake up, lad."

Those bright eyes blinked open, the smile he received warming him through. "Horace. I was dreaming."

"Were you?" Those swollen pink lips begged a kiss, and Horace took one. "Dreaming of me, I hope."

"Yes." Walker shifted closer, trying to draw him beneath the blankets.

"Mmm. No, sweet. I have other plans." Poor Walker shivered when Horace pulled him out of his nest, but he'd warm up soon enough.

"Plans? Is it still snowing?" Walker pressed against his side, hiding the lad's nakedness.

"It is. We have nothing but time." And hot water. And a very special bottle of oil.

"Time." Walker looked at the tub, head tilting like a pup hearing a whistle. "Is it time to bathe?"

"It is. We're going to have a nice soak, and get very clean, lad." Inside and out, for Walker.

Walker reached down, fingers sliding through the water. "Mmm. Hot. Do you want to go first?"

"Oh, I rinsed off already, lad. You go ahead and get in." He would be fine outside the tub, with the fire stoked up and the fire in his belly burning out of control.

Walker nodded, sinking down into the water with a soft little moan. "This is mighty fine."

His breath caught. Oh, that was fine indeed, that lean body, covered and revealed by the hot water. Horace's hands clenched and unclenched. Lord Almighty. He cleared his throat. "Very fine."

Walker nodded, leaning forward to duck his head into the water. That lean-muscled back glowed in the firelight, the long line begging his touch. Never one to deny himself, Horace reached out, running the cloth he'd dipped into the hot water down Walker's back. He traced each line, each little dip and hollow. The lad pushed up into his touch, offering him a honey-sweet moan.

"Oh, love, the way you give." The lad would give it all to him tonight, Horace knew that. For now he'd settle for the build up.

Walker sat up, the water dripping down over the pale, fine-grained skin.

"Pretty, pretty." Smiling, he let the cloth dip below the water, rubbing the top of Walker's ass.

Walker's cheeks heated, eyes flashing up toward him. "I. Horace?"

"What love?" The questions would come faster, he knew, when they got moving. He let the cloth slip around to the front, rubbing it gently over Walker's privates.

"That... I ain't never had no one..." Walker shifted, eyelids going heavy as he rubbed that fine, heavy cock.

"No one but me, hmm?" One day Walker would become used to his touch. Or perhaps the lad would never quite settle, naturally shy as he was. Either way it would be delicious.

"No. No one but you." Walker leaned toward him, hiding those hot cheeks against his skin.

"Mmm." Using his free hand to stroke the curls on Walker's head, Horace used the cloth in the other to scrub over Walker's balls.

He could feel Walker's eyelashes against his skin, fluttering like the wings of butterflies, the soft brushes keeping time with the soft, almost silent gasps. Sweet lad. After all they'd done, still so unsure. Horace almost stopped for a good, hard spanking, but he didn't think it went with his plan. "Up on your knees, lad."

"On my knees?" It heated him, bone-deep, when Walker knelt for him, even as the question was asked.

"Just like that, yes." Pushing just a bit, so Walker's arms folded naturally on the lip of the tub, Horace surveyed the lovely line of that spine, stretched out for him, and the hard curve of Walker's bottom. It made him groan, made him jump when his own cock touched the metal of the tub.

Walker spread, balls hanging low, brushing the water. "Horace, what are we on about?"

"You'll see, sweet. This will be something you'll never forget." Horace knew he never would either. He had to do this right.

The soft laugh seemed to fill the spaces in the cabin. "There's nothing we've done together I'll forget, Horace, no matter how much we go about doing them."

"Oh." That deserved a reward. He kissed Walker's neck, searching for and finding the little bruises he'd left there. "All right, now, hold still."

Walker nodded, trusting him so much that Horace thought it might break him. Taking a deep breath, Horace began to wash Walker with long sweeps of the cloth, working his way back down to that fine bottom. Such a tight little ass, just waiting for him. Cleaning the skin thoroughly, Horace worked between Walker's cheeks.

Those muscled buttocks clenched, Walker looking over one shoulder at him. "Horace? I... I don't..."

"You know I'd never hurt you. Never do anything you didn't want." Hell, he'd sooner cut his hand off, and he'd need that before the night was over.

"I know, but... I ain't never had someone wash there..."

"Well, it won't hurt none." They had to make sure the lad was clean. That much he remembered. Oh, how hard it had made him, watching his old friend Adam do this to a pretty lad in San Francisco. He'd come so much he ached. And now he had Walker to try it on.

"No. No, I reckon not." Walker gave him this dear, consternated look, but those knees stayed spread.

"Easy now, he said, sliding wet fingers inside Walker's body, just washing him gently. Oh, he couldn't wait to get the oil and spread the lad on the bed.

Walker leaned further, cheek pillowed on the crossed arms, eyes closed. Such perfect trust. Slowly but surely, he spread Walker, opening him, loving him. He needed the lad loose and ready. His hand was pretty damned big.

Sounds began to fill the air, Walker moaning as the lad moved upon his fingers, riding his touch. Those noises excited him beyond reason, but Horace let the touches stay slow, easy and good. Soon enough, though, he knew it was time to stand Walker up and rinse him off. "Up, sweet."

"I reckon I am, Horace." Walker stood, cock hard and full, red-tipped.

"Oh, I'd say you are." Grabbing up a bucket of warm water, Horace swept the suds and bathwater away, bending to give that needy prick a kiss.

Walker tasted sweet with a hint of salt; Walker's knees buckled a bit at his kiss.

Horace straightened, catching his lover and carrying him to the bed. He dried Walker with a soft piece of flannel, making sure he was comfortable. "You'll need to hold your hips up, love. Do you want a pillow?"

"Hold my hips up for what?" Walker lifted and Horace did slide a pillow beneath the fine tight ass.

"For what I'm about to do." Winking, he bent and took a kiss, reaching for the oil. Walker might bolt on him, but Lord, he needed this.

"You didn't need the pillow for this last night." Walker moaned into their kiss, distracted and wanton, tongue sliding along his own.

"No, but this is different." The oil coated his fingers once he opened it and tipped some into his palm. He left it open, sat it where it wouldn't spill, and turned to Walker again. He slid two fingers right into that waiting ass, knowing Walker would be stretched enough to take them. Walker squeezed his fingers, then the lad started riding again, moving just a bit faster now.

"That's it, love. That's it. Just open up for me." There was so much more that had to fit... Horace looked, feeling a little dubious.

"You feel good to me." Walker moaned as he pushed deeper, the lad's thighs parting as Walker let him in.

He used his other hand to touch, stroking, praising, pinching at Walker's nipples, pulling his cock. "And you feel hotter than a bonfire, lad. I love how you love. I do, I do."

The third finger slid right in, just the tiniest bit of resistance meeting him.

"Mmm. Full." Walker shifted, belly going taut as those hips rocked, eager.

"Not too much, though, hmm?" He needed to hear that Walker could take all he had to give. Everything.

"No. Not too much. I feel you deep." Walker groaned, body squeezing his fingers in a hug.

Moaning, Horace worked Walker a little faster a little harder, needing to get that fourth finger in. When the tight clasp eased, Horace added more oil and went for it, pushing his fingers together to ease the way.

"Oh..." Walker's knees raised, hips tilting as his lad tried to shift, stretch.

"Sh. That's good, love. Right there." Soothing Walker with his other hand on that flat belly, he waited for those tight muscles to relax.

"Horace. So full. So full with you." Walker's head tossed, just a bit.

"Yes, sweet. Now I need you to breathe. Deep. In and out." The oil wasn't going to run out, which was something he'd worried on, so that was good. He poured more on, watching Walker's chest rise and fall.

"B...breathe." The muscles about his fingers fluttered like a bird's wings. Walker groaned, belly flushed a dark red, cock not flagging even a bit.

"Easy. Easy." Oh, look at that. His marks on that skin stood out sharply, the flush making them even darker. So damned pretty. It was time to go all the way. Horace waited for Walker to exhale before adding his thumb.

Walker's body resisted, fought him for a moment and then, with a near-desperate cry, his hand was pulled in, that ring of muscle snapping around his wrist. Horace froze, his heart fixing to beat out of his chest, his breath heaving in his lungs. "Walker. Love. All right?"

"Love." Walker's eyelashes fluttered, eyes staring up at him, dazed. "You're in me."

"All the way in. Holding you. In my hand." Everything in him released, all of the pent up rage and fear at having almost lost this beautiful man.

Walker reached down, fingers trembling, and traced the place where their bodies met. A soft keening sound filled the air, Walker's body rippling around his hand as seed spurted over Walker's belly.

A raw moan ripped out of him, his every muscle straining and quivering as he fought for control. He just couldn't hurt Walker. Not ever.

That fine prick didn't flag a bit, no, it stayed proud and hard, bobbing above Walker's belly. "Horace. Move. I need. You gotta."

"Breathe, love. Breathe. You have to relax enough for me to..." He wanted in with his cock now. Wanted to push Walker down and pound into him.

"Breathe. Good Lord. You got your hand in me..." Walker groaned, legs starting to shift and move.

"Sh. Sh, now." They rocked, getting Walker relaxed enough that he could slide his hand out. It was a tight squeeze, but they did it without hurting, and then Horace was surging up, pressing down between Walker's legs with his body. Walker rocked up, entire body pleading with him, demanding that he take that heated, stretched hole.

"Horace. Please. Please, I *need*." Lord, had he *ever* heard his name said like that?

"I've got what you need." His cock pushed right in, the oil making it so easy. They both groaned, and he couldn't hold back, couldn't keep his hips still.

"More." Walker was wild as anything beneath him, each of his thrusts met with an equal need.

The kiss they shared stole his soul, just tearing into him. They moved faster and faster, Walker's still hard cock rubbing him, his own cock on fire inside that sweet body. Walker clung to him like a limpet, tongue pushing into his lips in the wild rhythm of his hips.

When Walker bit his lip, teeth sinking in, the bright pain took Horace over the top, and he shot deep inside his lover, his hips grinding down. God in Heaven, he was gonna die.

Walker keened for him, body shuddering weakly, a wet heat between them proving Horace hadn't been alone in his pleasure.

They collapsed together, both of them utterly spent, and Horace kissed Walker's cheek gently, loving, praising the courage it had taken to do what they just had. "Sweet love. Thank you."

Walker blinked over at him, nuzzling a bit. "In me."

"Definitely. Holding you." Smiling, he nuzzled in, just relaxing. Letting everything else float away. "Rest now, love. Just sleep. I've got you."

Walker nodded and wrapped around him, shivering a bit here and there until sleep took him.

Poor lad. It had been an eventful day. Horace took the time to slip free of Walker before he curled up and pulled the blankets around them. Walker was safe. His. Held.

That would hold any storm at bay.

Chapter Nine

Horace was as growly as a bear with a sore paw.

Walker didn't understand at all. The snow was melting, things were starting to live again, the ground hinting at green.

He hadn't been so excited in months. It wouldn't take much to have a tiny garden, enough greens to feast on. Maybe some onions to dry for the winter.

Good things.

If he could only figure Horace's mood.

Every time he wandered by, humming O, Susannah, Horace glared at him, those big hands working on this harness or that gold pan. The man just looked like he was sunk in a deep blue growl.

The sun was shining and he stepped into a patch of light, soaking it up.

He didn't even hear Horace until the man was right behind him. "Get yer ass inside, boy."

"What?" He jumped near out of his skin, turning to look into stormy eyes.

"I said, get inside. You'll have your spring soon enough. I need your help." Horace steered him back inside, hands heavy on him.

"Do you hate the spring so? I'd think you'd welcome it."

"I love it," Horace snarled, brows meeting over his nose. "I like summer, too."

"I do too." He nodded, frowning at Horace. "Are you ill?"

"No." Even more growly. "I just need your help."

"Well, I'm here, aren't I?"

"For now." Horace whirled and stalked to the fireplace, picking up a piece of harness. "This needs to be replaced."

"For now?" His feet felt like they were nailed to the floorboards, his mouth suddenly dry as dust. Was Horace going to send him off now that the snows were melting?

"Yes, lad. For now. 'Tis clear you can't wait to go." Those green eyes met his, a storm raging in them worse than any blizzard.

"What?" His own storm started gathering in him, roiling away. "What have I done to make you think that, you bull-headed fool?"

"You've been so damned happy!" Horace shouted. "You've moped around here all winter like I've been keeping you against your will, and spring comes and you're rarin' to go. What am I supposed to think?"

"I *like* the spring, you stubborn mule!" He shocked himself by shouting right on back. "I ain't never seen snows like this, day after day of it. I'm glad to see the green poking out!"

"So glad that you'll be down the mountain in no time." Lord almighty. Horace looked like he was... pouting. Surely not.

A pure white rage hit him and he stomped one foot with it, shoving Horace back. "'less you come with me, you great fool, I ain't going NOWHERE!"

Damned fool near to loved him into madness, tempted him to the basest and most wonderful pleasures and ruined him for any other and Horace thought he'd *leave*?

Horace scowled, rubbing his chest where Walker had hit him. "Prove it."

He shoved again and Horace went toppling, landing with a heavy thud on the bed. The ropes groaned and creaked, but they held. It was just as damned well that they did, too, because it'd been a terror to strip Horace's clothes away from the floor.

Horace blinked, eyes going dark, and a deep breath swelled that wide chest. "Now, look here lad..."

"No. You look. You get all blustery and fierce and you never once *asked* me, never once thought that I meant it when I said I had a mind to stay." He was in a pure fury, hands sliding over Horace as he bared that skin.

"I. Why would you? What have I got to offer a lad like you?"

He stopped to stare a moment, realizing that Horace really meant it. That plaintive tone, the perplexed look. All of it was real.

Walker met Horace's eyes, held that gaze for a long minute. "You. Horace, I... I couldn't go back. Not now. Not now that I have you." His hands slid up Horace's thighs, petting the heavy muscles there. How could he leave this? He was well and truly home.

"I want to believe that, lad. I do." Horace reached for him, then drew back, shaking his head. "No one has ever stayed with me."

"I'm not no one." He shook his head, pushing into Horace's arms, just like that. "You promised you'd keep me; you don't think it'd go the other way, too?"

"I hope to God it does." Horace kissed him, mouth oddly soft on his, tongue pushing in to search for his. His fingers found their way into Horace's great mop of hair, holding the dear man still so that he could kiss and taste, make Horace know how much he needed. A deep groan met his

motions, Horace's big hands cupping his bottom, pulling him closer. It felt good, but it wasn't enough. He needed to be in control.

He needed for Horace to understand.

Walker straddled Horace, pushing him back onto the quilts, fingers finding the tiny little nipples, pinching them until Horace jerked.

"Walker... sweet." Moaning, Horace moved under him, the feeling as big as the snow sliding off the mountain. The man was hot as fire beneath him.

"Yours. Yours, just like you're mine." He growled the words into Horace's mouth, holding that bright gaze.

"Yes, sweet. Yours." Look at those muscles ripple every time Horace moved. All of it was his to touch and taste, which was a heady feeling.

It was easy, to lean down and lick a line down Horace's throat, fingers sliding down to cup Horace's sacs as he pulled up a mark. His.

A sharp gasp pressed against his cheek, Horace's lips open and soft. He thought maybe he'd surprised the big man with his touches, his kisses. Perhaps it was what Horace needed. To know that his need was as big as Horace's, that he wanted as much as he was wanted.

He let his fingers slide down, daring to touch and stroke the tiny, hidden hole between Horace's cheeks. Horace bucked for him, breath laboring, that heavy chest rising and falling. When he glanced up, those eyes were pinned to him, wide and crazy green. He opened his mouth to ask if it was good, if Horace would let him in, let him touch. What came out was, "the oil, Horace. I need it."

And damn him, but Horace just reached for the oil, one long arm going right out, the bottle seeming tiny in Horace's hand.

His hands were shaking, but he didn't falter. He needed. Horace needed. They would do this together. He slicked his fingers, the oil dripping against Horace's shaft, slipping down and leaving snail trails on the silken flesh.

Horace reached down between them, stroking that thick prick, hand sliding wetly up and down. "Walker... I. Lad."

Bless him, Horace didn't even know how to ask for it. Walker nodded, wet fingers circling that tiny ring of muscles, wetting it before he pushed inside, opened Horace up. His body went tight, the pressure on his fingers a sweet promise of what was to come.

Deep, rough moans came from deep in Horace's belly. Those hips rolled up for him, Horace opening right up. Inside Horace was tight and hot, just burning up. He leaned down, kissing Horace's belly, the very tip of Horace's cock. It made him feel so proud, to touch Horace like this.

"Sweet. You. I. Put it in me." Oh, listen to that booming voice, telling him to do just what he wanted to do. His whole body throbbed.

"Are you ready? I wouldn't hurt you for all the world." He pushed in again, once more, just assuring himself Horace was spread and ready.

"I am, lad. Please." God, that look. It near burned him, searing right down to his insides. Horace was ready.

He took himself in hand, guiding himself to that tight, soft, slick place. There was resistance at first, but not enough to comment on because once he slipped inside, his entire world tightened to Horace. And Horace wasn't complaining. No, indeed. Horace grabbed his hips and pulled him closer, moving him in and out. Demanding.

"You're mine, too. My home." He ground the words out, his throat tight, body shaking with pleasure.

"Love... love you, lad. I surely do." Hand trembling, Horace pulled him in harder and harder, moving against him like he was made to.

His own hand found Horace's prick, moving upon it, spreading the drops that leaked from it all about. Grunting, Horace bore down, took more of him in, and jerked into his hand. Up, down, over and over. That great, shaggy head of hair was wet with sweat, that face set in hard lines.

"Love. Horace." He leaned down, took a kiss that liked to burn him, bone deep.

"Mhn." That sound was all the warning he had before Horace was spending over his clenched hand, spreading wet and hot between them. It seemed to go on forever, and the way Horace clamped down on him had him shouting out loud.

His hips jerked and rocked, driving him to his own climax, his seed pushed deep inside Horace's body.

"Oh, lad. Walker. Sweet." Those big hands smoothed down his back, stroking, loving, cradling him as he collapsed.

Walker nodded, cheek resting on Horace's chest. "Good."

"Yes, good. Mine." Patting his ass, Horace laughed. "Happy spring."

"Mmhmm. We'll fix the leather later." His eyelids drooped as he snuggled in, held on.

Perhaps his bear would feel less growly now.

Horace took a deep, bracing draught of fresh air.

Springtime in the Rockies had never been so fine. No, sir. Never so fine.

The harnesses were all mended. The pans were all dent free. He'd set up the flumes. Hell, he figured he and Walker had been working solid for two weeks, even if the lad had been more about scrabbling in the near frozen dirt than mining.

Horace decided they needed a break, so he threw his head back and bellered. "Walker! Boy! Come here!"

Walker's bright eyes flashed in the sun, his lover coming at a trot, cheeks pink. "Horace?"

"Ah, there you are, lad! What a beautiful day." He smiled, holding out his arms, nothing that he only wore three layers of flannel.

"It is!" Walker laughed for him, launching heedless into his embrace.

Horace hugged the lad tight, twirling them around, grinning up into those eyes. "What would you like to do, lad? A picnic? A swim?"

"Swim? Horace? Your Johnson would freeze and fall off!"

"Well, you don't stay in long, lad. In the north of Europe they sit in steam rooms, then jump in icy cold water and then beat each other with willow sticks." That was what he'd heard from a beautiful, icy Viking once.

"You're joshing me." Walker laughed for him, eyes dancing with it.

"I'm not. Too bad we don't have any steam, eh?" Though he would take to beating Walker with a switch just fine.

"Not a bit of it." Yeah, he could see the marks on that fine skin, his marks.

"We could go sit right by the fire, then run out and have a dip." The very thought made him want to roar with happy laughter.

"We could just sit right by the fire, then agree that sane men don't bathe in the bitter chill."

"We could, but where would be the fun in that? We won't be staying in long."

"You can't be serious, love." He laughed at the look in Walker's eyes. How many times had his sweet lad said those words to him?

"Try me." He picked Walker right back up, hauling him toward their cabin. He didn't have a willow branch, but he had a strop.

Walker's heart pounded hard against his shoulder, prick firming against his belly, proving his lover was with him in this.

"There, now." He settled next to the fire, Walker in his lap, smiling as the heat seeped into his bones. "Better, hmm?"

"Mmhmm." Walker nodded, settled and warm in his arms, cheek covered with a soft, light stubble. Horace kissed his way across, taking that sweet mouth with a long, slow kiss. The flavor of lemon candy burst across his tongue, and Horace chuckled. Someone was hitting the last of their stash. Walker grinned, cheeks pinking. "We'll have to get more. Together."

"We will. As soon as the danger of an avalanche is over, we'll spend a few weeks in town." He wasn't worried about that anymore. Walker was his.

Walker's nod brushed their cheeks together. "You need more shirts and I need stouter trousers."

"And you need new boots, lad. Maybe two pairs." They'd need candies and sugar, salt and flour...

"Coffee." Warm lips brushed his jaw. "Oil."

"Mmm. A new blanket. Just for us." Lord, his beard was getting bristly. He needed a trim. It was spring.

"Mmhmm." Walker's hind end pushed into his hands, the lad rocking a bit, sliding in his palms.

So responsive to his every move, his lad. So sweet in his hands and against his thighs. He wasn't about to forget about their swim, though.

Walker's lips brushed against his, tongue sliding in to taste him.

Horace opened up, letting Walker play a moment. They were about to start steaming, as warm as it was next to the fire. Almost time to run out and jump in. "You ready to swim, lad?"

"Horace, we'll catch our deaths!"

"We won't! Have I ever failed to warm you? It will be much less than when you got lost in the storm, lad. I promise." Horace rose, determined to get Walker to go with him.

Hell, the stream was barely three inches deep.

Walker followed, a look of utter disbelief on the lean face. Still, it warmed him, the trust there.

"Now, don't frown at me, lad. Off with your clothes. We'll leave them here so they stay dry." Horace took his shirts off, folding them neatly by the door. His breath came in at the cold, his nipples tightening.

"You've lost your senses." Walker followed along, bearing that sweet pink skin.

"You'll see." Horace let out a whoop and ran for the stream, his feet tingling with the cold, but his blood just thundering in his veins. He didn't have to look to know Walker was behind him all the way.

Walker pressed against his back, shivering and gasping out his name.

"In and out, lad." Plunging into the stream made him feel like he might die. His heart stopped, he would swear. But then its beat speeded, surging when he splashed water on Walker's dancing ass.

"Horace!" Walker was pale as a ghost, except for the pink in the lad's face.

Poor lad. He didn't have Horace's big physique, his reserves of muscle. Horace shook water out of his beard and picked Walker up, running for the cabin. "I'll warm you, sweet. I promise."

"Y...y...you do." Walker wrapped around him, clinging like wet sheets on the line.

"Right to the fire with you, and hot blanket." He'd dry Walker off, then warm him the best way he knew how. A good red ass would make him feel so much better.

Walker nodded, the blanket dragged around both of them, drawn close.

Rubbing vigorously at Walker's arms and legs, Horace got them pressed together, got their sopping wet hair dried off. A few more moments, and he'd be ready to bend Walker over the little bench next to the fire. Walker was panting, just a bit, moaning a bit more as they began to warm.

"There, now. There. See? It's not so bad, love." Yes, Walker's muscles were unclenching, starting to get looser, warmer. "Now, get me the strop."

"I..." Walker stared, cheeks going a deep, dark red. "Horace?"

"I intend to warm you right through." He patted that lean, round ass. "Go on, now, you know where I keep it."

"I. But." Walker moved, hands shaking some as the length of leather was fetched.

"Good lad. Now, bend yourself over here. I've put a dry blanket down." The bench was all padded, ready. Horace took the strap, testing it in his hands. Walker's lips opened and closed, the lad settling for him, even if the muscles all along the lean back shifted and jerked.

"Love how pretty you are." Walker had grown a good bit of strength since he'd come. Horace ran one hand down the fine spine, tracing the last droplets of water. Then he squared off and let the strop fly, watching the red bloom in its wake.

Walker jerked for him, so prettily, a deep grunt filling the air, the noise almost surprised. It had been too long. Oh, he and Walker were on much more even footing these days, which suited him to the ground. But he thought the lad needed this as much as he did. He swung again and again, leaving a lovely criss-cross of lines.

The moans came faster and louder, Walker's skin flushing warm, hips rolling and thrusting like the strop was a lover itself. He took it to the backs of Walker's thighs, then all the way back up to the top of that round bottom, groaning, loving how that skin looked.

"Horace. Horace, so hot." Walker's thighs parted, one hand reaching back to touch that burning skin.

"Yes, lad. I told you. Warm as anything." The strop dropped to the floor and he reached for that ass, filling his hands with it. Hot as fire.

"Please." Head tossing, his lad begged for him, body and voice.

"Now. Yes." Oil. They needed more oil, but they still had enough. Horace got it, coating his fingers. Tilting Walker's buttocks up even more, Horace slid those fingers inside, the heat there even more than it was on the outside.

He could watch the sight of Walker riding his fingers, skin glowing pink for a lifetime. Well, he could have if his own prick hadn't recovered from the cold and made a good show of rising like the morning sun.

"Horace. Horace, fill me." The words were a demand now, making him feel ten feet tall.

"Yes, sweet. Yes. Going to make you feel it. Every bit." Horace grunted, slicking himself up with some of the oil, then set his cock to Walker's entrance. Walker pressed back, his sweet lad wrapping about his prick, gripping it tight.

"God in Heaven." He could just about burst. So hot inside, so tight and good. Horace began to move, hands on that red ass, feeling his marks.

"Yeah. Yeah, Horace." That heated skin slapped against his thighs, Horace riding him like he was a prize pony.

"Love you so, lad." He did. So much that it was an ache, deep down inside him. But it was a good pain. Walker nodded, head falling back against his shoulder. His hips moved faster, pounding against Walker's sore bottom, his cock pushing in over and over. Oh, he needed. How he needed.

"Feel you. Deep." Walker jerked, gasping loud. "There. There, love."

"Right there." Yes, he could do that. Again and again. Horace jerked into Walker, hoping he could last long enough. It didn't take long for Walker's cry to ring out, eyes wide and staring as heat sprayed over his fingers, ass like a fist around his cock.

"Walker!" Horace followed close behind, leaning to kiss the back of Walker's neck, his seed spilling from him. Lord Almighty. Yes. That was just the thing. Walker leaned back into him, heart pounding furiously, throat working as they breathed together.

"Did that get your blood up, lad?" he asked, smiling against walker's damp skin.

"You... Yes. Yes, indeed." Walker laughed weakly, grinning at him.

Horace laughed, the sound booming off the walls of the cabin. "Oh, good. I wonder if they do it this way in Sweden."

Chapter Ten

So many people.

He kept his head down, kept his eyes on Horace. They'd not been down from the mountain together and, though he remembered enjoying going to Charleston as a lad, the press of people in this town seemed too much.

It seemed to be closing tight for Horace, too; his bearded lover glowering at folks as they walked.

"Back to the tavern, lad?" Horace asked, his voice rough as a cob.

"Yeah. Got used to being home, being in a quiet spot." His eyes went to their mountains, their cabin hidden away near the tree line.

"I think we should provision tomorrow, head out earlier than we thought, lad. I... it's too much." That sounded almost wild. Almost... scared.

Not quite.

"Please, Horace." He nodded, meeting those wild eyes before he got jostled by a lad running like the hounds of Hells were after him. Perhaps they could sleep in the open air tomorrow.

"Yes, lad. I think so." Horace hustled them along, hand coming up under his elbow.

That touch soothed him, bone-deep, and he leaned into it, just a tad, just enough that Horace would feel it. The tavern came up, the doors swinging open and closed. Yes, tomorrow they would fill up Rotgut's packs and head away home.

They trod up the stairs, Horace opening the latch to their door, and when it closed behind them the silence was all but deafening. Not like their woods, but sweet.

He stood, taking a deep, long breath like he could suck the quiet in, hold it for a bit. "I ain't made for so many folks."

"No. No, not me neither." Horace moved to him, took him in those huge arms.

His face lifted for a kiss, hands wrapped around Horace's hips, the cloth of those trousers so much more rough than Horace's skin.

"Mmm." The kiss relaxed them both, tense muscles going loose, warm. So good. The whole press of the town faded right away.

His hands slid around the nape of Horace's neck, fingers digging in, rubbing slow circles on the heavy muscles there.

"Oh, love." He knew Horace had been to much bigger towns, but the big man seemed so tense, so worried. Surely he wasn't worried still that Walker would leave him.

"Here, Horace. Here." He kept touching, feeling, loving on Horace for all he was worth.

"Yes. I never figured I would want to leave town so fast. Guess I got all I need, lad." That kiss curled his toes, and maybe his hair.

Well, that was worth something, wasn't it? He met the kiss with all the passion he had in him, yessir. Moaning, Horace lifted him right up, holding him under the bottom, those big hands covering all of his behind. Those hands had shown him more than he'd ever dreamed in a million years, and Walker thanked the good Lord for each lesson, even the sharp-edged ones.

Horace kissed him with all the fire he knew the man had, rubbing against him. That big body was like a furnace, on fire for him. He groaned, fingers sliding to pull at Horace's lawn blouse, searching for that fine, heated skin.

"Oh. Fine idea, lad." Horace walked him to the bed, plopping them down, the ropes creaking and the straw ticking shifting. He nodded, fingers pushing and pulling until he could get to Horace's chest and drag his fingertips over the dark, tight nipples.

Horace arched up for him, grunting, hands pulling at his rough shirt and trousers in turn. He heard fabric rip, but it would mend. He'd become quite good at mending. Soon they were skin-to-skin, Horace's fingers dragging lines of pure fire on his hip, his belly, his prick.

"Oh, love. Make me feel tall as a mountain." Horace could have some pretty words. 'Course the touches were eve better, making him gasp and wiggle.

"You and your mountain are what all I need." He wasn't no poet, but he could say what he meant.

"Good." Horace kissed him again, rolling to rub down against him, groaning. Needing him. Him.

He spread, leg wrapping around and holding tight, a soft cry slipping from him. "Need."

"Want me in you, love? Want me inside you?" He could feel how much Horace wanted that, the thick cock rubbing, wet and hot. So ready.

"As bad as I need to breathe." Maybe worse, because his breath was caught in his chest, trapped.

"Want that, too." Wetting two fingers, Horace reached behind him, pushing against his crease, the tips just sliding inside him.

That loosened the breath inside him, drawing out a deep moan that went on and on.

"Yes, lad. Look at you." Horace had that look of wonder on his face, the bright green eyes hot and needy.

He felt the flush climb up his belly, prick dripping, bobbing and throbbing.

"Would take you in my mouth, too, but can't wait." Horace opened him up inexorably, giving him three thick fingers. The burn found him nodding, groaning, spreading to let his mountain man in. Horace pulled his fingers out, muscling between his thighs, thumbs digging into his muscles. That broad prick shoved at him, inside him, making him cry out.

"Yours." He ground out the words, body spreading, stretching, letting Horace in and in.

"Mine. My treasure. I would give all the gold in the world for you." Moving slow and sure, Horace began shoving in and out of him, really letting him feel it.

He reached up, hands wrapping around the headboard, bracing himself and meeting Horace's strength with his own. His legs wrapped around the sturdy waist, his hands dug into the wood behind him, and Horace took him flying, just slamming into him. He reached down, fingers wrapping around his cock, pulling the column of flesh in time with Horace's thrusts.

"Oh. Yes. Oh, Walker." Every pull on his cock made his muscles flutter around Horace, making the big man buck, groan.

"Yes." He focused on squeezing and moving, both of them tumbling toward their climax.

It took only moments, both of them grunting and moaning, hips slapping together. Finally Horace wrapped a hand around his cock, too, pulling and pulling.

"Horace." His teeth sank into his lip, the sting and pressure enough to make him come, send seed spraying between them.

"Yes, love. Yeah." Horace shot for him, filling him deep, kissing him like there was no tomorrow.

It was all he could do, to simply hold tight, keep his lover close.

Just them. It was just them, and all he wanted to do was stay with Horace and love him some more. Until they could go home.

"We get ready at first light, lad," Horace said, echoing his thoughts. "We'll hit the stores on the way out of town."

"Back home to our mountains."

"Back where we belong." A hard slap rocked his hip, Horace's deep laugh booming out, sounding confident and happy once more. "I'm glad you stumbled into my cabin, lad. I surely am."

"Well, it served you better than blasting me, I swear."

Funny, how he had come to think of that little cabin as home. But then, he might think anywhere was good, so long as Horace was with him.

He'd been so worried about getting cabin fever, stranded up there in the snow.

Now he was ready to go back and let Horace teach him more lessons. He couldn't wait.

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