



Spurs and Saddles: Wanted

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## Prologue

Justice broke a bale of hay up between the last two stalls, King and Penny nosing into it immediately, neighing and snuffling as they ate. He leaned a moment against the wood before checking to make sure they both had fresh water.

He stopped on his way out to rub Dilly's nose and feed him a couple of carrots. He was going to need to pick some more carrots up at the grocery store. He was out. And if he didn't get his hay cut soon, he was going to be buying that soon, too. Damn it, there was just too much for one man to do.

Rubbing his forehead, he gave Dilly another stroke along the nose and headed up to the house, Jig barked at his heels, the silly mutt nearly tripping him up before he told her to get on back to the barn. The sun had just set, but he knew the way in the dark and soon was washing up in the mud room, shedding his boots and his muddy jeans. He had a pair of sweats hanging over the back of a chair in the kitchen and he slipped them on, the material worn and soft, comfortable.

The kitchen light was soft and homey, comfortable. He checked the fridge and took out the pork chops and barbeque sauce. Back out on the deck, he grilled the chops by the light from the kitchen. He was generous with the sauce – when he reheated the extra chops over the next few days, that sauce would keep them from getting too dry.

He had leftover mashed potatoes and sliced carrots. Adding them to his plate, he grabbed a beer and a fork and headed into the front room, sat in his chair and pulled the little TV table over.

The news was over, but there were some sports on the TV; a baseball game. Though neither of the teams playing were ones he followed, it was something to watch as he made short work of his food. He was too hungry to stretch it out and in five minutes he was back out in the kitchen, cutting off a piece of apple pie and heating it up in the microwave. He didn't have any ice cream left -- he'd used the last of it the other day and there wouldn't be any more until he got some cash flow happening. Which meant bringing in the hay. It would likely be a couple more weeks before it was ready and then he had to take a day or two to get it cut. He sure wished he could hire on some help, but he just didn't have the money. At least there hadn't been any debt when his father had left him the farm, but any money there was had gone to inheritance taxes and funeral costs, which saw him living from cutting to cutting, hoping to keep everything together.

His pie didn't take any longer to eat than his supper had, but by the time he was finished his belly was full and he had that post meal haze going on. His tiredness was aggravated by the hard day's work he'd put in that had started well before dawn and he soon dozed off, the TV's drone giving him the illusion of company.

When he jerked awake sometime later, the game was over and it was time for bed. He tossed his dishes in the sink -- they'd keep until morning and it wasn't like there was anyone to take offense

to how dirty things got around there. There was only him and right now he was too bushed to care.

He brushed his teeth and washed his face and his hands, before stripping down and getting into bed. Of course, now that he was lying down and it was past the time for any man who began his work day with the sun to be asleep, he was wide awake. That's what he got for napping after supper.

Tossing and turning wasn't getting him any closer to sleep, so he flipped onto his back and started to touch himself. He didn't do anything kinky or nothing, he wasn't into that kind of stuff, but he liked to run his hands over his skin, touch his nipples a bit, and his belly, grip his hips and card his fingers through his pubic hair before he let them drift to his cock. He liked to pretend it was someone else touching him, that he wasn't alone in his bed just like always. He supposed the fact that he imagined those other hands belonged to another guy made him perverted in most folks' eyes, but he figured it was none of anybody else's business.

His fingers lingered on his nipples tonight, the little bits of flesh having gone hard as he neared them. It fascinated him sometimes, the way something so small, so useless, could be made to feel so good. Every time the pad of his finger passed across one of his nipples, he felt it tingle all the way down to his cock. He did it again and again, moaning at the thought of his imaginary lover doing this to him.

He sent his other hand down, tracing the ridges of his belly. The muscles were hard and defined, not an extra ounce of fat on them. He worked hard, damn hard, and he knew it showed. Too bad there was no one to see.

He growled suddenly at himself. He wasn't a whiner; he knew the deal when he'd taken on his pappy's ranch after his father had died and left it to him; he could have sold it, but both his father and his pappy had instilled in him a love for the land, for *this* land, *their* land.

Shaking his head to clear it of all thoughts, he slid both hands down, one grabbing his balls, the other his dick. It was a good distraction, his body reacting like he knew it would, everything tightening up with the pleasure of his own touch.

He rubbed his thumb back and forth across the head of his dick and then stroked his hand up and down a few times. He didn't use hand cream or anything to slick the way -- he liked that little bit of roughness from his hands, he liked the way the calluses on his fingers caught the sensitive skin and pulled. It wasn't enough to really hurt, but it made him ache some.

Rolling his balls, he spread his legs wider, the soft cotton sheets cool against his heated skin. He changed his grip on his balls as they started to pull up against his body, tugging on them and then pressing them up. His hand flew on his dick, his hips beginning to move, to push up.

His breath sounded loud in the dark room, gasps and groans foreign somehow, and yet his and familiar and hot. And then it all started to swirl together into something warm as the pleasure built from his balls out. He kept working the tip of his dick with his thumb as he chased his

orgasm, his whole body straining toward it. He needed it, needed this: the pleasure, the release, the heavy oblivion it would leave behind.

With a grunt he came, wet spunk spilling up over his hand, hitting his belly and chest. He kept working his dick, hand slowing, the way all slippery and slick. Little shivers went through him. He whimpered, once, and let go of his dick, breath panting harshly from his chest.

Clean up took no more than a second or two as he swiped at himself with a tissue and then cleaned the mess up on his hand and chest with another one. Both were tossed over the edge of the bed and he turned on his side, curling up around a second pillow.

His eyes closed, the heaviness left behind by his orgasm letting him sleep.

## Chapter One

Justice rushed through his chores on Saturday. He worked his ass off until four p.m., even skipping lunch so he could be done by the time the rodeo started on TV. He loved watching those cowboys ride. He loved the way their arms bulged and the way their asses looked framed by the chaps. Some of those cowboys even got hard when they rode, their dicks hard in their dirty, beaten up jeans.

It made him dream, seeing those hard cocks, made him want things he didn't figure he would ever have. But after, when he went to bed, he would pretend it was one of those strong, callused hands that touched him, that a ninety point ride grin was staring down at him.

Some days he'd go in to the feed store or the grocery store on Saturday and stop at the Dairy Queen on the way home, but there was no money for that this week, there hadn't been for a while, so he was going to make do with a pork chop sandwich. He still had some thick rye bread left that was sitting in the fridge, so it shouldn't be moldy.

He'd just sat down with it, some chips and a Coke when Jig set up barking. He waited for her to get over whatever had set her off, but instead she got louder, her barks more strident. He frowned. He hadn't heard anyone drive up, no car, no truck, and certainly no tractor. She kept it up, though, yapping and yapping, almost becoming desperate with it.

Sighing, he put aside his plate and headed out, grabbing the rifle from the rack in the mudroom before opening the door and stepping out onto the porch.

Jig was in the middle of the yard, halfway between the house and the barn, keeping a man Justice had never seen before on the driveway. Her hackles were up, and her teeth bared. The stranger stood stock still, eyes on Jig.

"I'm not here to rob you or nothing," the man called out after the porch door slammed closed. "You can call off your dog."

Justice thought maybe he didn't have to do that at all, though Jig's barking had quieted when he'd come out, she was still in full alert mode. Justice figured it wouldn't hurt any if the stranger was leery of her for a few moments longer.

In the quiet that followed, he could hear the music from the TV. His show was starting, damn it. He took a good look at the man, taking in the beat-up jeans, the less than pristine white shirt, and slightly too-long curls that framed a strong face. A backpack was slung over one shoulder.

"What do you want?" It might have come out a little harsher than he'd meant, but damn it, this was his only indulgence, his own time off and he resented this stranger's intrusion.

"I need some work. A place to stay. Carl Larson at the feed store said maybe you needed a hand with the crops, that you might not object to some company."

“He did, did he?” Justice spat on the ground. God damn Carl Larson anyway, putting that big nose of his into Justice’s business.

“Ayep.”

He took a closer look at his intruder. The man looked weary, and skinny like he hadn’t been eating right lately. Justice thought maybe there were decent muscles hiding underneath that coat, though. Justice didn’t have much to offer, but he had a feeling that it was maybe more than this stranger had. “I got lots of work, but I can’t pay much. Hell, I can’t really pay at all.”

For the first time the stranger looked up from Jig, looking at Justice with the greenest eyes he’d ever seen on a man. “All I’m looking for is food and a roof over my head.”

Justice didn’t know if it was those eyes or the sound of cheering coming from his TV, indicating that the riding had started, but he found himself nodding suddenly, letting the barrel of his rifle point at the floor. “Room and board I can do and I’m willing to discuss more when I’ve got it.” Okay, him suddenly offering something long-term had nothing to do with what was going on in the arena on the television. Not that the stranger’s eyes were swaying him... hell, he wasn’t even fooling himself on that front.

“You’d better come inside -- I’m fixin’ to eat.”

The guy tipped his goat roper hat and headed toward him. Justice waved at Jig and sent her back to the barn with a “Good girl.” He stepped aside to let the stranger past him. The man was surprisingly tall.

Those green eyes met his as they passed and a rough “Thank you” sounded.

Justice nodded and followed the man in. “I’m Justice Holler.”

“Tuck Foley.”

One big hand was held out and Justice took it. The shake was strong, firm but not hard. The calluses on Tuck’s hand said he was used to hard work, which boded well for him upholding his end of the bargain. Hadn’t Justice been recently lamenting his lack of money for some help around the place? He figured he wasn’t going to look this particular gift horse in the mouth, so to speak.

“I don’t suppose I could take a shower? I’ve been on the road a while.”

“Sure.” Justice led the way down the hall of the little ranch house. “This is the bathroom here. And you can put your stuff in the guest room. The door on the right there.”

Tuck tipped his hat again and disappeared into the bathroom, closing the door behind him.

Justice stared for a moment before being drawn back to the front room by more noise from the TV.

He'd only missed the first couple of riders, which happily didn't include his absolute favorites, and when the commercial came on, he quickly made up a second plate of pork chop sandwich and chips, and grabbed another Coke out of the fridge. He set the plate and can up on the little battered coffee table in front of the equally battered couch before settling back into his chair to watch the cowboys ride the bulls.

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Justice had almost forgotten about Tuck by the time his guest came back out into the front room. Or not really, not with the second supper sitting right there on the coffee table in front of the couch, so forgotten was the wrong word.

Still, he'd managed to achieve his usual stiffie, watching those cowboys ride the bulls, and he shifted as Tuck came in, hiding the evidence, so to speak.

Tuck sat, tugging the coffee table close and eating like a man starving. "You like bull riding, I see," he managed between mouthfuls.

It took Justice a moment to realize it likely hadn't been a crack about his almost adequately hidden hard-on, but rather an attempt at conversation. "I do."

"Who do you like to take the buckle this year?" Tuck asked around another mouthful of pork chop.

Barbeque sauce sat on the corner of Tuck's lips, giving Justice sudden thoughts about licking it off. He cleared his throat and focused on the show happening on the TV and thought about the question for a minute or two before answering, even though he knew who he liked for the championship, had known for weeks now. He didn't want to look like he hadn't given the question serious consideration, though. "I'd say it's Dawson Phillips' year."

Tuck snorted. "It might be his year, but Enrique Nogales is going to win the whole enchilada."

With that, Justice suddenly found himself in a fierce debate with Tuck that lasted nearly as long as the go-round they were watching. He hadn't watched bullriding with anyone since his father had died. Hell, he'd hardly had any company but his own for so long, he could have sworn he'd forgotten how, but Tuck didn't seem to be complaining any about his manners.

The argument hadn't slowed his hard-on any. It didn't help that their arguing had lit Tuck's face all up, green eyes shining away at him. Tuck had a nice voice, too. All low and husky like it hadn't been used enough, it settled in the base of Justice's spine. Between that and what they were watching, Justice was still embarrassingly hard by the time they were done eating and he was offering dessert.



Tuck proved himself to be a good guest, though, not saying a word or giving any indication as to whether he'd had an eyeful of Justice's predicament or not.

"I've got some movies," Justice pointed out as he sat again, having passed Tuck one of the bowls of vanilla pudding he'd brought in from the kitchen. He was nearly out of that now, too and they'd have to go without dessert until he got that hay baled and sold.

"Yeah? I like mysteries and crime stuff a whole lot."

"I like the scary shit," Justice admitted. "But I can't really watch them alone." It was silly; he was a grown man, but horror movies still freaked him out unless there was someone else there watching with him.

"Well, then, seeing as you've got company in the form of me, myself and I, why don't we try watching something scary then?"

"You sure?"

"I wouldn't have suggested it if I wasn't."

"Awesome!" Justice bounded up to the shelf that held his DVDs. "You have anything you want to see in that area?"

"Nah, I'm easy."

Justice told himself not to go there when that comment conjured up all sorts of thoughts, instead he concentrated on the latest batch of horror films he'd treated himself to the last time he got paid for the cattle he'd brought in to be butchered. There were still a few he hadn't seen yet. "What about the Saw series? There's four of them and I haven't seen any of them yet."

Tuck laughed and the sound was cheerful, not mocking, even though Justice knew Tuck was definitely laughing *at* him. "You buy them even though you know you won't be seeing them?"

He shrugged. "Well, see, sometimes I watch them on a Sunday afternoon when it's sunny outside and all the lights are on. Other times I have a visitor, like now, who's willing to watch with me." Okay, so he mostly watched them on sunny Sunday afternoons, but Tuck didn't need to know just how on his own he was out here. "I love 'em, they just scare the hell out of me." Which was no doubt why he did love them so much. Although God knew he enjoyed them when they were so bad they were funny, too. You never did know which kind you were going to get. "And sometimes, I just really feel the urge and go ahead and watch one."

Of course the last time he'd done that he hadn't slept for three days straight, so he'd sworn off doing it.

“Well, I’d be happy to be the warm body you watch them with.” Tuck put down his empty bowl and stretched, treating Justice to a little bare patch of belly. “For as long as you’ve got work for me,” Tuck added.

He nodded absently, more than a little distracted by that peek of belly. The DVD player was fairly new, one of the last things his father had bought before he’d died, and it held up to five disks, so he put in all three of the Saw movies, and let it cue up the first one as he settled on the couch next to Tuck rather than in his chair. Silly though it might be, he felt more comfortable near the closest warm body rather than all the way over in his chair on his own. Those three feet made all the difference.

Tuck chuckled some more, but settled in pretty quickly and soon Tuck seemed as engrossed in the scary movie as he was.

And scary it was; it was pretty gory, too. Before too long, Tuck found himself with his heart in his throat and his hands clenched, his fingernails digging into his palms, as he tried his best not to scream.

He didn’t realize he was also shaking some until Tuck clapped him on the back, making him jump about a foot off the couch and let out a high pitched squeak. His head whipped around and he felt a little wild until he met Tuck’s eyes and the hand on his back stroked soothingly.

“So--” he squeaked again, so he cleared his throat a few times. “Sorry about that. I did warn you.”

“That you did.” Tuck bit his lower lip, no doubt to keep from laughing at him. Again. “You do realize you don’t *have* to watch these.”

“I paid good money for them, there’s no reason to get rid of a perfectly good movie. Especially if you’ve already paid for it.” Tuck was right, of course, but they were his one vice, and he figured a man deserved at least one, even if it did scare the hell out of him. “Now hush, I’m trying to watch.”

Tuck hushed and they watched the rest of the movie in silence, only the warmth of Tuck’s body next to him keeping him from screaming at the really intense parts. Luckily both Saw II and III were already in the machine so he didn’t have to get up from the safety of the couch with Tuck in order to put them in.

Tuck didn’t even tease him when he turned all the lights on in the house to lock up and slowly turned them off as he made his way to his bedroom. But once they were at the two bedroom doors which were across the hall from each other, Tuck stopped him, grinned.

“You sure you don’t want me to sleep out in the barn?”

“Huh?” He’d said Tuck could have the bedroom.

“Are you sure you want a stranger in your house after watching those movies?”

“Bah!” Justice balled his T-shirt, which he’d already pulled off, and tossed it at Tuck. “I’m fine.” Truth was, he was happier having a warm body in the house with him after watching the scary stuff. Even if it wasn’t anyone he knew.

And if a little voice inside his head said that he’d like to get to know Tuck a whole lot better, well, he wasn’t listening to it. Much.

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Justice turned out the light and settled into bed, a little worried that he’d be up most of the night thanks to the movies. Three in a row, each one gorier than the last. What had he been thinking?

He’d been thinking that he’d like to have cuddled right into Tuck and hidden his face in the surprisingly muscled chest. In fact, he was thinking more about what he would like to do to Tuck than the movies. It seemed he was more turned on than scared.

He closed his eyes and, instead of worrying what might be hiding under his bed or in the closet, he ran his hands down his body, imagining they belonged to someone else. No, not *someone* else, Tuck.

He sighed and then let his hands move toward his dick. Just this once. It couldn’t hurt to pretend one time, could it?

He remembered Tuck’s eyes, so very green, like the fields after a rare day of rain, laughing at him, and he imagined them laughing for a completely different reason. That made him wonder if Tuck was ticklish. He covered his mouth with his arm, muffling his own moan as his hand closed over his dick and he started to stroke.

It surprised him, how quickly he was right there, randy as all get out and ready to pop. He jacked himself off hard and fast, gasping as his balls tightened right up, getting ready to shoot.

His hand working his dick dragged another moan out of him, and he bit down on his arm to keep it from sounding out loud, worried about Tuck hearing him and knowing what he was doing, imagining somehow that Tuck would know who he was thinking of, who he imagined was looking down at him, smiling, hand moving on him exactly the way he needed. He liked a good firm, stroke, but gentle touches across the head of his dick. He liked the way his calluses felt on his smooth skin, and he’d bet Tuck had calluses, too.

Justice’s hips bucked up as his balls began to empty, pouring come up over his hand. It hit on his belly and his chest, leaving him wet and messy and all but asleep. He managed to find the tissues and wiped himself clean before he turned onto his side, curled up and gave into the pull of sleep.

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Justice slept through the night, not one nightmare disturbing his rest. He did have strange dreams, though, most of them starring Tuck. Usually without clothing.

It was enough to have him blushing when he met Tuck coming from the bathroom the next morning, dressed only in a pair of boxers. To start with, Justice had his morning wood tenting his underwear; one look at Tuck in almost all his glory was enough to make it harder than ever. Hard enough Justice had to tug himself off in the bathroom before he could go on with his day.

He shaved and then washed his face, under his arms, his groin. He also made sure he'd gotten all the come from the night before off his skin. Then he headed out, his own boxers adequate coverage now that he'd taken care of business.

Tuck was already in the kitchen, looking at the coffee maker like it had insulted Tuck's momma or something.

Justice grinned. "Problems?"

"I'll say. I can't figure out how to make this thing work. I don't do well with new machines without my first cup of coffee burning a hole in my belly and, well, this is the coffee maker that's not being the least bit intuitive, so you can see my dilemma."

"Clara needs a little sweet talking is all."

"Sweet talking? *Clara*?" Tuck raised an eyebrow, his skepticism thick in the morning air.

"That's her name. Clara. It suits her." Justice went over and made sure Tuck had filled the machine with water, that there was a filter and coffee grounds in it. Then he pushed the button to turn it on, grinning to beat the band when the machine immediately started to gurgle and drip.

"Son of a bitch!" Tuck came over and looked, waiting until about an eighth of the pot sat at the bottom of it. "I swear I didn't do anything more than you did."

"Except for the sweet talking."

Tuck rolled his eyes. "Yeah, yeah, except for that."

"A lot of the stuff around here is pretty old," Justice pointed out. "And it needs a little tender loving care to get the most out of it. Not just the stuff either. The cattle, the horses..."

"The cowboy."

"What?" Had Tuck actually said what Justice had heard?

Tuck met his eyes. "I said I'll do my best."

He stared at Tuck and Tuck stared back at him. For a long moment they stood there, looking into each other's eyes. Justice wondered if he should say something or move closer or... somehow let Tuck know he was interested if Tuck was. Would that freak the man out? Was Justice reading him entirely wrong? It was Justice's experience that men didn't like other men checking them out. At all. He wasn't sure what to do because he really didn't want to get beaten up. Then the coffee pot gave a particularly loud gurgle and the moment was gone.

Turning, Justice dug through the cupboards for his last half-box of cereal. He thought maybe he was going to have trouble keeping what he did last night to a one-time thing.

## Chapter Two

Tuck turned out to be a hard worker. Tell him what to do, and he'd put his shoulder to it and get it done. He looked great doing it, too.

Justice found himself lingering now and then, to watch the way Tuck's muscles would play beneath his T-shirt, the way Tuck's jeans would pull taut over his ass. It was a mighty fine ass, and too often Justice would catch himself staring.

Tuck looked up at least once to catch him staring, too. Justice went red and hurried away, finding himself something busy and physically demanding to do and making himself focus on it and only it.

Some time later he'd find himself drifting back into range to watch Tuck work some more. It was distracting as hell and it wasn't getting his work done and one of these times Tuck was going to catch him at it and come on over and rearrange his face for him.

They made do with bologna sandwiches for lunch, eaten sitting side by side on the fence, a carton of lemonade shared between them. Justice tried really hard not to think about how Tuck's mouth had been on the spout of the carton moments before he took his own gulps of the cold liquid. He tried really hard. He wasn't very successful at it, though. The fact that he could watch Tuck wrap his lips around the spout and drink wasn't helping anything, either.

Tuck was just too sexy for his own good. Or at least for Justice's own good.

Hands off, he reminded himself. He could use the cheap labor to keep the place going and if he let Tuck know how he was interested in spending their evenings, he was likely to get the shit kicked out of him at worst, lose the only help he had at best. There was a small possibility Tuck was made the same way he was, but there was a much bigger chance that Tuck wasn't at all like him.

Still, the afternoon passed quickly, and Justice was good, the talking to he'd given himself at lunch seeming to help keep him focused on the tasks at hand and not on Tuck.

Of course, that seemed to be Tuck's cue to suddenly be in eye shot no matter where Justice turned. He went in to feed the horses, and there was Tuck, mucking out Dilly's stall. He hung out the washing and there was Tuck, working on loose boards on the barn. Everything he did somehow offered him a fine view of his new ranch hand.

He'd never been happier to have six o'clock roll around and for once, thanks to having the extra pair of hands, he was going to finish his day before the sun went down. Tuck helped him with the evening chores and then Justice high-tailed it out of the barn, muttering something about needing a shower in the worst way.

Once he was under the hot spray, he took himself in hand and worked himself quickly, coming with Tuck's face in his mind's eye.

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Supper was a study in torture. Tuck was right there next to him, mouth opening every few minutes to let Tuck's fork, meat or potatoes or canned beans pass Tuck's lips and into his mouth. Tuck kept closing his mouth around the fork, dragging it slowly out. It was like he was doing it on purpose and it was slowly driving Justice to distraction.

Sure, they were watching a movie. Some crime drama that Justice couldn't even remember the name of right then, let alone who the players were. He was too busy watching Tuck eat.

Tuck himself seemed oblivious, eyes on the show, hand and fork working slowly to feed him.

Justice managed somehow not to groan, but he couldn't keep his overeager dick from rising up and pushing at the shorts he'd changed into. Damn it, he needed to stop acting like some randy teenager who came forty times a day.

At least Tuck didn't seem inclined to discuss the movie when it was over, for which Justice was extremely grateful. It would have been embarrassing as all get out to have to admit he hadn't been paying attention. At all.

"You want to play cards or something?" he asked once the movie was over.

Tuck shook his head. "Maybe another night -- it's been a while since I worked quite this hard and I'm wiped."

"I thought you were used to this kind of work. You certainly seemed to take to it like a duck takes to water."

"Yeah, but work's been scarce and I've been doing whatever I can find and not a lot of it's been ranching." Tuck gave him what he could have sworn was a quick once-over before meeting his eyes again. "Don't worry; I'll play with you another night."

"I... I... Sure. Okay." Justice stammered and watched Tuck move down the hall to the bathroom. He was sure Tuck hadn't meant that the way he'd heard it, or rather wanted to hear it. Man, he had to get a grip on himself.

And not like *that*.

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Almost a week had gone by, Justice finding a good rhythm to working with Tuck. It was different, working with someone else, feeling like a team. Oh, sure he'd had his father, but Jeremiah Holler hadn't thought much of Justice. He wasn't sure if it was because his father had somehow known he was gay, or if it was just because that was the kind of lousy father Jeremiah

had been; things had never been very good between them and Justice had been far closer to his pappy than to his father.

At any rate, Justice found he liked having someone to share the load with, to share the evenings with, even if he did spend half his time trying not to look and the other half trying to hide his hard-on.

Today, though, he'd been looking a lot. He was pretty sure Tuck had caught him at it more than once or twice, too, and it had him wondering how long Tuck would take it before he up and left to get away from Justice.

Because Tuck would leave, for one reason or another, Justice was sure of it. Hell, he could hear his father in his head telling him it would happen. He'd never amount to anything, he was a lazy waste of space, and he was a bastard who nobody could ever want.

Justice wiped his brow and shook his head. He didn't need his father's efforts at controlling him to reach out and grab at him from beyond the grave. The man was gone now, it would be best to bury all the bad feelings as deeply as he'd buried the man.

Still, the thoughts had him feeling down and when they'd finished with their day's work, he mumbled something about grabbing a shower before heading back to the house. "There's hot dogs in the fridge," he told Tuck. They'd be taking in the hay in tomorrow. He was still using the old square baler as he couldn't afford to hire one in, a few days to dry and then they'd be selling it and getting in some much needed supplies. In the meantime, he was standing in the shadow of his father, feeling pretty down on himself.

He was almost down the hall, T-shirt already off when Tuck grabbed his arm and swung him around.

"What the hell?" Justice glared.

"You took the words right out of my mouth." Tuck was standing far too close for comfort.

"What?" Justice could feel his nipples start to go hard in the cooler air inside the house, at least that's what he was telling himself was making them stand up. It had nothing to do with the incredible heat pouring off Tuck.

"You've been grouchy all day. What's wrong with you?"

"Nothing."

Tuck snorted.

"Nothing that's your business," Justice amended.

"Then maybe it's about time I made it my business."



“What?” The end of the word was muffled, Tuck’s mouth landing on his, hard.

He stood stock-still for a moment, absolutely stunned. And then he reacted, hands landing on Tuck’s shoulders to push Tuck away. His fingers curled around the warm skin, grabbing hold of Tuck’s T-shirt and he pulled his mouth away with a gasp.

Tuck stared at him and he stared right on back, mouth open as he panted, his cock harder than it had ever been in his jeans. “You... I...” Yeah. He wasn’t feeling very coherent at the moment.

“All you got to do is say no,” Tuck said as he leaned in again until their lips were pressed together, their gazes holding.

Groaning, Justice suddenly opened his mouth wide, his hands holding on tight. Tuck pushed him up against the wall, pressing up against him as Tuck’s tongue pushed between his parted lips and kissed him like he’d never been kissed before. Justice’s eyes finally closed, his whole body absorbing the kiss and the way Tuck’s body felt as it pressed him to the wall.

These noises filled the hallway, desperate, needy noises that he eventually realized belonged to him. He didn’t think he could have stopped making them even if he wanted to. They certainly didn’t seem to be slowing Tuck down any, one kiss after another was pressed onto Justice’s mouth. He took every one and demanded more from Tuck.

He’d been so lonely for so long, first when it was only him and his distant father, and then after the old man had died. He’d never expected to find anyone -- he’d never even looked, to be honest -- and he’d been alone so long. He clung to Tuck, to the kisses and Tuck’s broad shoulders.

Tuck’s body pressed up against him, pushed him into the wall and rubbed. It felt like he was alive for the first time ever, like he was all lit up from the inside. When Tuck’s hand cupped his dick he cried out, exploding into a million little pieces. He filled his jeans with come, body shuddering.

The only thing keeping him upright was Tuck’s body, pressed hard against his as he panted, his hands opening and closing on Tuck’s shoulders, shudders running through him as each of Tuck’s breaths chased shivers across his skin.

He finally opened his eyes, looking straight into Tuck’s. He kept panting, his breath elusive, refusing to be caught. He didn’t care, though, not with the heat in Tuck’s gaze feeling like it was searing right through him.

“How about we take this into the bedroom?” Tuck suggested.

Justice nodded, still not able to speak.

Laughing gently, Tuck hauled him away from the wall and tugged him along into his own bedroom. He'd done the washing yesterday, so the bed was newly made with clean sheets, and the scent of sunshine and hay wafted up around him as Tuck pushed him and he landed on his back on the bed.

Still breathless, still unable to find the right words, he held out his arms for Tuck, groaning when Tuck followed him down onto the bed and lay on him. He could feel Tuck from his toes to his shoulders, their bodies pressed together. Tuck was hard, and so was Justice, his prick not caring that he'd come in his pants. It should have been icky and gross, but instead it didn't matter. It was all good.

What did matter was the way Tuck was kissing him again, tongue slipping and sliding in his mouth, fucking his mouth. He recognized the rhythm; Tuck's hips were echoing it, rubbing their hard dicks together. Despite having come he was still hard, still needy.

Strong fingers started tugging at his pants. "Naked, okay?"

"Yeah. Please." Cool, he had his voice back and had even managed to be more or less coherent.

Tuck grinned at him again, laughing softly as his jeans were opened and tugged down. Tuck grabbed a tissue from the little bookcase next to his bed and cleaned his cock. It had him moaning and bucking, that touch on his hard dick.

"Eager." Tuck didn't sound like he was complaining.

"Been a while," Justice admitted. In fact he hadn't ever lain in his own bed with anyone, ever. The sum of his experience was a couple quick gropes in the bathroom of the only gay bar he'd ever been in when he'd gone to Houston a couple years back. There just wasn't anywhere around here for that kind of thing and Justice was already on the outside of the community, people finding out he was gay would have sealed his fate as the old queer rancher.

Tuck's fingers stroked his cheeks at his words, eyes gentle as they looked down at him. "I don't suppose you've got stuff?"

"Stuff? Oh! You mean like condoms." His cheeks heated and he shook his head. "There's not exactly any call for that kind of thing out here on my own."

"No? You might have had a dildo or two you liked to use..."

It took a moment for him to figure out what Tuck meant and his eyes widened once he did, cheeks going even hotter. He shifted restlessly, feeling like a rube, like some backwater hick who didn't know anything.

"Sh. It's okay. I didn't mean to embarrass you." Tuck kissed him again, slowly this time, making it more sensual than sexy. "Maybe that's something we can explore together some other time."

Justice nearly swallowed his tongue, but his dick gave a little jerk like it was saying it fully approved of that particular idea. Of course he was pretty sure his dick would approve of pretty much anything right now. And it definitely approved of the big hand that wrapped around it, Tuck's calluses dragging over his most sensitive skin.

"You ever been blown?" Tuck asked.

Justice figured that at this rate his eyes were going to bug right out of their sockets. "I... No."

"Oh, you're going to love this." With that, and a grin, Tuck gave him one more quick kiss and then wriggled down his body.

Even that felt good, and the way Justice's clothes dragged against his skin seemed naughty. He got his elbows under him, looking down and watching as Tuck pressed kisses to his navel, to his hip bones. The way his dick was all red, the tip glossy and so close to Tuck's mouth was obscene, but in a good way.

Justice swallowed. "You're gonna..."

Tuck looked up at him, eyes shining with wickedness. "I'm gonna." And then Tuck turned back down and licked at the tip of his dick.

Shouting at the unexpected sensation, Justice bucked and gasped. "Oh, God!"

"No. Oh, Tuck." A wink accompanied the words, and then Tuck took the head of Justice's dick into the warm, wet heat of his mouth.

Justice thought he might die right there on the spot and be happy to at that. His eyelids wanted to shut, but at the same time he couldn't stop watching as Tuck's mouth slid over his dick. He could feel it and he could see it and both were the most amazing things ever. He was making noises again; sounds that he couldn't control kept coming out of his mouth.

He was pretty sure he was going to come again, and he was pretty sure that it was going to be soon. It hardly seemed fair for him to come twice while Tuck was still dressed, but then Tuck did something with his tongue across the tip of his dick and anything Justice might have been thinking about shot right out of his head.

Tuck's mouth slid off him and Justice whimpered in protest, his hips pushing up, trying to follow.

"You good?" Tuck asked, eyes turning up to meet his gaze.

Justice made a garbled noise that was meant to be "Yes," and he nodded his head vigorously. He was good. He was really very good. He was hoping to be even better in about one point three seconds.

“I thought so.” Tuck wore a wide, shit-eating grin and Justice figured Tuck deserved to be smug because *wow*.

Mouth closing over his dick again, Tuck sucked him harder this time. Tuck’s head bobbed and Justice’s dick gleamed with Tuck’s saliva as it slid in and out of Tuck’s mouth.

“Coming,” Justice managed as he felt his orgasm take him, gathering in his balls and shooting out his dick.

Tuck managed to pull off just as he came, and it sprayed all over Tuck’s face. Tuck didn’t seem to mind, though, he simply took a tissue and cleaned himself off.

Justice’s elbows gave out and he collapsed back onto the bed with a groan. He’d thought he’d been melted before when he’d come out in the hallway. That had been nothing compared to this. Now he didn’t think he could move even if he’d wanted to, so it was a very good thing he was already lying down and not wanting to move.

He patted Tuck’s shoulder as he panted, slowly getting his breath back while Tuck rested a cheek against his hip, breath wafting over his dick. It was intimate, maybe even more intimate than the actual blow-job had been. Okay, they were both intimate and something he’d never thought he’d have.

“Thank you,” he finally managed to find words, to say something.

He could feel Tuck’s smile against his skin. “You’re welcome.”

They lay like that, together, for a while, when it suddenly occurred to him that he’d gotten to come twice and Tuck was still dressed. “What can I do for you?” he asked, feeling awkward and as untried as he was.

“How about a hand job?” Tuck pushed back up along his body until they were lying side by side again, and then shimmied out of his clothing, bumping against Justice now and then as he did so.

It was nearly dark, but not so dark that Justice couldn’t see Tuck’s body, the hard working muscles, the hard dick jutting from Tuck’s middle. He swallowed and reached for it, smiling when his touch made Tuck moan and press close. *His* touch had done that.

“You need to move your hand.” Tuck’s hips bucked, pushing the heat of his dick through Justice’s hand.

“Oh. Right. Sorry.” God, he was such a dork.

He started moving his hand and Tuck groaned. “Nice and tight and fast. I like it fast.”

So Justice squeezed and moved his hand as quickly as he could. A low flush started creeping up Tuck's chest as he watched, all the way up to the strong shoulders and neck until it flooded Tuck's face.

"Faster!"

Justice worked faster, panting now with the effort. Tuck panted, too, eyes suddenly going wide, mouth opening as heat poured out over Justice's hand. He kept moving his hand, slower now, because that's what he liked, and Tuck jerked a couple of times and then put a hand over his, stopping him.

"Mmm... that was great, Justice. Thank you."

He gave Tuck a smile and, after they'd cleaned up his hand and Tuck's dick, he curled into the warm body. Curling up with Tuck felt surprisingly natural and Justice found his eyes closing, his body sagging into Tuck's.

A soft kiss dropped onto his head and he pursed his lips and kissed whatever bit of skin was closest, almost asleep.

They could have supper after they napped. It wasn't like there was anything better than peanut butter sandwiches, anyway and God knew, *this* was better than that any day.

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Working with Tuck the next morning wasn't awkward like Justice had worried it would be. In fact, it was easier, because now if he was caught staring, he didn't worry about it, he kept doing it. Because Tuck would stare back and would smile at him. It made him feel like he was wanted. He liked that feeling.

Of course working with a hard-on was not the easiest thing in the world, but he wasn't going to complain about it. Especially when, halfway through the morning, Tuck grabbed him in the stables and pushed him up against a bare patch of wall and started kneading him through his jeans.

Groaning, Justice moved into the touches, not even caring that Dilly was watching them from his stall. Hell, he didn't even care that he was going to have to go in and change if Tuck kept that up.

He wasn't ever going to get used to having someone else working on him, someone else touching him. He didn't want to get used to it, in fact. He wanted it to always be this special, no matter how many times Tuck touched him. The smell of hay and horses was strong in his nose, but he could smell Tuck, too, the heat had made Tuck sweat and it was a pure male scent that made Justice even harder.

"Gotta make sure we don't mess up your jeans," Tuck told him, dropping to his knees right there in the stable.

Justice watched, wide-eyed, as Tuck opened his jeans and tugged his hard-on out of his underwear. He bit back his whimper as Tuck's mouth closed over his dick. Heat and suction pulled him in. It was as good as the first time, maybe even better, he didn't know. He didn't care either, as long as Tuck didn't stop until he'd come.

Tuck's head bobbed over him, Tuck's tongue sliding over all the sensitive spots on his dick. Justice's head went back, banging against the wall and he didn't care. All he cared about was how amazing Tuck was making him feel.

His hands dropped down onto Tuck's head, fingers wrapping around Tuck's skull and he held Tuck in place as he started rocking. He pushed his cock in and out of Tuck's mouth, the sensations unbelievable. He worried for a moment he might be hurting Tuck, but then Tuck's hands wrapped around his hips and tugged, encouraging his movements. Groaning, he continued, losing himself in the rocking motion, in the sensation of Tuck's lips dragging over his dick.

It wasn't long before he cried out, hips snapping as he suddenly came hard. Panting, he relaxed back against the wall. He was aware of his surroundings again, of the sound of Dilly snorting and neighing at him, of the scent of hay and manure and summer heat.

Tuck was licking his lips, looking so smug. Justice guessed he'd look pretty smug himself if he'd just made another guy's brains leak out of his ears. Maybe he still could be that guy -- after all, Tuck had to be needing, too.

"Can I..." He made a waving motion with his hand that he hoped Tuck would correctly interpret as him returning the favor.

"S'okay." Tuck sat back on his haunches and Justice could see he had a hold of himself and was stroking.

Justice made a noise and slid down along the wall so he could have a better view as he watched. Tuck had an amazing dick. It was long and thick, the red tip currently wet with pre-come. It made Justice lick his lips -- he wanted a taste of that.

"I want to give you a blow-job." He met Tuck's eyes for a moment, so Tuck would know he was serious, and then he turned his attention back to Tuck's dick.

"Tonight. When we can be comfortable and take our time." Tuck's voice was strained, his words husky.

Justice nodded and licked his lips again. He swore he could smell Tuck's musk over the scents in the stables. Tuck groaned and shot, come splashing over the straw on the ground between them, the scent of it suddenly sharp and there and yes, he'd smelled Tuck before Tuck had come.

He reached out and Tuck's hand met his, their fingers twining together. They sat like that for a few minutes, Justice feeling himself grinning like a fool. "We should get back to work," he

finally said, not wanting to at all. But they couldn't just go have a nap in the middle of the day, hell, the middle of the morning, like they could at night.

With great reluctance, he let go of Tuck's hand and pushed himself back up. In a matter of moments they were both tucked back into their pants and back at work.

Lunch was peanut butter on bread, again, but Justice couldn't wait for it.

## Chapter Three

They worked their asses off for two days bringing the hay in and loading it onto two trailers to take over to the RN ranch. Justice was stoked that he had a buyer for the hay, and one who could pay him cash at that. He had a list a mile long for the feed store and then the grocers and then he and Tuck were going to go out and have themselves a great steak dinner.

Justice shook his head as Tuck came down the hall wearing his work jeans and a stained shirt. “You can’t wear that into town, we’re going to dinner at a fancy restaurant.”

“I thought you were selling the hay and bringing in supplies?”

“Well, yeah, but we’re supposed to celebrate being solvent again and having more than just peanut butter to eat.” It wasn’t exactly a date, but maybe the closest thing to it that he and Tuck would get.

“Doesn’t it make more sense for me to keep working while you do your business and pick up the supplies?” Tuck tugged him close, their bodies pressing together. “For what a dinner out would cost you could pick up a bunch of steaks for us to do on the grill. We could eat great for days on that.”

“Yeah, I suppose so...” He’d been kind of looking forward to having a day with Tuck in a different environment. A day where they could spend some time having fun instead of stealing moments here and there between chores. “You sure? I’ll throw in a sundae at the Dairy Queen on the way home.”

“Oh, tempting, tempting.” Tuck smiled at him, hands sliding to grab his ass. “But seriously, you could buy the fixings for a dozen sundaes for the same price. You really want to treat me? Bring home some ice cream with toffee bits in it.” Damn it, Tuck was being practical and it was hard to argue with that even if he did want to.

“I guess I could do that.”

Tuck beamed at him. “Thanks.” The word was followed up by a kiss, Tuck’s tongue slipping between his lips for a slow exploration.

Groaning, Justice melted against Tuck, fingers sliding over Tuck’s broad shoulders. “I should get going.” Not that he wanted to, his hips had already started rolling, rubbing their hard-ons together.

“You should.” Despite the agreement, Tuck didn’t seem any more inclined to see him go than he was inclined to going.

“I’ve got to get that double load over to Ricardo. And you’ve got to get that field plowed over.” He was still standing there, though, his forehead pressed against Tuck’s. “It’s not too late for you to come with me.”



“It just doesn’t make sense for both of us to lose a whole day of work.” Tuck gave him another kiss, hard and sure, and then pushed him away. “Go on. I’ll take care of that,” Tuck nodded at his hard-on, “When you get back.”

“It’s a deal.”

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For all Tuck hadn’t wanted to come along on the selling and buying trip, Justice had never seen anyone so excited to help unpack groceries. They got the frozen stuff into the freezer first: meat and ice cream, frozen vegetables and a few frozen prepared meals, along with a dozen loaves of bread.

Then they unpacked the feed and the treats for the animals, Jig barking excitedly as soon as the bags of Alpo came out of the truck bed and were packed in the unused stall in the stables. Justice dug out one of the huge bones he’d picked up at the butcher, tossing it for Jig, who chased after it and then dragged it to the shade where she sat chewing away in doggie bliss.

Tuck found the condoms he’d bought at the drug store he’d driven all over hell’s half acre to get to, wanting to get them somewhere he wasn’t known. If he’d done it in town, he’d have been the talk of the town for ages, and him without a girl anywhere in sight. He didn’t need that kind of speculation.

Tuck’s eyebrows went up when he saw the name of the store on the bag and the three dozen condoms and two bottles of lube that were in them, along with two packs of band aids, a bottle of Tylenol, some NoDoze and shampoo. “This looks like you’re planning one hell of a party.”

Justice felt himself blushing and he grabbed the bag away from Tuck. “I needed everything in there. I mean not all at once...” He rolled his eyes and grumbled, grabbing the bag and taking it down to his bedroom. He’d done more than enough blushing over the purchases at the drug store, thank you very much.

He took the time to put the condoms and the lube on the bookcase by his bed, and then tossed the rest of the stuff into the cupboard in the bathroom. When he got back to the kitchen, Tuck had almost everything else unpacked and stored, a package with two big steaks sitting on the table next to two baking potatoes already wrapped in foil.

“We do these on the grill, too?” Tuck asked, pointing at the ‘taters.

“Yeah. I got sour cream and chives, too. Thought we could do them up right. Oh, and some of those little rolls like they serve in the restaurant. Those were for tonight, too.”

“Recreate our own restaurant meal, huh?” Tuck grabbed hold of his belt and reeled him in.

“Something like that. It was your idea, you know.”

“Yeah, I know. And because I stayed here, I got that whole west field ready for seeding tomorrow. And that meal cost you far less than the restaurant. It was a *good* idea.” Tuck’s eyes held his gaze, not looking away for a moment.

“It was.” Not that he hadn’t wished more than once that Tuck was with him. He’d grown used to Tuck’s company, to having something to talk with and snark with. They would have laughed together over the pristine state of the RN Ranch, and he’d have loved Tuck’s opinion on the calves Barker West had up for sale. He was pretty sure he’d made the right call in letting them go, but it would have been good hearing that from someone else, too.

It hadn’t taken long at all, but Justice had grown used to Tuck’s company and he didn’t want to lose it anytime soon.

Tuck licked his own lips and then Justice’s. “I deserve a reward for having such a good idea.”

“Yeah, I reckon you do.” Justice leaned against Tuck and pressed their mouths together, moaning as the kiss held, their lips clinging. Then he broke away, feeling smug. “That’s why I picked up the biggest steaks I could find.”

Laughing, he ducked Tuck’s swat and grabbed the potatoes and the steaks, heading out to grill them up for the supper to end all suppers. Tuck chased him out with a couple of beers, threatening bodily harm if there wasn’t more to this reward than simply steak and potatoes.

Justice knew he had nothing to worry about. After all, he’d picked up three different flavors of ice cream, hadn’t he?

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Dinner was amazing. In fact Justice was so stuffed he thought maybe he was never going to get up off the couch again. After all, he was fed, comfy with Tuck pressed up against his side, and CMT was on, Brad Paisley singing about checking his lover for ticks. It didn’t get much better than this.

Tuck nudged his arm with an elbow. “You gonna let me check you for ticks?”

“You don’t need an excuse to get me naked.” He’d strip down for Tuck anytime, anywhere. He figured he’d more than proven that already. About the only place they hadn’t already given hand jobs or blow jobs was on horseback and Justice figured that was as it should be. You were way up there in the saddle and making out would be dangerous.

He started chuckling at where his thoughts were ambling, and he shook his head when Tuck gave him a look. “I’m just being silly.”

“Be silly out loud.”

“I was just thinking that horseback was probably a piss-poor spot to try to get something on with you.”

Tuck snorted. “You got that right. You know where a good place would be?”

“Where’s that?”

“The bedroom.”

“Yeah?” He met Tuck’s eyes, his dick starting to fill right away. “I can think of worse places to do it.”

“Like horseback,” Tuck suggested, making them both laugh. “You bought all those condoms, I’d hate to see your money get wasted.”

“Me, too.” He took a breath and brought up what was really on his mind -- had been all evening long. Had been since he’d bought the condoms, actually. “You know I’ve never done anything with the ass.”

“I hope not, that’s called bestiality and I do believe it’s illegal.”

He hit Tuck over the head with one of the sofa cushions.

“Sorry, sorry. I couldn’t resist. Besides, making love’s supposed to be fun, not stressful. And I don’t want to do it if it’s going to freak you out.”

“I’m not freaked out. It’s only that I never asked a man to do me before and I’m a little nervous about the whole thing.”

That had Tuck’s jovial manner fading and he pressed closer, leaning their foreheads together and looking into his eyes. “You want me to make love to you? To be inside you?”

Justice nodded and swallowed and said, “Yeah, I do.” His voice was a little husky, but it was part horny as well as part nerves.

“I would be honored to be the first one to do that with you.” Tuck’s eyes stayed serious, their gazes locked. “Are you sure, though? Because we don’t have to. What we’ve been doing is more than enough.”

“I’m sure.” He was touched, too, that Tuck would take the time to check instead of rushing to the getting it on part. “I haven’t before now for lack of opportunity, partners and desire, not because I didn’t want to.”

“Well, it looks like you’ve got all three of those now.” Tuck gave him a soft kiss. “I’ll take real good care of you, I promise. You’re in good hands.”

Justice nodded, his fingers finding Tuck's, twisting together with Tuck's. "I know you will. It's partly why I want to do it." He hoped Tuck didn't ask what the other parts were because he wasn't sure he absolutely knew and he certainly couldn't say any of it out loud.

They kissed, breath tangling like their tongues. It was gentle and sweet, the anticipation making his dick hard, but he was enjoying the slow pace, too. Tuck made him feel cherished, made him feel like Tuck wanted to do this too, with him, and not to simply get his rocks off.

Tuck's hand landed on his belly, just above his waistband and he groaned, legs spreading in silent encouragement. That's where that hand stayed, though, warm and gentle, such a tease. It put a warmth in his belly that slid down to gather in his balls. In fact his whole body was tingling with warmth. He'd never felt anything like it.

He supposed it could have been his imagination, but Justice refused to go there. He was necking on the couch and on his way to making love for the first time. This was real, damn it, and he was going to savor every moment, even if his dick was making speed it up and get to the good stuff noises.

Tuck pushed his shirt up over his head and tossed it toward the hallway, not looking the least concerned over where it landed. Then Tuck lowered his head and took one of Justice's nipples in his mouth and suddenly Justice didn't much care where the shirt landed either, or even if it did land.

His hands dropped to Tuck's head, fingers digging into the short curls and holding on. "Don't stop."

Snorting, Tuck pulled off, stopping. "As if I'd stop."

"You just did!"

Tuck blinked, laughed, and finally went back to what he'd been doing, mouth closing over Justice's left nipple. Tuck's teeth came into play, biting at his flesh, making his whole body jump and jerk. His nipple was soothed by Tuck's tongue flicking back and forth, each touch making Justice's dick jerk inside his jeans.

Moving over to this other nipple, Tuck kept up the delicious bites and licks, keeping Justice jerking and rippling beneath the attack. It went on and on until he thought he was going to scream, or maybe come from it.

Before he could do either, Tuck moved on, mouth hot and wet on his breastbone. Justice never would have guessed his breastbone could be a sexy spot to have someone licking and kissing, but Tuck was showing him how it was. His skin was so sensitive that the open mouthed kisses felt like they went straight to his balls, making them draw up against his body.

Tuck slowly licked down his body, following some pattern that Justice couldn't see and didn't much care about. All he wanted was for the touches to continue, for that hot mouth to keep him

high. He laughed when Tuck's tongue danced into his navel, and then groaned when the touch lightened and sent more sensation through him.

"We should move this into the bedroom," murmured Tuck, cheek rubbing against his denim covered dick.

"Oh. Okay." He'd forgotten what exactly they were leading up to, even now that it had been brought up again he didn't feel the same nerves. He felt needy. He wanted it; he'd never been more sure of that.

Tuck stood and held out his hand. Justice grabbed it, letting Tuck haul him up and get them moving down the hall. He shivered a little as the cooler air in the back of the house slid over his naked torso, but Tuck was there with warm hands and gentle touches, keeping him from being cold and keeping his nerves from returning.

"Let's get the getting naked bit out of the way." Tuck's hands moved to his jeans, undoing his belt and tugging it off. Then his button was undone, the zipper drawn down and Tuck bent to tug his jeans right off.

Justice's dick shot out, almost hitting Tuck in the face, but Tuck ignored it, standing and stripping himself down, too. Justice stared. He loved how Tuck's body looked. He loved the way Tuck's skin was tanned darkest on his face and arms, less on his torso and not at all from the waist down. Justice loved the working man's muscles and the easy, loose way Tuck carried himself, like he was easy in his skin.

Groaning, he reached out to touch, fingers sliding over warm, smooth skin. Tuck's eyes followed his fingers, a soft smile on Tuck's lips. "Feels good, Justice. You have good hands."

It probably would have been corny under other circumstances, but Justice appreciated the words, and he stepped closer, exploring Tuck's chest, following the path Tuck's mouth had taken on him earlier.

He took another step closer and they were kissing, Tuck's hands on his skin, his on Tuck's. They two-stepped their way over to the bed, still kissing and touching and Justice thought he was never going to last until Tuck was inside him.

Tuck must have had the same thought, because his hand spread across Justice's body and slid down to wrap around his dick, holding it, stroking him with a nice light touch.

"Oh, God, Tuck..." He was going to lose it. "Please..."

"Yeah, let's get you off so you can enjoy this."

He nodded. He could get behind that. Or in front of it. Or whatever. His hips started moving with Tuck, pushing his dick through the hot tunnel of Tuck's hand. A gentle stroke of Tuck's thumb

across the head of his dick had him coming, heat spraying from him as his body gave it up for Tuck.

Groaning, he leaned against the rangy body, letting Tuck hold him up while he tried to catch his breath.

“No napping yet,” Tuck warned, hand still moving on him, stroking gently. It kept him from going soft, and the touches to his spine and ass kept him interested, wanting.

“Not until after you do me.”

“That’s right.” Tuck let go of him and pushed, sending him onto his ass on the bed.

Laughing, he climbed up, going to his hands and knees. “Like this?” He might have never done it before, but he knew the basics.

“Oh, God, yes.” Tuck climbed up after him, dick as hard as his was, and looking pretty damn big at the moment. He knew Tuck was good-sized, but he didn’t remember Tuck being quite so big... Tuck must have seen him noticing, because one of Tuck’s hands landed on his back, the touch gentle, soothing. “Told you I’d take care of you. I’m gonna make it good. I promise.”

Justice nodded and let Tuck’s gentle touches distract him again, let the arousal go through him. Part of him wanted it to slow down and take all evening, last. The other part of him wanted it to be done already, so he *knew*, so his nerves wouldn’t get the better of him.

Tuck’s hands kept moving over him, slowly, gently, keeping him focused, keeping him right there. So it was almost a surprise when suddenly Tuck’s fingers were on his ass, sliding along his crack and touching his hole. His whole ass clenched, his hole closing tight in reaction to the unfamiliar touch.

“You’ve never even touched yourself here, have you?” The words weren’t mocking or teasing, Tuck was simply asking.

He shook his head. When he jacked off, he sometimes grabbed his balls, but he didn’t play any farther back than that.

One of Tuck’s fingers stroked across his hole, barely there touches that had him shivering. “Are you sure you want me to do this?”

He turned and met Tuck’s eyes. “I’m not in the habit of saying things I don’t mean.”

“No, no you’re not.” Tuck nodded, that finger still stroking, the touch almost maddeningly gentle. “I just want it to be good for you. I don’t want you to regret it.”

He reached back and stopped Tuck’s hand, holding it still against his body. “I’m not going to regret it. I want to do this and I want to do it with you.” That it was Tuck made all the difference.

Leaning down, Tuck kissed his hand. “Then I want to do it with you, too. But let’s switch this up. I want to see your face, Justice.”

“Okay.” He let go of Tuck’s hand and shifted, moving so he was lying on his back, his legs spread around Tuck. “Like this?”

“Yeah.” Tuck cupped his cheek, thumb sliding over his skin. Tuck’s eyes stared into his. “Like this.”

Justice felt something warm and fluttery in his belly. He’d never felt like this before; he was scared and excited and something inside him was opening up to the look in Tuck’s eyes. It wasn’t just about the sex. That was maybe scarier than what they were going to do. And maybe it was more exciting, too.

“I’ll make you fly,” Tuck murmured, bending to bring their lips together.

Justice opened his mouth and let Tuck in. He wasn’t passive, though. No, he kissed Tuck back, their tongues sliding, their teeth clacking once or twice. The kisses had him relaxing again, focused on the pleasure of each kiss, on the feeling of Tuck’s lips on his.

He spread wider as Tuck’s hand moved down his body, fingers tracing his dick and stroking his balls before moving behind them. This time he didn’t tense up when Tuck’s finger slid over his hole and he noticed the way the touch seemed to reverberate all the way through him and up his dick, the first drops of pre-come leaking from him.

Tuck pushed that finger into him, making him gasp. It felt... strange, but not bad and as the slick finger wriggled inside him, the strange faded, turning into good. Tuck slid it a little deeper, moving it in and out and Justice gasped, realizing suddenly that he’d been holding his breath.

One soft kiss after another covered his face, Tuck making him feel special. “Relax and enjoy it.”

He was trying. He was definitely enjoying it, the soft touch of Tuck’s finger pushing in and out of him lighting him up from the inside. And then something really lit up inside him and he shouted, body jerking hard. “Do it again!” Tuck obliged him and soon he was moving on that finger, crying out every time it hit that spot inside him.

“You ready for more?”

He looked up at Tuck and squeaked. “More?”

Tuck nodded and his finger slid away. Two were held up in front of his eyes. “Two?”

“Oh. Okay.” Right. They were going to make love. He’d simply been lost in the sensations of Tuck’s index finger inside him. One finger and so much feeling. How was he going to survive two, or more?

Two fingers were smaller than Tuck's dick, but they still stretched him, made him ache until all of a sudden the pleasure lit inside him again. The same thing happened when Tuck put another finger inside him. The stretch was too much for a moment or two, and then it eased, and then it disappeared altogether when Tuck hit the place inside him that felt so good. It didn't seem very long at all before Justice was moving with Tuck's fingers, riding them eagerly.

Finally Tuck's fingers disappeared and Justice knew what was coming. He didn't get nervous or uptight, though, not even when it took a moment for Tuck to get the condom on. His whole body was eager for more, for Tuck. At least he didn't get nervous until he felt the thick heat of Tuck's dick pushing against his hole. Then he tensed again, eyes searching for Tuck's, for that reassurance.

Tuck gave it to him, eyes smiling, lips closing over his in a warm kiss that eased his nerves. His lips opened as his body did, Tuck's tongue slipping into his mouth, Tuck's dick pushing into him. He felt Tuck everywhere.

When Tuck began to rock into him, Justice met the movements. They found a rhythm together, the sensations all consuming and more than he could have imagined. Every now and then Tuck's dick hit that same spot inside him and he shouted, his own dick leaking drops onto his belly.

Moving faster, Tuck kept pushing into him, sending him higher. He really did feel like he was flying, like he was floating on a cloud, Tuck all around him. Then Tuck grabbed his dick and that was all she wrote. Justice bucked up, shouting as come sprayed up his chest, his ass clenching hard around Tuck's dick.

"Tuck." He panted, relaxed and melted.

"Justice." Tuck jerked into him and then froze, mouth going slack.

He opened his mouth, begging a kiss and Tuck obliged him. This kiss was sloppy and slow, messy and lazy. He whimpered as Tuck pulled out of him, his body clenching around nothing; he felt really empty.

Tuck did something with the condom and then curled up next to him. He pushed into the warmth of Tuck's body, his eyes closing. That was better.

"So how was it?" Tuck asked, hand moving along his spine.

"Better than I was expecting."

"What exactly were you expecting?"

Justice shrugged. "I don't know, but not for it to feel so good. That spot inside..." It had been amazing.



“So, you’d do it again?”

“Hell, yeah.”

He felt Tuck’s smile against his cheek. “Good. That means it *was* good.”

Popping Tuck in the arm, Justice replied, “I said it was!”

“Yeah, but now I *know*.”

Justice blew a raspberry against Tuck’s skin. “I told you I’m not in the habit of saying things I don’t mean.”

“But I wanted you to *really* mean it.”

“Well, I did.”

“I know.”

This was the weirdest post-sex conversation Justice had ever had. Okay, so he wasn’t exactly Mr. Experience on that front either, but still. “Naptime,” he told Tuck.

Tuck laughed softly and kissed his cheek.

## Chapter Four

Justice got the grill started and looked over at the barn to see if Tuck was on his way in yet. There was no use starting the meat if Tuck was going to be more than a few minutes longer.

Just as the rangy form came out of the barn, Jig started barking up a storm, going to the top of the lane where a car was coming up. It was the Sheriff. As the car came to a stop, Justice glanced back toward the barn, but Tuck was nowhere to be found.

Justice watched the Sheriff get out of his patrol car and came down off the porch to shake the man's hand, Jig shutting up as soon as he did, moving to stand beside him.

"Justice Holler."

"Hello, Sheriff. What can I do you for?"

"Straight to business, is it, son?"

"Sorry. I don't get many visitors this way. Did you want to come in for a cold drink?"

"Nah, you're good. It's almost time to get home to the missus for my grub." The Sheriff leaned against his car and looked around casually.

Justice waited for the man to get to why he was here.

"You still out here by yourself?" the Sheriff finally asked.

Justice didn't stiffen, and he didn't let himself look at the barn. He nodded, figuring it wasn't really a lie. There was just him and Jig and the Sheriff out in the yard. That meant he was out here by himself, right?

"Yeah? Because Carl Larson said he sent some drifter who fit the general description of this man we're looking for your way a couple weeks back."

Justice shrugged. "It's pretty isolated out here, Sheriff; it would be pretty stupid of me to take in some stranger."

The man nodded, his hat bobbing with it. "My thoughts exactly, son. You need to be careful all on your own out here. I tell you what, I'll have someone come by now and then to check up on you as long as this guy's still thought to be in the area."

Justice frowned. "What's he done that you're suddenly so worried about my well-being?"

"He's wanted in connection with the rape and murder of a little girl."

Justice couldn't have stopped his eyes from widening if he'd tried. He couldn't believe Tuck was a rapist or a murderer. The man's hands were too gentle, those eyes too true. He made Justice feel too good, and not just physically. "Well, I ain't no little girl and I've got my pappy's rifles and I know how to use them."

"Good, good." The Sheriff wandered back around to the driver's side of his car. "You make sure to keep it close, I'd hate to find you dead."

"I can take care of myself -- nobody's going to mess with me."

The Sheriff waved and honked the horn as he headed down the lane. Justice watched until he couldn't even see the dust anymore.

Then he turned and headed for the barn.

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Justice found Tuck leaning against Dilly's stall, rubbing the gelding's nose and feeding him carrots.

"You want me to leave?" Tuck asked.

"Huh?"

Tuck turned and folded his arms over his chest. "I said, do you want me to leave?"

"Why would I want you to leave?"

"Saw the Sheriff. Heard what he said." Tuck's words were short, clipped, and Justice couldn't read his eyes.

He didn't understand why Tuck was pissed off at *him*. He hadn't turned Tuck in, and *he* hadn't accused Tuck of anything. "Yeah, well, I don't believe you had anything to do with that."

"You sure?"

Growling, he strode over to Tuck and grabbed his T-shirt in both hands. "Yeah, I'm sure. What I'm not sure about is why you're treating me like an enemy here?"

"Because you don't know me from Adam and yet when the Sheriff shows up and says I raped and murdered that little girl, you don't turn me in. What's wrong with you?"

"There's nothing wrong with me!" He was shouting now, pissed off at Tuck's attitude. Jig started barking at the barn door. "And I do know you. I've had you inside me for Christ's sake!"

Tuck snorted and spat on the ground. "That doesn't mean you know a thing about me."

“Screw you, Tuck. I know that you wouldn’t hurt anyone like that -- especially a little girl. I’ve seen you with the horses and Jig. I was there when you made sure what we did was good for me before you even thought about yourself. You’re not a rapist or a murderer and being an asshole now isn’t going to convince me otherwise.” He started into Tuck’s eyes, trying to convince the big jerk he was sincere.

Tuck stared back for a long time, eyes shuttered, cold. Finally, Tuck sighed, mouth twisting. “Thanks, Justice. I appreciate the faith.”

Taking a step back, Justice let go of Tuck’s shirt, hands smoothing over the material. “Sorry. I didn’t mean to mangle you.”

“S okay.”

Justice stood there a moment and then shook himself. “Come on. I was about to put the burgers on the grill. You can get the buns ready and put out the chips. We’ve got bullriding this evening.”

“Sounds good. I know you like the bullriding,” Tuck teased, taking a step forward and ghosting a hand across the front of his jeans. “I know you like it a lot.”

“Ass.”

Tuck brayed, setting the horses off in their stalls, and headed toward the barn door. Justice shook his head and followed, full of questions he didn’t know how to ask. He didn’t believe Tuck had hurt that girl at all, but he wanted to know why other people did.

They worked quietly together to get their supper ready, Justice making two large burgers for them, Tuck putting condiments on their buns and adding chips to the plates. They were pepper lime ones, Justice’s new favorites and, unfortunately, from the last bag they had. They had Cokes, too -- they were making the beer last as Justice didn’t figure the beans would be ready to harvest for another three weeks, so what they had needed to last them for a while.

They had about an hour before the bullriding started, so Tuck tuned the TV to ESPN and they watched whatever random ball game was on.

Justice didn’t know if Tuck felt it, too, but to him it felt like there were all these questions sitting right there between them. It made things a little tense in a way they’d never been between them, not even that first night when Justice really didn’t know Tuck from Adam and they’d watched bullriding together while he fought his hard-on and tried not to embarrass himself.

He was half way through his second burger when Tuck put his first one down, only half-eaten, and sighed. Justice didn’t speak, waiting instead for Tuck to get around to whatever it was he was going to say.

“I suppose you want to know what happened?”

He shrugged, but the truth was that while he didn't believe for a minute that Tuck had done what the Sheriff said he'd done, Justice wanted to know why the police thought Tuck was involved.

“I didn't lay a finger on that girl.”

Justice nodded. “I know that.”

“Yeah, so you said.” Tuck met his eyes. “I'm not sure I deserve that kind of blind faith.”

“You've done nothing in your time here to deserve anything else. I know what a man with a mean streak looks like, and you're not it.” There'd always been a look in his father's eyes, a way Jeremiah'd held his mouth that was mostly sneer.

“Well, thank you. It's good to have someone in my corner.”

Tuck was quiet so long that Justice finally prompted him. “So what happened?”

“I was in the wrong place at the wrong time without an alibi. Or rather, I had an alibi, but the woman didn't want her asshole of a boyfriend to know that she'd been out with me.” Tuck spoke quickly, word after word pouring out like now the dam had cracked it was truly broken. “We didn't do anything but talk, though she was more than willing. I just don't get it up for women. Not interested in 'em, as you might guess. Apparently the boyfriend's abusive and would have gone postal and killed us both. Like I think he did with Agnes' little girl.”

“That's awful! Why wouldn't she go to the cops?”

“Because she loves him and she refused to believe that he did that to her daughter.” Tuck said it so matter of factly.

“Then why was she with you?”

“I was doing some handyman work for people in the neighborhood, staying in the converted garage of an older couple while I worked. They lived a few doors down. Her girl was supposed to be at a friend's house for a sleepover and Agnes came over crying after the boyfriend hit her and stormed off in a drunken rage. She just needed someone to talk to, someone who wouldn't hit her for crying or blame her for all that was wrong in their life. They found the girl the next morning in the woods behind the house. I heard the boyfriend accuse me and Agnes backed him up, so I slipped away and left before they could come find me.”

“But you helped all those people. And surely Agnes would have backed you up eventually? And there wouldn't have been any evidence linking you to the crime, would there have been?” He didn't understand how Tuck could let people think he'd done such a terrible thing.

"I'm a drifter, Justice. Folks are always going to look to me first when something goes wrong because no one wants to believe someone they've lived next to for years could be responsible for doing something bad. And Agnes was pretty scared of Glen. She loved him, too, though. It's a potent combination and I'd have been surprised if she'd have recanted to back me up." Tuck shrugged. "It seemed easier just to leave."

"Probably made you look guilty." He thought running away always did.

"Yeah, I suppose so. I didn't do it, though, so I don't feel guilty for leaving. But she was a cute kid, I'm sorry someone did that to her. I hope they figure out who it was." Tuck looked at his burger, and then picked it up and started eating again.

Justice went back to eating his as well, talking around a mouthful. "That why you wouldn't go into town with me the other day?"

"Part of it. It also made more sense to have one of us working. I know how busy things are right now. How much work there always is."

"It's been better since you've been here to help out." He didn't feel anymore like the ranch was weighing him down, suffocating him. He'd always liked the work, doing it alongside Tuck made it that much better.

"Better since you got laid, too, I'll bet." Tuck gave him a wink.

Trying hard not to blush, Justice tossed a chip at Tuck, who laughed at him for doing it. So he tossed his last few, only to watch Tuck grab them up and put them in his mouth. Damn, that hadn't been the brightest move -- not with those being the last of them.

They shared the clearing up, the companionable, easy way back between them now that they'd talked about what had happened. When they were done, they filled a couple of bowls with vanilla ice cream and poured on some chocolate sauce before settling side by side on the couch to watch the bullriding.

Between Tuck beside him and the first few bullriders doing their thing, arms bulging, legs encased in leather chaps, Justice found himself with a hard dick easily fifteen minutes into the hour.

"You really do love those bullriders." Tuck slid a hand over his thigh, fingers brushing the hardness in his jeans. "Or is it the bulls that turn your crank?"

He popped Tuck in the shoulder and didn't bother dignifying that with an answer. They were beautiful animals all right, but it was the men with the balls and the touch of crazy who tried to ride them who got Justice all hot and bothered.

Tuck chuckled and his hand slid some more, fingers closing over Justice's dick. Groaning, Justice spread his legs wide, giving Tuck permission to touch anything he wanted to.

“You ever ridden a bull?” Tuck asked, fingers working on getting his jeans open.

“No.” It was one of the things his father had considered frivolous and downright stupid. Mind you, there wasn’t much his father *had* liked. Justice had long ago sworn that he wouldn’t be like the old man, that he’d look for the good in things, in people. In life.

Tuck finally got his jeans open, rough fingers tugging out his dick, and Justice let his head drop back on the couch, his eyes closing to slits as he watched the cowboys on his TV and enjoyed the way Tuck’s fingers slid over his hard-on. Tuck used the gentle touch he liked, with Tuck’s calluses catching here and there, adding a bit of rough in spots.

Justice whimpered and moaned, legs spreading wide, heels planting on the ground so he could rock up into Tuck’s hand. If that wasn’t enough, Tuck’s tongue was drawing pictures on the side of his neck.

“Gonna make me blow,” he noted, though Tuck probably knew that. He was always quick off the mark the first time, even more so now that Tuck knew how he liked it, knew where his sweet spots were.

“So blow, Justice. Blow and then you can take me into the bedroom and make me your bull.” Tuck bit at his earlobe, making him jerk. “Make me your bull and ride me.”

“Tuck!” Justice humped Tuck’s hand, the images in his head enough to make him explode, come spraying up over Tuck’s hand and messing up his T-shirt.

“You like the sound of that,” murmured Tuck against his ear, breath hot on his skin. “You want me to play bull underneath you and fill you up, try and buck you off, but never quite do it.”

Justice’s hands opened and closed. “Tuck. That’s...”

“Sexy as hell.” Tuck pushed his dick back into his jeans and zipped him back up. “After the bullriding on TV is finished we’ll indulge in some riding of our own.”

“I... Okay.” Tuck was right, it turned him on to hear Tuck talk like that, made him begin to firm up again. If Tuck kept it up, by the time they went back into the bedroom, he’d be hard as a stone again and more than willing to ride any way Tuck wanted him to.

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True to his word, the sheriff sent a deputy out to the ranch to check on Justice less than a week later. He’d gone to high school with Arnie Slowichek, so the two of them sat on the porch with a beer each and chatted for a while. Tuck stayed out of sight in the stables.

“Must get lonely out here with your pop gone.”

Justice shrugged. The truth was he had a far better quality of life without the old man around, even before Tuck had come into his life. “There’s lots to do.”

“There having a dance at the Veteran’s Hall next Friday. You ought to come.”

He gave Arnie a horrified look. “I can’t dance!”

Arnie nearly choked on the slug of beer he’d taken. “None of us guys can, but the ladies like it when you make the effort. I met my Doreen at a dance, you know. The Spring Social. I was right out of high school and clueless as hell. My momma made me go. Best suggestion she ever made.”

Justice shook his head. Sure Arnie’d met Doreen at a community dance after high school was out, but the only thing Arnie’d been clueless about was condoms. He’d caught Doreen with a baby right away and they’d been married two days before the Summer Haze Dance in July. They had four kids now. Justice figured if Arnie liked to rewrite history as he remembered it, who was he to spoil the deputy’s fun?

Arnie finished his beer and handed over the bottle, standing and stretching his big frame. “Speaking of Doreen, I suppose I ought to head home. Thanks for the beer.”

Justice stood as well and walked Arnie back to his patrol car.

“Be careful out here all by your own, Justice.”

“Like I told the Sheriff, I know how to take care of myself and I’ve got Pappy’s rifles.”

“Yeah, yeah. Better careful than dead, though. I’ll drop by in a few days, make sure everything’s still fine.”

Justice rolled his eyes. “Really, Arnie, I’m fine. Y’all keep showing up to check on me and I’m going to start thinking you’re looking at me for something.”

Arnie laughed, but there was something in his eyes that made Justice’s grin freeze in place. He couldn’t stop feeling like something was up.

He watched the Deputy’s car go down the lane until it turned onto the road, and then he watched until he couldn’t even see the cloud of dust kicked up by the tires anymore. He stood there for awhile longer, Jig wandering over to sniff around his legs and beg a scratch before wandering away again.

When Tuck spoke from right behind him, he nearly jumped out of his skin. “What did he want?”

“I’m not exactly sure.”

“He was here for nearly an hour and you don’t know why?”



Justice shrugged and headed to the stables with Tuck. They had evening chores to finish up. “Apparently I need looking out for as there’s this drifter in the area who they want for questioning. But I don’t know...”

“What do you mean?” It looked like Tuck had done most of the chores; they just had to feed the calves in the field behind the stables.

“I think he knew you were here. Or he suspected that you were. He kept looking around -- he was pretty casual about it, but I don’t know. It felt like he knew something. Maybe I’m just being paranoid.” He hated that Tuck had this thing hanging over him, that Tuck had to hide anytime anyone came up to the house, that Tuck couldn’t go into town with him at all.

“Maybe. Or maybe I need to move along before I get us both into trouble.”

“You can’t go!” A fist clenched itself in Justice’s belly. “Who’d help me take in the beans if you go? And that fence needs fixing all along the north pasture. It’ll take me forever to ride it if I’m on my own. I can start paying you, if it’s a matter of money.” Not a lot, but he could swing something.

“It’s not about that and you know it.” Tuck took his arms and turned him so Tuck could look him in the eye. “I don’t want to get you in trouble for looking out for me, hiding me from the police.”

“But you didn’t do anything. How much trouble can I be in for hiring on a hand hasn’t done anything wrong?”

“That’s not how they’re going to see it. They’re going to think you were deliberately hiding me.”

“Yeah, well I am, aren’t I?” He scuffed the toes of his boots across the floor, his hands in his pockets. “I don’t want you to go, Tuck. I don’t care if they call it conspiring with a criminal or whatever, I know you’ve done nothing wrong and I know I’ve done nothing wrong.”

“I don’t want to go either. I like it here. I like you.”

“Yeah? Well, I like you a lot. A whole lot.” He’d be awfully lonely if Tuck left. And it wasn’t just that Tuck was an extra body to have around, it was Tuck himself. “So you’ll stay?”

“Yeah, I guess so.”

“That was real enthusiasm there.”

It was Tuck’s turn to pop him in the arm, but Justice ducked and weaved and Tuck missed him and had to chase him down. Jig got into the game, barking away as she ran alongside them. As soon as the muck gave way to grass, Justice let himself be caught, Tuck taking him down hard and landing on top of him.

He might have complained except that it felt good, Tuck pressing him into the ground, spreading biting, stinging kisses over the bit of his neck exposed by his T-shirt. He wriggled and jerked, Tuck rubbing against him.

All of a sudden they weren't playing anymore. His dick was hard and so was Tuck's; he could feel it digging into his ass, hard as any bone.

"Want you."

Justice only had one answer to that and he gave it, ass pushing back, offering Tuck whatever Tuck wanted to take. "Yes."

"I don't have stuff out here." Tuck's fingers kneaded his ass cheeks, making the seam of his jeans press into his crack.

"Uh... we could go in?"

"We have to finish up the chores first. Those calves aren't gonna feed themselves." Tuck stood and hauled him up unceremoniously.

Justice noted he was back to working with a hard-on and that it wasn't any easier now when he knew he was going to get some when the chores were done than it had been earlier when he'd had no such guarantee. Except that the knowledge he was getting some later meant it didn't go away, at all.

He kept looking over at Tuck, only to find Tuck looking back at him every time. It was going to take them forever to get the calves fed. Considering the company, he didn't mind that much, no matter how long the work took, he was sharing it with Tuck.

Look at him, turning into a sentimental fool. He put his head down, determined to make short work of the rest of the feeding. He gave the horses a last check and met Tuck at the foot of the porch stairs. They went up together, the backs of their hands brushing.

They didn't have to say anything as they split up in the kitchen, Justice grabbing the leftover chicken out of the fridge and tossing it in the microwave while Tuck set the table and found the little carrots and something to dip them into. There were leftover biscuits out of a can, too, and Justice popped those into the toaster to warm them up.

The place soon smelled like food, Justice not minding the leftovers at all -- at least it wasn't peanut butter, although he'd bought two great big pots of the stuff when he'd done the groceries, along with a half dozen bottles of different jams. If they were lucky they'd have good food until they brought the beans in and sold them, but chances were they'd be living on peanut butter sandwiches again sooner or later.

For now, though, they were feasting on leftover borracho chicken, biscuits and carrots. They even had a bit of beer gravy to go on it all. They ate at the kitchen table tonight, playing footsie and shooting the breeze. Sometimes they had nothing to say and ate in an easy silence.

The dishes were taken care of with the same easy familiarity and when they were done, Tuck grabbed him with hands damp and hot from washing up, tugging him in close for a couple of soft kisses.

Justice rubbed himself back and forth across Tuck's groin. "So... you wanna go make out on the couch for awhile?"

"I was thinking I needed a shower, actually."

"Oh." He tried not to pout, but he didn't try very hard; he was disappointed.

"Stop looking like I just kicked your puppy -- I was thinking you needed a shower, too."

"Oh!" He grinned. They'd never showered together before. It sounded vaguely dirty in a clean way. "A shower sounds good."

"A *shared* shower."

"Yeah. You and me and the water." He beamed at Tuck and led the way down the hall, laughing and jumping out of the way as Tuck goosed him. Tuck always had something new to share with him, something fun for them to explore together. Blow-jobs and making love, kisses that went on forever, and now sharing a shower. He didn't think this would ever get old.

He sure hoped not anyway, but he wanted Tuck to stick around so they could find out together.

They each stripped and tossed their clothes into the hamper in the corner of the bathroom, Tuck starting the shower while Justice watched, checking out Tuck's ass as Tuck bent to reach the taps. He stepped forward and grabbed, one cheek per hand, making Tuck jump and shout out.

Turning, Tuck flapped wet hands at him, and then leaned in to lick the drops off his skin. Justice groaned, fingers sliding through Tuck's short curls, holding him in place for a moment.

"Come on, Justice. Let's get wet."

"I already am," he pointed out, his skin shining where Tuck had licked.

"Tongue baths don't count." Tuck goosed him, hurrying him into the water.

He stepped under the spray, getting wet before Tuck nudged him out of the way to have his turn in the water. Then Tuck picked up the soap and started running it over him. "The trick is to get clean first, so it doesn't matter if you remember to afterwards, or not."

“You’ve done this a lot then?” He knew Tuck had more experience than him, but he couldn’t help teasing about it, making it sound like it was a whole lot more.

“Oh, yeah. I’m a real stud. Showered with *all* my men.” Tuck pushed him up against the wall and took his mouth, their bodies slick and slip-sliding together, soap keeping things moving easily.

It felt different, but good and Justice rubbed back, seeing suddenly why Tuck had wanted to do this and moaning as their cocks slid and rubbed together. Tuck’s fingers continued to soap him up, skating past his nipples and making them stand up.

His balls were rolled, Tuck’s fingers sliding behind them to tease his skin, his hole. He was getting all soapy and clean, and even more turned on. He spread his legs as best he could, making Tuck chuckle.

“I always know you want it,” murmured Tuck. “You always give it up for me without question.”

He didn’t know what to say to that.

“Relax, Justice. That’s a good thing.”

“Oh, okay.” So, he did relax. He leaned back against the tile and let Tuck make him fly, like Tuck always did.

Once he was totally soaped up, Tuck touching him absolutely everywhere with slick fingers, Tuck drew him back into the water, the hot spray rinsing him clean. That was when the tongue bath mentioned earlier started, Tuck’s mouth going everywhere his hands had.

Justice moaned and whimpered; he groaned. He was glad for the wall behind him, because it was the only thing holding him up. Tuck saved his dick for last, tongue and lips tracing and kissing, teasing him until his balls were aching, drawn up tight against his body.

“Tuck, please.” He’d beg if he had to.

It worked, too, Tuck’s mouth finally closing over the head of his dick, tongue sliding back and forth across the tip. It felt so good. Tuck’s mouth was so much hotter than the water coming down on him, and the suction was going to take the top of his head off. His hips jerked, pushing his dick deeper into Tuck’s mouth.

Tuck’s hands landed on his hips, but instead of stilling him, Tuck tugged, encouraging his rocking motions until he was thrusting into Tuck’s mouth, his dick going deep. When the sensitive tip of his dick hit the back of Tuck’s throat, he cried out, coming hard.

His head hit the shower wall and he barely managed to stay standing as Tuck gently cleaned him, mouth sliding on his dick until it finally came off with a soft pop. Standing, Tuck pressed him against the wall, dick hard and hot like a brand against his belly.

Tuck's kisses tasted like his come, like him, and he opened wide. Tuck's tongue pushed in and out, Tuck's hips sliding against him with the same quick, sharp movements.

"Let me suck you," Justice murmured, not sure he'd be able to get up again once he was down on his knees, but wanting to make Tuck feel even half as good as Tuck had made him feel.

"How about we dry off instead and you let me do you in bed."

"Works for me." He wouldn't have to worry about collapsing if he was already lying down.

"Good." Tuck met his gaze. "You work for me. You know that, right?"

"I thought you worked for me..."

Tuck rolled his eyes and popped him in the arm. "I was being serious."

"I know, I know. And I do. I know. We work for each other."

They did, fitting together like they belonged.

## Chapter Five

The weather cooperated for a change and in less than three weeks they'd harvested the beans and Justice took them down to the cannery, selling the entire load at top dollar. He hit the grocery store on the way home and was in a fine mood as he turned up the drive, singing away with George Strait at the top of his lungs.

His fine mood dissolved quickly at the sight of two patrol cars in his front yard, a handcuffed Tuck being pushed into the back seat of one.

Justice pulled up the truck and jumped out, getting right into the sheriff's face. "What do you think you're doing?"

"Old man Lancaster thought he saw someone on your property. Said you'd gone into town so it couldn't be you. We came to investigate. Found this vagrant on your land."

Justice shook his head. "No, Tuck's not a vagrant, he's working for me."

"You sure about that, son? This is the man wanted in that rape and murder of a little girl I was telling you about a while back."

"No way. I don't believe Tuck had anything to do with that. He's a good man." He looked over at the back of the sheriff's car, but Tuck was staring straight ahead, mouth tight. "Tuck? Tuck, man, I'm going to bail you out." That didn't earn him any response either. He turned back to the Sheriff. "Where are you taking him?"

"Over to Durham county where he's wanted." The man looked at his watch. "I reckon there won't be any sort of hearing before morning as by the time we get him there things'll be closed down for the day."

"You mean he's going to be stuck in jail overnight? Look, why don't you let him stay here and take him in tomorrow?"

One of the sheriff's eyebrows disappeared up into his hat. "You're awful concerned for a vagrant worker."

"He's my friend."

"I'd be more careful with who I made friends with Justice Holler. Even if I was inclined to leave him here overnight, he'd be in jail the next day. Rape and murder's serious business, son."

"But he didn't do it!"

The sheriff patted his shoulder. "I'm sorry, son. I suggest you go on in and be thankful you weren't murdered in your sleep."

“You’re not listening to me.”

“No, Justice, you’re not listening to me. That man is no good and he’s done a bad thing. You’re better off having nothing to do with him, not taking up his cause. You start doing that and people will talk.” The sheriff gave him a significant look. Like a warning. Like the sheriff figured he knew exactly what Justice and Tuck had been getting up to.

Justice’s mouth snapped closed on what he wanted to say. It wasn’t going to do him any good anyway, he could see that.

The sheriff nodded at that and headed around to the driver’s side of the car.

Justice went up to the window and banged on it. “Tuck? Tuck? I’m going to come get you out. It’ll be okay.” Tuck shook his head and wouldn’t look at him. “Come on, Tuck.”

He banged on the window again, and, finally, Tuck turned to look at him, eyes sad and a little bit scared. “I won’t take you down with me,” Tuck mouthed.

Sighing, Justice pressed his hand against the window.

Then the engine started and he stepped back, watching as both cars drove off, carrying Tuck with them. He watched for a long time, frozen to the spot and feeling bereft, like the best thing in his life had just been yanked away from him.

It wasn’t until the dust had almost settled again when he realized there was nothing stopping him from following right behind them. The ranch chores could wait for a day or two. They could wait forever if they had to.

God damn it.

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Justice caught up with the two patrol cars pretty quickly, not caring if they pulled him over and cited him for speeding. He figured that was the least of his problems. He followed them all the way to Durham County and into the police station in the center of town.

Where he cooled his heels for hours.

The Sheriff handed Tuck over to the Durham cops, who whisked him away and then the Sheriff took off, shaking his head at Justice as he passed by. Justice went and talked to the sergeant on duty, but the man stonewalled him, telling him to take a seat.

So he did, the drab gray walls depressing as he waited for a long time before going back up to see if there was any new information yet.

The guy shook his head and looked at the clock on the wall. "Why don't you go home and come back in the morning?"

"No, I'll wait."

"Suit yourself." That was when the sergeant went off duty, a new and equally uninformative man replacing him.

It was too late to call a lawyer, but Justice figured that's what he was going to do come morning. He was going to make sure Tuck had the best representation he could afford. He'd put the ranch up for a loan if he had to. Sell it if need be. The thought of possibly losing the ranch scared him. The thought of losing Tuck scared him more.

He dozed off sometime after midnight, after making sure the man at the desk understood that he wanted to be informed the minute there was something to be informed about. He kept jerking awake, small noises and the dropping of his own head keeping him from falling into a deep sleep. It was pretty miserable, but he figured Tuck had it worse.

Justice jerked awake again around two in the morning to see Tuck crouched in front of him. He blinked and Tuck blinked back. "Tuck?"

"In the flesh."

Reaching out, Justice touched Tuck's cheek. It was warm and rough, long past five o'clock shadow scratching at his fingertips. "How?"

"Apparently they'd figured out it was Agnes or her boyfriend -- they needed me to corroborate Agnes' story that she was with me most of the night."

"So you're not under arrest?"

"Nope."

"And they know it wasn't you?" He didn't mean to be stupid, but he was tired and his head was all fuzzy and just seconds ago he'd been worried about Tuck going to jail for rape and murder.

"Yep."

"You're free to go?"

"I am. Now if only my ride would stop asking questions and get me the hell out of here..."

Laughing, he threw his hands up in the air and jumped up, pumping his fists. It was that or wrap his arms around Tuck and kiss the man silly and he figured the middle of the cop shop was not where he wanted to do that. "Okay, let's get the hell out of here."



“You don’t have to convince me.”

Justice was practically vibrating as they went out, careful not to touch. If he touched Tuck he wouldn’t be able to stop. They climbed up into the truck and Justice started it up and turned them toward home. “I don’t think I can wait until we’re home, Tuck.”

“I don’t want to stop anywhere in Durham.”

Justice could understand that. He drove hard, but made sure he wasn’t over the speed limit; the last thing he wanted was to be stopped for speeding.

He started asking questions to distract himself from the need to touch Tuck, to make sure for himself his lover was okay. His lover. Yeah, that’s what Tuck was: his lover. “If all they wanted from you was to corroborate Agnes’ alibi, why’d it take so long?”

“They didn’t tell me that’s why they had me at first. They wanted to know why I’d run. You were right -- it made me look guilty. Of course, my not being in custody also made them take a closer look at the other suspects.” Tuck sighed and stretched as best he could in the passenger seat. “They spent a few hours grilling me and then started focusing on where I’d said I’d been. I guess they wanted my alibi of Agnes to be airtight.”

“They wouldn’t tell me anything.” Justice gripped the steering wheel tighter, glancing over at Tuck. “I was getting ready to call a lawyer.”

“Good thing you didn’t -- once they’re involved, you’re really in deep.” Tuck reached out and squeezed his thigh. “I’m okay, Justice. They know I didn’t do it.”

“Do you have to go back to testify in court?”

“Yeah, if he doesn’t confess or plead out, I will. I gave them your place as my home address. I hope that’s okay.”

That warm feeling he got a lot around Tuck swelled inside him. “Yeah, Tuck. That’s okay. After all, it is your home, you know?”

“Yeah? I’d like to think it is.” Tuck’s voice got real quiet. “That you are.”

“Oh.” Justice swallowed and looked around, almost surprised to see they were out of town, in fact they’d just passed the Durham County line and there was a dirt road just ahead. He turned down it and drove about a hundred yards before parking the truck.

Then he turned and grabbed for Tuck. It was awkward as hell -- there wasn’t enough room and the damn gear shift was in the way, but he didn’t care. Tuck didn’t seem to either and the two of them did the best they could, kissing and touching, hands tearing open clothes so they could reach skin.

Justice pushed Tuck back, hand sliding down to grab at Tuck's hard-on. He tugged open button and zipper, digging out Tuck's dick and wrapping his hand around it. Tuck returned the favor and they stroked each other fast and furious, needing to come, to connect, to do this together.

"Tuck. Tuck. God." Justice repeated Tuck's name like a prayer. It wasn't going to take long at all and he went first, come spraying up over Tuck's hand. Tuck was right behind him, though, shouting and coming all over him.

Panting, he rested his forehead against Tuck's, looking into his lover's eyes. Tuck smiled, fingers running over his head, his cheeks, his shoulders as they shared kisses.

"Thanks for sticking by me, Justice."

"That was easy -- I knew you didn't do it." That hadn't been lip service, he'd *known*.

"You're the only one who believed that." Tuck gave him another soft kiss, the look intense. "Now how about you take me home before we get arrested for doing it in some farmer's corn field?"

"That would put a downer on the whole no longer being accused of rape and murder thing, wouldn't it?" He put himself back together, zipped back up and buckled his seat belt. Then he started up the truck and headed for home.

As soon as they were on the main road, Tuck reached for his hand, holding on.

## Epilogue

Justice broke a bale of hay up between the last two stalls, King and Penny nosing into it immediately, neighing and snuffling as they ate. He leaned a moment against the wood, watching Boomer, the new colt, fool around with the water, getting it all over the place.

He stopped on his way out to rub Dilly's nose and feed him a couple carrots and an apple. He topped up Jig's food bowl and made sure she had fresh water, too.

Then he headed across the yard toward the house, waving at Tuck. His lover was stripped down to his jeans and standing at the grill, cooking up what looked like steaks. Great big thick steaks. Oh, they must have done well with the latest batch of beans. He and Tuck had continued to send just one of them off to sell crops so they didn't both lose a day's work, but they took turns now that Tuck didn't have to hide. And if folks thought it was weird that the two of them were happy being bachelors out here on their own, he didn't care. It was nobody's business but their own. Even the sheriff had said as much when he'd come out to shake Tuck's hand and make sure there were no hard feelings between them.

"Things went well?" Justice asked, climbing the stairs and moving into Tuck's arms.

"Went great. We got twenty cents a bushel more than we'd been hoping for."

"No way!"

"Yes way." Tuck kissed him hard, hands sliding to his butt to tug him in. "I bought us celebration food."

"I can see that. Looks great, smells even better. Let me go wash my hands and ditch the boots."

"Kay. This won't be too long. There's potatoes baking on the side here, too, and I picked up a cake from that new bakery."

Justice gave Tuck a grin and took off his boots, socks and T-shirt, heading back to the bathroom to wash his face and neck. The cool water felt good on his skin, but he made short work of cleaning up, wanting to get back to Tuck.

It hadn't taken long for him to get used to having Tuck around, and it felt weird whenever they were apart for the day. He was glad it didn't happen very often. He rolled his eyes at himself; thinking about Tuck made him mushy.

He grabbed the mail off the kitchen table, going through it quickly. There was a letter from the solicitor and he opened that one up, smiling as he saw the paperwork, the official seals on it. Folding it up and putting it in his back pocket, he grabbed a couple of cold beers and padded back out to the porch.

Tuck grabbed his beer. "You look like the cat who ate the canary."

“Or maybe the guy who just lost half his ranch?”

“Huh?”

Justice pulled the papers out of his back pocket and handed them over. “You’re now officially half-owner of the JT Ranch.”

Tuck shook his head, looking through the papers. “I don’t know what to say, Justice.” Tuck’s voice was thick. “This is... nobody’s ever done anything like this for me.”

“Yeah, well, your drifting days are over now. You’ve got a place of your own.”

“A place of our own.”

Justice nodded. He could get behind that. He had that warm feeling inside him again and it was spreading out from his belly to the rest of him. Now, he knew what it meant.

Tuck’s arm came around his shoulders and they stood together, looking out over their land as the steaks cooked.

End.