

A Sip...



A Torquere Press Short

Change of Plans
By T.C. Blue

Life had a way of changing from minute to minute, Nicky Granger told himself through the haze of booze and pot that had become something of a close friend. Hell, he'd never planned on... well, any of it, really. Turning into the closest he could get to being a lush while still passing his classes, letting the constant blariness of too much alcohol blind him to the fact that he was being a dick... and he'd definitely never planned on cheating on his boyfriend, but it had for damned sure happened.

Worse than it happening in the first place was that he'd gotten caught at it and, all of a sudden, he felt like crap. Cheating crap, in point of fact.

Nicky grumbled to himself, still buzzed enough that he didn't bother forming actual words, then wrapped his fingers around the neck of the half-empty bottle of Jim Beam he'd been nursing ever since getting back to the dorm room and finding Cliff's things completely gone. Only the emptiness where Cliff's clothes had hung in their small closet and the stripped bed against the far wall showed that the guy had ever even been there.

"Well, fuck him," Nicky managed to slur to himself as he stared at the bare mattress from his spot on the floor. "Fucking dick."

It was the next morning before it finally hit him, and when it did Nicky was already groaning from the pain thundering inside his skull.

He'd really screwed up. And there wasn't a single chance that his obviously *ex*-boyfriend was going to forgive him. Cheating was one of the things Nicky and Cliff had agreed about... and that was that. Crap.

Two more days, two more bottles, and when the football player Nicky had been caught with showed up at his door, Nicky was just toasted enough -- just lonely enough -- to let him in, in every possible way.

He was single, after all, he told himself blearily, body pushing back onto the thick heat that pierced him. Single and on his own. Footloose and fancy-fucking-free. He might as well enjoy it. And he did. Right up until he didn't.

Getting out of the dorm had been the first right step, Nicky knew. Out of the dorm and into a two bedroom apartment he was subletting from a girl in his Statistics class who'd moved in with her townie boyfriend.

Stopping with the drinking and herbal refreshment had been the next right step, because Nicky hadn't touched a drop or a bong in the three weeks he'd been living off campus. He wanted to, sometimes -- mostly at night when the silence and the knowledge that he was truly on his own struck -- because his friends were the ones he'd been so used to drinking with and once he'd stopped? Well, he'd noticed that they were sort of immature and boring... and stupid when they were drunk and stoned and he... wasn't.

Hell, Nicky wasn't sure of how it had happened, but yeah. He'd somehow fallen in with the party-boys and, without the party, they were basically just *boys*. And they were likely to spend a fifth year in college, which Nicky couldn't see himself doing even if he'd had the money for another year.

He wasn't even dating, for God's sake. He didn't have the time, what with trying to catch up on the class work he'd ignored for so long. Which wasn't to say that he didn't get his rocks off. Just that he wasn't *dating*. There wasn't any need when there were plenty of guys, on campus and off,

who didn't mind a little down and dirty messing around. Even though those encounters left something to be desired, Nicky figured they were better than nothing.

He figured that right up until the fifth prospective roommate came knocking on his door. After that... well, Nicky changed his mind about a lot of things, not that Bradley "call me Brad, man," Tolliver seemed to notice or care.

They fell into a loose friendship of sorts, sharing groceries and the occasional evening watching poker tournaments on TV, and Nicky was almost happy with that arrangement. Almost satisfied. But only almost, damn it. Only almost.

Eventually, Nicky knew, *almost* wasn't going to be enough. It was really just a question of when and how Nicky would try to change things. He didn't want to lose Brad's company, as sporadic as it could be... but he wanted so much more of it.

He needed a plan, Nicky decided after a couple months had gone by. He needed a plan that would capitalize on the small bit of interest he hoped he wasn't imagining seeing in Brad's eyes every once in a while. He needed to... he didn't know what, but he needed to do *something* because Nicky was starting to suspect that he needed Brad, needed the guy's companionship and good humor. Needed everything Brad was and could be. Bradley made him want to be a better person, just by being the kind of guy he was.

So. Time to step up. Get things moving. And it would take time, Nicky reminded himself, but he could be patient... he hoped.

"Jesus Christ, Nick! What the hell are you doing?"

Nicky blinked, then arched a brow at his roommate, hand never slowing on his own rampant cock. "What does it... oh, yeah. What does it look like, Brad? Fuck, that's good."

Brad groaned and looked away, though Nicky didn't miss the small, almost-hidden glances Bradley couldn't seem to help. "For fuck's sake, man, can't you do that in your room? Christ! I could have been anyone walking in here!"

Nicky snorted, hand moving faster, fingers tightening and releasing in time with the throbbing that had started in his balls. "Shit, man... you're the only one with... oh, yeah... a key. Besides, you've been wanting to see me for months. Figured I'd throw you a... fuck. A bone."

That was actually true, as far as it went. Brad really had been spying, in some looking-but-pretending-not-to-see way that Nicky had never seen before. It was hot, though. Hot and kind of strange, but that summed up Bradley, too.

Hot, with his dark red hair and oddly violet eyes... hotter still for the fact that the guy was lean and toned and moved like some sort of jungle cat on the Discovery Channel. Not big, because

Brad was five-foot-seven at most, but... Yeah, Nicky noticed yet again, when Brad was standing by himself, it was easy to assume he was much taller. That nicer than nice body was perfectly proportioned. And Bradley's sharp features, which would have looked odd on anyone else, just seemed right. Like Brad was some drawing or painting come to life.

"You... you're out of your fucking mind, man," Brad said, sounding insistent, though he was still sneaking those little glances at Nicky's cock. Nicky could see them, could nearly feel them on his hard prick. "I... just don't come on the fucking couch, jackass."

Nicky closed his eyes, breaths coming just a bit faster, a little more labored, deepened with the knowledge that Bradley wasn't leaving, no matter how much the guy should have been if he was anything like as offended as he was trying to sound.

"Fuck." The whispered word was barely there, so soft that Nicky almost didn't hear it under the soft moans springing from his own lips as he slid his hand up, fingers gathering slick dribbles of fluid.

Oh, that was an idea. Fuck. Fucking. Plowing hard and deep into Bradley. Yeah. Nicky could only imagine feeling that body hot and tight around him, Bradley arching, bowing, trying to pull Nicky's cock deeper. And fuck if the thought alone wasn't enough because Nicky's balls drew up harder, tighter, and a sharp cry sprung from him, pushing past his lips to fill the air, covering another quiet "Fuck!" from Brad.

Nicky shook, shuddered, his hand slowing as the pulses of hot seed splattered his stomach less forcefully by the second. And when he opened his eyes, Brad was gone, though the previously open door to Bradley's bedroom was closed and the rest of the small apartment was as empty as it had been at the start of Nicky's carefully planned show.

A smug smile twitched his lips as he cleaned up and strolled past Brad's room on the way to his own and heard the near-silent but unmistakable sounds of flesh on flesh. "One seduction, well begun," Nicky murmured to himself as he dropped his clothes on his bedroom floor and crossed the hallway naked. "Man, Cliff would be laughing his ass off right about now."

His ex really would, Nicky figured as he got into the shower and started the hot water pouring down. Hell, after the way Nicky had fucked Cliff over, Cliff would likely laugh himself sick to see Nicky all caught up in love. Completely sober, celibate for the last six months but for his own hand... and entirely, helplessly in love with Bradley Tolliver, which was the last thing even Nicky had expected.

He'd known he liked Brad. He'd known that from the minute they'd met. But Nicky had for damned sure never imagined it going much deeper than that, and yet... well. There it was.

It was unsettling, to use one of his Momma's words. Unsettling and fucking uncomfortable, because even though Brad was gay, the guy had never given any sign of being interested in Nicky on that level. Aside from the small glances and occasional lip-licking Nicky had noticed when Brad was sure Nicky wasn't looking, anyway.

And they'd be graduating in two months, Nicky reminded himself. Finishing their Bachelor's degrees and moving on. Into the world, in Nicky's case, and to grad school in Brad's, and Nicky was suddenly running out of time. He honestly didn't know what he would do if he didn't just bite the bullet and try to get something started that could last between him and his roommate.

He'd thought about it, after all. At length. Thought about what it would be like to never see Brad again, to leave Oklahoma State for some other place, other people, a different life. It was the fact that even the idea of a life without Brad filled him with a sort of sadness he'd never experienced before that had started Nicky thinking. And, finally? Well, it was time to take his shot. To risk it all.

He'd needed to put it out there and see whether there was even the slightest chance of Brad feeling something for him. That Brad had been staring at Nicky's naked cock then shut himself behind closed doors to jerk off -- because Nicky knew that was what he'd heard -- seemed to imply that maybe it wasn't just him.

Nicky hoped so, anyway. Couldn't *help* hoping, no matter how the things he'd done in the past made him feel like he didn't deserve a chance at happiness. He'd been an asshole, yes. But he'd changed, and... maybe Brad was his second or seventh chance. Maybe.

"God help me," Bradley groaned, relaxing just a little when he heard the shower running across the hall. "What the fuck! Fucking Nick. Bastard."

Yeah, that was true enough, and Brad knew it. He might only have transferred in at the start of the year, but he'd heard all about Nicky Granger long before he'd ever met the man. *Bad news* was the kindest thing Brad's new friends at the campus GLBTQ organization had said with regards to Nicky. In fact, one of the other students involved with SODA -- the Sexual Orientation Diversity Association -- had warned Bradley off with a cautionary tale of Nicky's drinking and drugging and man-slut ways. It had almost been enough to keep Brad from renting the spare room in Nicky's apartment, but not quite.

He'd justified his decision to live there by telling himself that just because he and Nicky were both gay and apparently single, it didn't mean there had to be anything between them aside from the sort of friendship that usually existed between roommates. That Nicky was a huge player would only make Brad that much more determined to keep things on a friendly-but-not-*too*-friendly level. He didn't need the drama of fucking his roommate anyway, especially considering what he knew. So he'd reminded himself of that frequently, even after he'd gotten a good look at Nicky fresh from bed, Brad's second morning in the apartment.

Taller than Brad by a good two inches, Nicky was gorgeous in a subtle kind of way. And when the guy was still sleep-muddled, black hair sticking up in random tufts, pale blue eyes open but somehow fuzzy, skin lightly tanned from the waist of Nicky's boxers up to his hairline? Yeah. And those full red lips, parted just a little as Nicky shuffled into the kitchen, feet barely lifting

the bunny slippers from the floor. If it hadn't been for what Brad knew, he would likely have started thinking things that weren't a good idea.

Instead, he'd shrugged off Nicky's looks. Pretended to be indifferent and uninterested, because the last thing he needed was to get all tangled up in some weird-ass relationship that was doomed before it even started.

Bradley wasn't looking for forever, granted, but he was definitely looking for more than just a fuck... and Nicky wasn't the guy to offer up anything but a suck-and-fuck to break up the boredom. Or so Brad had thought.

He'd taken the warnings to heart and held his reaction that morning to a grunt as he passed over the carton of orange juice. Then Brad had left the kitchen and gone on about his business, forcing the image of sleepy, befuddled Nicky from his mind with determination.

It had only been months later that he'd realized he hadn't seen any of what he'd been warned of. Brad had never seen Nicky drink even a single beer, much less do any sort of drugs. And Nicky was home just about every night, without dates or fucks or whatever the hell Brad wanted to call them. It was... weird.

That little bit of realization had been two months earlier, though, and even the SODA guys Brad hung out with didn't have anything bad to say about Nick's *current* behavior. In fact, they pretty much agreed with Brad's assessment that Nick was basically a cool guy.

At least Brad had thought so until he'd come home that afternoon and found Nick mostly naked on the couch, cock in hand.

And what a cock, Brad thought with a purely internal moan. Long. Thick. Veins standing out clearly, slightly darker than the pale pink and dusky rose hues of that turgid flesh. And Nicky's fingers, just a bit of gold against the florid skin, moving, stroking, sliding willfully up and down, holding Brad's eyes though he'd tried to look away more than once.

Christ, Nicky was damned hot to look at, even mostly clothed. Entirely naked, prick in hand, and with that look on Nicky's face... that *so close, so fucking close* look? More than Brad could ignore. More than he could stand, if he was being honest with himself. And he was, Brad knew.

He was being honest and damned horny, his own hand replaying Nicky's earlier actions, though it wasn't Nicky's cock Brad was stroking. It was his own, damn it. And God help him if he wasn't thinking he'd rather have his roommate doing it for him, even as the approaching release coiled slowly in his gut.

He spared a moment to tell himself he was crazy but that knowledge didn't have any effect on the images in his mind when he closed his eyes.

Nicky, right there in front of him. Gold-tinged fingers moving Brad's aside, pushing him back on the bed. That nearly elegant hand wrapping around Brad's cock, moving with intent, dragging

soft cries and short spurts of fluid from his body. Nicky's ice-blue eyes staring at him, hot and wanton. And Nicky's mouth -- Jesus Christ, that mouth -- opening, pink tongue slipping out wet and tempting, licking slowly at Brad's tip for just a moment before the man's lips closed over him, around him, and...

"Fuck!" Brad gasped, groaned, making an effort to keep himself from shouting as he came. His heart pounded roughly in his chest as he spilled wildly over his own fingers, slicking his fist for the last long, slow tugs.

He was biting his lip when he finally opened his eyes. Biting his lip and so damned ashamed of himself for being willing to enjoy the fantasy while having no intention of experiencing the reality.

Yes, Nicky was hot and Brad for damned sure wanted him, but that didn't change anything. He still wasn't looking for forever, but he for damned sure wanted something that would last longer than the two months he had left at OSU, and Nicky... Nicky couldn't offer that. Nobody at school could.

Brad reminded himself sternly that he'd be at the University of Miami come fall, and Nicky would be... well. Not in Florida. So starting something with so little time left to them? Not a good idea.

Brad already knew he was going to miss Nicky more than he wanted to. In fact, he sort of suspected that it would be almost unbearable, right at first. Even with the lengths he'd gone to in keeping himself from spending too much time with Nicky, the guy's absence would be like a sore tooth. Something Brad knew he'd keep poking at, even when it hurt... but eventually he'd get used to it.

He would get used to it and he would move on. There wasn't really any other option.

The truth of that very fact didn't help, though. Not while Brad was cleaning himself up, and not while he tried to study late into the night. He kept seeing Nicky, naked on the couch... kept imagining what it would be like to have the man, to touch him even once. It was... horrible.

Appealing.

Impossible.

"Thanks, Jamal," Brad whispered as the theater lights dimmed, dancing popcorn and sodas cavorting across the big screen. "I really appreciate this."

Jamal grinned, teeth white in his dark-skinned face. The glow of the MPAA rating for the first preview highlighted the planes of his cheeks and Brad thought he could have happily been right there on a real date if he hadn't been so hung up on Nicky. As it was... well.

"No problem, man," Jamal answered easily. "I kind of owe you for bidding on me at the auction last month. I still can't believe you got Tony up to three hundred bucks."

Brad laughed quietly and shook his head. Tony and Jamal had been going through one of their rare off-again periods then. He'd just made it clear, through bidding on Jamal, that if Tony wasn't going to step up, someone else might. It had been a carefully thought out manipulation, but it had worked, and that was what counted. Still... "Good thing he finally outbid me. Otherwise, our 'date' would have involved a hell of a lot of ramen noodles."

Jamal shrugged as the next preview started. "There's worse things than ramen." Then he wrinkled his nose and Brad didn't ask. He knew Jamal was on scholarship and the first of his family to even go to college, much less be close to graduating. "But speaking of dates, are you sure this is a good idea? Nick's been really... I don't know. Weird about you lately, man."

Weird. Yeah. That was one word for it. Tempting was another. Hell, Brad had seen Nicky naked more in the week just past than he'd seen the guy clothed. It was starting to... no. Not starting. It *was* getting to him. Every day Brad had a harder... more difficult time not staring. Walking away and not touching, not reaching out to discover whether Nicky's skin was as soft, as smooth as it looked. And every day, Nicky's gazes became sharper, more heated, more... desirous, as oddly Victorian as that sounded even in Brad's mind.

The worst part of those intent stares was that Brad sometimes thought he saw an unexpected sort of tenderness there. A gentle, sort of wistful longing under the heat. And that was more than unexpected, really. It was unwelcome.

It would be easy to fall for Nicky. So damned easy to let go and lose himself in skin and hands and full red lips against his own. God help him, but he wanted to. Wanted it all. But wanting didn't change things. Brad was still going to Florida and Nicky was going to Tennessee or something, and that was that.

"It's a great idea," Brad finally said. "Nicky... well, he'll lay off if he thinks we're together and he doesn't actually know Tony, so it'll be fine." He sighed. "I just need a night off, man. And the movie's starting, so shut up, okay?"

"I think you're fucking nuts," Jamal muttered, sitting back and looking at the screen, "but it's your call. That boy is hot. Oh, man! Check it out. That's a damned fine ride."

Brad pretended he hadn't heard his friend, though he had to admit Jamal was right. The souped-up car tearing down the highway in the movie was awesome.

Christ, he felt like a coward. Every time he walked out the door and implied that he was going to spend time with Jamal, Brad felt like a coward. Like he should just tell Nicky the truth and deal

with the fallout. It didn't help that Nicky still gave him those looks, though the guy had at least stopped with the naked lounging and jerking off in the living room.

It was those looks that were haunting Brad. Those gazes that spoke of so much more than simple attraction and desire. Because as the naked displays disappeared, the warm, wishful glances got more obvious. And what was Nicky trying to do to him, anyway? Brad already didn't want to leave Nicky behind and they were only friends, for God's sake. It would be so much worse if Brad let them become something more. *So much worse.*

Even so, there were only three weeks to go. Brad was sure he could manage for that long; especially if he packed his things ahead of time. Then he could go just as soon as all the school-related crap was done. Throw it all into the back of his car and be on his way. Yeah. Easy.

Easier said than done, though, because when Brad got home from yet another supposed date with Jamal that night, Nicky was waiting. He didn't look happy, either. In fact, he looked... well, pissed off would be putting it mildly.

"Um, hey." Christ. Was that really the best he could do? And apparently Nicky was just as dissatisfied with that offering as Brad was, so he tried again, pretending he didn't notice Nicky's glare. "How's it going, Nick." It was more statement than question, but Brad couldn't help it. He didn't really want to know why Nicky was glaring. Wanted to go hide in his room, in fact, like he did most nights, even the nights he'd allegedly been out with Jamal.

"Not so good," Nicky answered, those ice-blue eyes narrowing to little more than mere slits. "How was your *date*?"

Jesus. What was he supposed to say when Nicky was standing there like that, arms crossed over his chest and surly as Brad didn't know what? What did Nicky know, or more to the point, what did Nicky *think* he knew?

"Um. It was fine," Brad tried, flinching just a little when Nicky snorted. "I mean, it was just casual, you know? A couple pieces of pizza over at the Perfect Slice. And..." Lord, Nicky looked even angrier, but Brad couldn't seem to stop himself from talking. "And Jamal had some things to do so we called it a night and here I am."

Another snort and Brad just knew he was blushing, damn it. "What kind of things," Nicky prodded, eyes becoming even more narrow, which Brad hadn't thought possible.

"I don't know," Brad muttered, dragging his eyes from Nicky's to stare at the floor. "I didn't ask."

"Oh. Well, in case you were wondering, your *date*. Jamal. He's probably back in his room by now, doing Tony." Oh. Fuck. "You know Tony, right? Jamal's *boyfriend*? The one he was playing tonsil-hockey with at the Quik-Shop an hour ago?" Nicky made a sound that was almost a snarl, but not quite. "You know... while you were on your *date*. Asshole."

Crap. A deer caught in headlights could possibly feel as frozen and stunned as Brad did right then. He was sure of it. Hell, he wanted to... he didn't know what. Pass out or topple over or... something. Shit. And Nicky was clearly waiting for some sort of response and Brad didn't have a single clue about what he could say. That didn't stop him from trying, though. "Nick..."

"No." Just that. Flat. Blunt. Like all the anger had drained out of Nicky in one split second. "At first I thought Jamal was stepping out on you, so I said something to him and Tony and I find out you *knew*. You knew and you were fucking playing me! For fuck's sake, Brad, you could have just said you really weren't interested. Instead, you fucking lie to me for a whole month?" Nicky looked sad and lost.

"Nick," Brad tried again but Nicky just shook his head and turned away. "Nick, please."

"No." Again with that word, and Brad didn't like it any more than he had the first time. "You don't want me. I get it. It's cool. I figured we were friends. That you could have told me without this whole... bullshit game. But don't worry." Nicky paused and Brad had a feeling he was forcing himself not to look back. "I'll leave you alone, Brad. I hope..." He shrugged; it looked *so* defeated, so not Nicky. "I hope you find whatever it is you're looking for. That's all."

Brad could feel his mouth opening and closing soundlessly, even as Nicky's bedroom door closed behind the man. "What the fuck just happened?" he whispered to himself, but damned if he had an answer. In fact, Brad admitted silently a few minutes later as he lay on his own bed and stared at the ceiling, he not only didn't have an answer, he didn't have a clue about why he felt so damned wrecked, all of a sudden. Wrecked. Broken. Hopeless.

Nicky was nowhere to be seen the next day. Or the day after that. It was like... as soon as he'd decided to stay out of Brad's way, he'd discovered some formerly unknown ability to be the invisible man, and surprisingly enough, Brad found that he resented the hell out of it.

He resented it even more that Nicky had every right and reason to be pissed off. Brad had not only lied, but done so consistently for more than a month. Brad figured he would have been just as MIA if their positions had been reversed. Of course, in his case, it would have been because of the feelings he had for Nicky, feelings he wasn't letting himself examine too closely.

It didn't help at all that Jamal and Tony had laughed at him the first time he'd run into them after that night. Tony had chuckled and rolled his eyes. "Well, what did you expect?" he'd demanded. "The guy cleaned up his act and has a huge crush on you. Then he finds out you're so *not* into him that you'd rather fake a relationship. I'd have punched your lights out." And Jamal had just stood there shaking his head, damn it.

Which didn't mean that Jamal was actually staying silent about the whole messed up thing, because three days after Nicky had learned the truth, Jamal was on the phone. Brad barely made it inside the apartment and to the kitchen counter to answer before the machine picked up.

"Hey, man," Brad greeted, the caller ID showing Jamal's mobile number. "What's up?"

Brad listened and laughed just a little when Jamal mentioned yet again that Brad needed to get a cell phone. It still wasn't in his budget, though.

He talked for a few minutes, taking the cordless unit out into the living room and sighing to himself when he saw Nicky's door standing open. "Invisible man, 3; Brad, zero," he muttered, then "Nothing, just talking to myself," when Jamal asked him to repeat.

"Maybe you should try to explain," Jamal said next and Brad laughed, all the bitter longing he felt coming out in the sound.

"To who?" Brad grumbled the words, letting his head drop backward to rest on the cushioned rail at the top of the couch. "Nick's not here, and what could I say, anyway? 'It's not that I don't want you, it's that I *do*'? Because that'd go over really well. Or... oh, I know! 'You're going to Nashville and I'm not, so I can't get all involved because I'm already gonna miss you too much' -- how about that?" He shook his head, eyes closed. "It's screwed up, man. There's really nothing for me to say, even if I *could* find Nick. Either one of those things, no matter how true they are, would be... I don't know. Too..."

He wasn't expecting any voice other than Jamal's, and Brad definitely wasn't expecting the hand that suddenly cupped the cheek that didn't have a phone pressed to it.

"Either one of those... would have been better, Brad," Nicky said bluntly. "Would have... I don't know. Hurt less."

Brad was blinking. He knew he was. Blinking and staring like that damned deer again, in between the rapid rise and fall of his eyelids. "Brad. Yo, Brad. Hey, man, you there?" he heard Jamal. He just couldn't manage to speak.

"Brad's gonna have to call you back," Nicky said after pulling the phone from his ear and Brad's mind echoed the tinny "oh, fuck," he heard coming through the line.

"I thought maybe I wasn't your type," Nicky said what seemed like a silent eternity later, but was more likely only seconds. The phone sat abandoned on the coffee table and Brad only noticed because both of Nicky's hands were on his face. "Then Jamal started coming around and I was sure of it, Brad. I... still thought that, even after I found out what was going on. That you were maybe just trying to avoid saying it. But that's not it, is it? You... God, I can't believe... You want me. You do. I mean, you really want me."

God, his heart was leaping in his chest. Doing the fucking Samba or something. And fuck if his cock wasn't hard, pulsing in time. Nicky's hands were so warm on his face. Brad thought he'd feel that heat forever, and that wasn't good, damn it.

Brad closed his eyes again for just a moment and swallowed hard. "I don't want to," he said, meeting Nicky's stare. "I don't want to want you or care about you or even *need* you, Nick. I

don't want you to be a good guy and so exactly my type, and I for damned sure don't want to have you and have to *leave* you. I... you should have just left it alone, man. You should have just..."

"I couldn't." Nicky was frowning, shaking his head, and his thumbs were moving ever so slightly on Brad's cheeks and Brad couldn't stand it, couldn't take even another second of that touch that was so very light and yet so damned deep. So intimate in a way he'd never even considered. "I can't."

"Why, Nick!" God, it was more of a cry than anything else. Brad couldn't help it, though. "Why?" he demanded again, shoving himself up from the couch, away from the unwelcome tenderness that had almost proven his undoing because he'd for damned sure come close to leaning into Nicky's hands. "Why do you have to be so fucking... shit! Just let it be, Nick! Please, I... if you care about me at all, just let me go, okay?"

Brad actually saw the split second in which Nicky went from gentle to determined. Those pale eyes hardened just a little and it was... scary, yes, but a part of Brad found it exciting.

"I can't do that," Nicky answered, taking a step to close the bit of distance Brad had managed to achieve. "No. I mean I *won't*. You want to know why, Brad? *This* is why."

Then those full, red lips were on Brad's, somehow soft and hard all at once, and Nicky's arms were tight around him. The long, thick cock Brad had seen so many times was pressing against him through layers of fabric and it was... God, it was good. And bad.

Fucking horrible, Brad told himself, even as he met Nicky's kiss with a visceral heat that shamed the need he'd already known existed within him. One fucking kiss and his good sense was entirely gone because it wasn't enough. Wasn't even close to enough. Maybe nothing would ever be enough again.

Hands and lips and tongues took them down the hall. Long, hard breaths, pushing in and out shakily, got them to Brad's room. And small moans, grunted groans, joined them in falling naked onto the sheets, bodies rocking, rolling, writhing together in a dance of flesh and a necessity so deep, it was almost primal in its intensity.

"Brad. Brad." Gasping against his lips, Nicky's voice was rough, harsh and honest and bare. And Nicky's cock, so hard and slick from both their fluids, pressing just so against his own, was sliding, rubbing wildly until Nicky stilled for just a brief moment then forced a short, sharp cry into Brad's mouth as liquid heat spilled between them.

"Fuck." Breathless and barely there, Brad was panting so hard. "Fuck. Yes." Then he lost himself in Nicky's mouth again, his own body jerking, spasming in time with the rapid pulses of seed Brad was adding to the moment.

Three weeks, Nicky thought. Just three more weeks of Brad before everything would be finished, over... done.

It was messed up. More, it was *fucked* up. And he shouldn't be thinking about the end while Brad was inside him, moving so slowly, but he couldn't help it.

Even with Brad's long, hot shaft spearing him, pushing small grunted moans from his lips, Nicky couldn't quite manage to be fully in the moment. Then Brad's fingers gripped him tighter, pulled him back harder onto that rampant cock and Nicky forced the bittersweet thoughts away.

"I... yeah. Yeah, baby. God, that's..." Perfect, Nicky wanted to say, but that might be too much, too soon. "Good, Brad. So fucking good..."

"Uh-huh," Brad groaned the agreement, pushing deep again, so deep Nicky thought he might never lose the feeling, not that he wanted to. "Y-yeah, Nick. Fuck. You... Christ, so hot. Tight, man. Good."

Better than just good, Nicky knew. And Brad thought so too. Nicky could hear it in Brad's voice, in the softness underlying the immediate need. It was fucking amazing. Like they'd been right there before, though that didn't make any sense.

Nicky moaned again, quietly, when Brad dragged slowly back, the length of his hardness sliding along Nicky's prostate like a tease. Enough to have him begging for more, but not hard enough to do anything but have Nicky's cock throbbing, bobbing between stomach and sheets. "Fuck, Brad. Harder, okay?" God, he sounded breathless. Then again, he sort of was.

"You got it, man..." And Brad jabbed his hips forward, shifted just a bit and that was exactly what Nicky had needed. That hard, fast thrust that finished the job Nicky's hand had started on his own cock.

Seed shot from him, pulse after pulse that tightened his body and had him crying out... and Brad was shouting, too, thighs and groin so tight against Nicky's ass that Nicky couldn't swear they wouldn't fuse. And heat, hard heat pulsing inside him. Brad's balls tightening rhythmically against Nicky's skin, so hard Nicky could feel it, and he spared a brief regret that there was latex between them, but better safe. Always better safe.

He fell forward, face first on the mattress, hand protecting his softening dick as he came to rest with Brad still on him, still in him, and he tried desperately to find some way of saying that he couldn't let Brad go, couldn't let them end. Then Brad was breathing against Nicky's neck and there was something to the sound -- a small hitch, a near-silent catch -- that had Nicky suddenly and unquestionably sure. Brad was in it just as deeply. Just as helplessly. And if it was both of them, then... Yeah, Nicky told himself with a small smile. They needed to talk. It was just a question of what to say, how to start.

He tried to organize his thoughts. Tried to formulate reasons and methods of working things. Did his damndest to compose some sort of logical proposition that would show Brad that Nicky

wasn't taking anything lightly. That he wasn't prepared to just walk away or even let Brad drive off into the sunset or some such shit.

In the end, it was easier than Nicky had thought it might be.

Brad stirred after a few minutes. Lifted himself from Nicky's back, pulled out of Nicky's body, leaving him empty and chilled, though it wasn't cold in the room. Then Brad sighed, moving a bit more, and Nicky heard the sound of the condom being removed, tied, landing in the small waste bin beside the bed.

"I don't really have my heart set on Nashville," Nicky said into the strained silence that surrounded them after Brad settled beside him, clearly as tense as if he hadn't come just minutes earlier. "I mean, it's a nice place. I like it there. But I can work pretty much anywhere, Brad."

Another minute of quiet, broken only by the sounds of their breathing, but it seemed to go on forever.

"I thought you had a job lined up," Brad finally said, but Nicky swore he could hear something an awful lot like hope in the words. "I thought it was a done deal, man."

Well, it was, Nicky admitted to himself. His uncle had promised him a job at one of the small music rags the man owned. Even so... "I've never been to Florida. I think I'd probably like the sun. They have beaches down there in Miami, don't they? I could learn to surf or something." And Uncle Kenny would hook him up with some interviews or something. The man knew pretty much everyone in the small-press news-rag world. "I'm pretty sure they even have music down there. Can't say I'd mind writing for a Miami music magazine."

Brad didn't move for a few seconds, but that was fine. Nicky figured he was thinking or something. Hell, he would have been thinking too. Besides, they had three weeks to talk about it, to decide just how they were going to manage. One thing Nicky knew, though...

Brad laughed then, pulling Nicky from his thoughts. "Seriously, Nick?" Brad said, moving closer, one hand resting warm and just right at the small of Nicky's back, "If you're gonna live in Miami, I think you need to learn Spanish before you worry about surfing."

Then Brad was even closer, and Nicky felt those soft lips pressing a slow kiss between his shoulder blades. He almost missed Brad's whispered "You sure about this, honey?" but he heard it and Nicky couldn't help nodding, even as he shifted, turned, arranged himself on his side so he could look into Brad's slightly stunned eyes.

His hand rose, sliding up Brad's arm and then down from Brad's shoulder to rest over the man's pounding heart and Nicky smiled. Nodded again, slowly. "I'm sure," he said simply. "I'm sure of *you*. This. *Us*." And thank God Brad was, too, because Nicky wasn't sure of what he would have done if Brad hadn't leaned up then, pressing his lips to Nicky's.

Kisses were good. Nicky had never really been the biggest kissing fan before, but he suddenly saw the appeal. Kisses were perfect. And Brad's kisses?

More than worth a change of plans. Hell, Nicky thought that was the *least* they were worth. There was so much more to come. They had three weeks. And by the time they left OSU, they'd have it all figured.

More importantly, Nicky told himself as their kisses went deeper, wetter, hotter... it would be *their* plan, not just his.

The future was waiting and they would face it together. Sweet.

Change of Plans

Copyright © 2009 by TC Blue

All rights reserved. No part of this eBook may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews. For information address Torquere Press, Inc., PO Box 2545, Round Rock, TX 78680

Printed in the United States of America.

Torquere Press, Inc.: Sips electronic edition / June 2009

Torquere Press eBooks are published by Torquere Press, Inc., PO Box 2545, Round Rock, TX 78680