

The book cover features two muscular men. The man in the background is shirtless, has a dog tag necklace, and large white wings. The man in the foreground has long dark hair and is also shirtless. The title 'BLUE EYED ANGEL' is at the bottom, and the author's name 'B. J. POWERS' is at the top.

B. J.  
POWERS

BLUE EYED  
ANGEL

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# Blue Eyed Angel

By

B. J. Powers

# Chapter One

*Patton State Hospital, San Bernardino County,  
California.*

*By reason of insanity.* The words milled through Baxter's head over and over, day after day, night after night. Here he was, incarcerated, stuck in a mental institution. For how long? Indefinitely, the judge had said. But his lawyer, Tom Gardner, had assured him that he'd not have to be there very long. Had he stood trial, he would have gotten life.

It was insane. A nightmare. A freak blow life had dealt him and left him rotting among a bunch of nutcases.

"Bax, wanna play a game of pool?" Frankie, one of the more lucid inmates shouted at him.

Frankie was an older man and committed to Patton State Hospital for the same crime. Murder. But...there was one big difference. Frankie was guilty as hell. In a fit of insane jealous anger, he'd slain his wife, his mother-in-law, and his two

teenage children. The man wasn't insane. At least, not anymore, but he'd spend the rest of his days in the institution.

"No, don't feel like it, Frankie. Besides, I've gotta go and see the shrink in half an hour."

"Later?"

"Maybe."

He hated the shrink. At least he only had to see him once a month now. Four years ago, when he was first admitted, he had to see Dr. Lane once a week. Lane prescribed meds for Bax, to keep him calm he was told, and the nurse hovered over him to make sure he swallowed. Calm? He was angry. Yes. He was furious. His good-for-nothing lawyer left him rotting. Promises, always promises. "Yes, I'm still investigating. I'll get to the bottom of it all. Be patient, Baxter." Little did they know he'd learned to hide the pills in his mouth and would pretend to swallow something. He needed their zombie making drugs like he needed a hole in the head.

That no good son-of-a-bitch lawyer he had. Investigating? Like hell he was. Gardner was probably living it up with the money Bax had given him access to.

"Mr. Kavanagh, it's time for your appointment." Don, his new nurse approached. Bax didn't like the man. Something about him was shady, something in the way he looked at Baxter,

almost with a killer stare, caused Bax to think the man had it in for him.

"Yes, I know."

"Let's go then."

Bax shook the man's hand off his arm and stood. "I can go by myself."

"No, I'll take you there."

Bax ground his teeth together. If he protested, he'd get punished. Don knew very well Bax knew the way, that he was quite capable of going there alone. The man just liked to be difficult, as he'd been ever since he'd replaced the last nurse. "Fine. Just don't touch me."

It didn't help. Don grabbed Bax by the arm and held him with a tight grip. So tight it hurt. Bax knew if he put up a fight he'd end up getting beaten. Steeling himself, he walked alongside Don, gazing down at the floor tiles, counting them. Eighty-nine tiles to go.

Don knocked on the door of the psychiatrist's office. A soft buzzing sound indicated the opening of the door. "In you go. I'll come back in an hour," he said, and shoved Bax in the back.

Baxter stepped inside and stopped dead as the door closed behind him. The once familiar office wasn't so familiar anymore. It had been painted and redecorated. Cheerful plants were scattered throughout the large room. The old, grimy, white curtains were replaced with bright, blue, striped

ones, and the tiled floor was now covered with a gray-blue plush carpet. Pictures graced the walls. Bax looked around in wonder. It was like stepping into a different world.

“Baxter Kavanagh?”

Bax walked toward the desk. That wasn’t Lane’s voice. He looked at the owner of the voice and stopped. The metal desk was gone. In its stead stood a large oak desk. Behind the antique desk sat a man. The sun streaming through the windows made his hair shine like molten gold. Bax squinted at the bright sunlight and slitted his eyes so he could see better.

“I’m sorry. Let me draw the drapes.”

The man stood and turned his back to him and Bax noted how tall he was. Wearing only a T-shirt and jeans, muscles rippled as the man reached to draw the curtains. He swung back to face Bax.

“Mind hitting the light switch?”

Speechless, Bax turned and went to switch on the light. When he turned around, the new doctor was still standing, facing him. He held out a hand.

“My name is Rory Quackenbox.”

Bax grimaced at the name.

“That’s okay. You can laugh. I’m used to it.”

“Sorry,” Bax mumbled as he took Rory’s hand. A shock traveled up his arm as Rory shook his hand with a firm grip. A shock that settled in the pit of his stomach, then traveled to his groin. He

couldn't help but stare at Rory's face. He'd never seen such beautiful eyes in his life—blue, very blue, and piercing. Contact lenses? No one could have eyes that blue. Rory's face was angular, yet boyish. He was tanned, causing the blue eyes to stand out even more. Bax let go of the hand.

"Sit down, Baxter," Rory said, his sculptured lips smiling slightly.

Bax noticed the crinkling at the temples. My God, he was the most beautiful man he'd ever seen.

"As you may have guessed, I'm your new psychiatrist. I've studied your case history. It seems you've been a model patient since you've been here. A few incidents, yes, but nothing really violent. Your main problem is that you can't deal with what happened. You refuse to admit guilt. Would you like to talk to me about that, Bax?"

"If you were accused of something you didn't do, would you admit to being guilty?"

"So you're still maintaining your innocence."

"Obviously."

"Mmm. Interesting. I'd like to hear from your own lips what happened that night. I know you've gone over this time and again, but please bear with me."

"It should all be in that thick file you're fingering."

"It is, but this is all in Dr. Lane's words, his



diagnosis. I like to form my own opinions. Please?"

How could he resist that beautiful smile? Baxter shifted uncomfortably in his chair. This wasn't right. This man was nothing like a psychiatrist should be. Stern, unbending. Ugly maybe? Or at least middle-aged and wearing glasses. Rory couldn't be much older than he was. All this time he'd spent in Patton, his libido had been on hold. Even fantasizing had left his dick limp. He thought he'd lost it forever. Now, out of the blue, a golden god stepped into his life and brought it all back in full force. But what good could it do? He was a convicted murderer and the golden god had his life in his hands. He stood and started pacing the floor. No way in fucking hell did he want Rory to see the growing bulge at his crotch.

"It was five years ago, just a couple of weeks before Christmas, when it all happened. But let me start at the beginning so you can understand what led up to it. Mind if I have something to drink? A glass of water?"

"I'm sorry. How about a coffee?"

"Thank you. I don't drink the coffee here. Tastes like ditch water."

"I guarantee you'll like this one." Without further preamble, Rory got up and walked to the corner of the office where a brand-new coffee maker stood on the counter. "That's a first."

"What is?" Rory gripped a steaming mug in his hand and walked toward Baxter.

"Coffee in this office. And it smells damn good, too."

"I use the best beans. Grind them myself."

Bax took a sip. "My God, I haven't tasted this in..." He savored the delicious taste of real coffee for a moment, letting it tease his taste buds. It was like an angel had kissed his tongue.

Rory smiled, interrupting him. "Do you have family, Baxter?"

The way his name rolled off Rory's lips almost made it sound sexy. "No. My parents died in a car accident when I was very young. I grew up in foster homes."

"You're an architect?"

"I was. Yes."

"I saw you did rather well for yourself."

"Much fucking good it's done me."

"You're bitter."

"I wonder why? Thanks for the coffee. I'll continue my story now."

Rory leaned back in his chair and swung his feet to the edge of the desk, hands behind his head.

At least this man seemed interested in hearing his tale of woe. "I became involved with someone. Deeply involved. I didn't know he was a mobster's son." For a moment he turned and

looked Rory directly in the eyes, but Rory's expression didn't change. No disgust at his life choice. Nothing. Pacing the floor again, he continued. "His name was Paul. No one in his family knew he was gay. They thought we were just very close friends and Paul didn't want them to know. But he was in a bad situation. His father wanted him to get married. Paul was engaged to a young woman, the daughter of another mobster. He loved her, but he loved me more."

"So Paul was bisexual?"

"Yes. But after he met me, he couldn't be with her anymore. He didn't know what to do, how to end their engagement. Not without families on both sides getting into uproar. Paul and I spent as much time together as we could. More than often, his fiancée, Melissa, would be with us. She was a very nice young woman. Very sweet. We'd have a great time, laugh a lot, and at times I could even see the three of us living together. But there was always the family. Paul could not tell them. So, we continued the way we were. Pressure to get married from both families started to get to Paul. Then one day, Paul's sister caught us together. She told her parents. Paul's father told Melissa's parents and there was hell to pay. Paul's father forbade Paul to ever see me again."

"But you did see him again."

"Yes. Melissa knew about us then. Of course

her parents told her that Paul was gay, but she loved him so much and really cared for me as a friend, that she forgave Paul and made him promise we'd never be together again as lovers. We had an invitation to a Christmas party that didn't involve either of their families. I decided to back out of it. I didn't want to be in this uncomfortable situation anymore."

"Were you in love with Paul?"

"Love? I don't know. Lust is more like it. I cared a lot for him. He loved me though. It didn't bother me as much as it did him for us to part ways. Anyway, Paul and Melissa begged me to forget the past and go with them to the party. I protested, but finally gave in.

The party was great. It was near two in the morning when I started to feel the amount of booze I'd consumed and knew it was time to leave. Melissa didn't drink and she offered to drive me home. Paul was very drunk as well. He begged us to stay a while longer. I had another drink or two and got so drunk, I don't remember much after that. I vaguely recall getting into Melissa's car. But then I must have passed out. The next thing I knew people were shaking me. Cops. I was still very groggy. It was in the wee hours of the morning, but the booze was still fogging my mind." Bax stopped for a moment to take a breath and a gulp of his coffee. "What

shocked me to reality – when I saw that my shirt was covered in blood, my hands as well. Paul and Melissa were in the front seats... Paul's head... a splintered horrible mess... Melissa's face was gone. I puked then, couldn't help it. The cops hauled me out of the car, cuffed me, and later took me to the police station. When I sat waiting in the police car, I saw them remove Paul and Melissa from the car and put them in body bags. It was all too unreal, like something from a nightmare or a horror movie."

"So you don't know what happened?"

"No. As I said, I was passed out on the backseat."

"According to your file, you were holding the shotgun that killed them. Your fingerprints were all over the gun."

"I've never owned a gun in my life and I'm not a violent person."

"The gun was registered in your name."

"I've never bought a gun. No one believed me."

"So how did you end up in here instead of jail?"

"My lawyer managed to get me declared mentally unstable and unable to stand trial. He said I'd be back in the real world a lot sooner that way." Bax laughed bitterly. "I haven't heard from him for quite a while."

"Who is your lawyer?"

"Tom Gardner of Gardner and Associates."

"I see. Who recommended him to you?"

"No one. He showed up at the police station. Said he'd heard about my case and wanted to represent me."

"Were you ever out on bail?"

"No. The crime was too violent."

"Have you tried calling him?"

"Yes, I've left tons of messages, but not a word. He's got access to one of my bank accounts, one that has a great deal of money in it. I suspect he's living it up on my money."

"Why don't you fire him and get yourself another lawyer?"

"Kind of hard to do from here. I have no one. No friends left. Everyone abandoned me. No family. The last time he came to visit me, he told me to be very careful. Both families want revenge. There's a contract out on me."

"They'd have a hard time getting to you here."

"The mob's very clever. They'll get someone in here somehow. I have a gut feeling my days are numbered."

"That's a morbid thought. Well, your hour is up. I'll be seeing you again soon."

The hour had flown. It was the most unusual hour Bax had ever spent with a shrink. Somehow, deep down, he almost felt better. Someone had listened to him. And that someone had also awoken something else deep inside him—the

ability to like a person. "In a month I guess."

"No, much sooner than that. As a matter of fact, I'll see you in two days. Same time."

"They won't like that. I'm scheduled for once a month."

"I don't care what they like and don't like. In my office I'm in charge, and if I tell them you need intensive therapy, they'd better listen. Off you go. Next client is waiting."

Was it his imagination or did he read kindness in Rory's eyes? Caring? Was it possible that this man believed him?

"Thank you for listening and for the great coffee. I'll see you in two days."

Baxter left the office after one more glance at the sexy gorgeous man behind the desk. Again, he felt a stirring in his loins, his cock jumping to the command. He hardly felt the guard's hand on his arm this time, or counted the floor tiles, as the man led him back to his room. All he saw was Rory's face, his eyes, his cerulean blue eyes that gazed right through him.

The door clicked shut. He was alone. Except he didn't feel so alone any longer. Glancing at the clock he saw he had an hour before dinner. Quickly, he slipped out of his pants and lay on the cot. His cock winked at him, his loins burnt with desire. He closed his eyes and visualized Rory, his beautiful face, his body without clothes on. The

image stood still in his mind as his hand stole to his cock and grasped the throbbing flesh. Slowly, he started to move the skin back and forth. The hand wasn't his, but Rory's hand doing this. Rory's lips smiling at him, his eyes devouring, the blue darkening to ocean depths of desire. His hand jerked faster, faster still, his balls ached. Suddenly, release, heavenly release that had built up over such a long time. His come squirted, kept on squirting. Bax inhaled the musky odor. He loved the scent of semen. Letting out a deep breath, for the moment his needs satisfied, he cupped his balls and lay back to dream about a man he could never have.



## Chapter Two

Rory sat deep in thought. He waited to open the door for his next patient. He needed a few minutes. He'd known Baxter was gay from reading his file. But that the man would have such an impact on him personally, *that* he hadn't expected. He opened the file. Baxter was two years younger than him, thirty-four. What a waste. But was it? He claimed not to have committed the murders.

Deep down his gut told him this man was innocent. Never before had he felt so strongly about an inmate's innocence. Nor the attraction for the handsome young man, an attraction he couldn't afford or he'd lose his job. He gazed at the photos inside the folder. They didn't do Baxter justice. Mug shots seldom did. It was obvious that Baxter worked out. He was lean, muscular. His face, framed by midnight black wavy hair, had imprinted itself in Rory's brain. And those eyes, almost as black as his hair, reflected deep pools of

bitterness and anger. Baxter was attracted to him, too. The growing bulge at his crotch hadn't escaped Rory's sharp eyes.

He sighed and fought the desire within, fought to still his aching cock. *Get control of yourself. You can't have an affair with a patient. But... maybe I can help him prove his innocence.*

Loud knocking on the door disturbed his thoughts and jolted him back to reality. He set Baxter's folder aside. *I'll take it home and will read it more thoroughly then.*

His day finally over, Rory headed home to his house in the township of Patton. It was hotter than hell, unusually hot and muggy for November. This was winter, for Christ sake. He was glad to walk into his air-conditioned house. After throwing his briefcase on the couch, he headed for the kitchen to get a cold beer, then walked to his bedroom, sipping his beer. He stripped, then guzzled the rest. The cool air felt heavenly on his naked body.

The jet streams massaged his tired muscles, relaxed him. Closing his eyes, he tried to blank out Baxter's image. Without success. He could not get the man out of his mind. It had bothered him all day, even while dealing with other patients, and he found it hard to concentrate on each individual's case. *Get a grip on yourself, buddy. You*

*might feel attracted to the man, but you can't let it interfere with your work.*

It didn't help. Nothing helped. He allowed the image to work his imagination – Baxter's hands on his body, his lips on his cock. Rory stroked his chest, his arms, his legs, all the while dreaming of the dark eyed man. Finally he stroked his cock. Slowly at first with just one finger. He rubbed the spot at the base of his cock in a circular motion, deepening the pressure, until he felt ready to burst. He grasped his cock firmly and started moving the skin back and forth. His heart pounded within his chest like a sledgehammer. Thrill upon thrill coursed through him. "Baxter, oh Bax," he whispered as release came. He let out his breath and slowly pumped the last semen from his cock until it lay once again dormant in his hand. For the moment he felt sated.

After quickly lathering his body and washing his hair, he didn't even bother to dry himself but only wrapped the towel around his hips. The moisture on his skin felt good, the air-conditioner cooling him instantly.

After getting another beer, he contemplated sitting by the pool, but decided to wait till later. It was still too hot, so he headed for the living room and took Baxter's folder out of his briefcase.

He stretched out on the couch, the folder in his hands. As he opened it and gazed at Baxter's

pictures, he felt his cock stir again. "Down, Fido. Not now," he murmured as he started to read the complete transcript of the trial.

A few hours later, he closed the folder and looked at the notes he'd made. First things first. Baxter needed a new lawyer. Only Baxter had the power to fire his present lawyer and to stop access to the bank account, but Rory could help with that.

## Chapter Three

Baxter was surprised when he was ordered to go to the psychiatrist's office the next day. Normally, he would have protested, questioned it, but now that Rory was his new shrink, he welcomed the order. Don looked at him strangely, the look in his icy green eyes questioning the reason for this preferential treatment. Bax didn't care, nor that Don seemed to resent it and handled him rather harshly. He didn't react when the nurse punched him in the ribs to walk faster. Oh, he wanted to beat the shit out of the guy, but the fact that the shrink wanted to see him again, and so soon, had rekindled a spark of hope deep within him. He gritted his teeth and walked toward what had become a haven in his mind.

"Sit down, Baxter. I'll get you a coffee."

"Thank you, Dr. Quackenbox."

"Oh, please, call me Rory, or Dr. Quack."

"I can't call you by your first name."

"In private you can. Please do."

"Thanks, uh...Rory. I really don't want to call you Quack."

"I'm used to it."

Baxter gratefully accepted the steaming mug of aromatic coffee. "Thanks. Why'd you want to see me again so soon?"

"I took your file home with me last night. I studied your case, the contents of your folder, and did some research online. I'd like you to fire your lawyer and we'll look for a new one. That's if you can afford it of course."

Baxter was astounded. "I've got a lot of money. Before all this happened, I invested heavily and it paid off."

"You told me. Great. So how did you get stuck with a shitty lawyer?"

"He just showed up and offered to represent me."

"I see. Let me guess. The mob probably sent him?"

"Yes, I suppose. I was heavily involved with them, thanks to my relationship with Paul. Some of them seemed to believe me and said they wanted to help."

"I find that rather unbelievable. You'd think they'd let you rot after what you supposedly did. There is something fishy about the lawyer just showing up out of the blue. And I would also think the mob would want to see you get a death

sentence, rather than see you end up in here. Something is very wrong with this whole picture. My thoughts are, that lawyer had an agenda, the mob had an agenda, and told the lawyer to have you declared insane. Why? Maybe they thought it would be easier to get to you in this place. They know very well how long a prisoner on death row can be there through appeals and all. Has your lawyer ever appealed?"

"He said he did, but the appeal was denied."

Well, first thing I'd like you to do is fire him. Then you need to close the bank account you gave him access to."

"Where do I start?"

"By picking up my phone over there and dialing his number."

"And after I fire him, then what?"

"We'll talk about that after you do it. Go ahead." Rory pushed the phone across his desk closer to Baxter.

"He probably won't accept the call. Lately, I've been unable to get hold of him."

"Then I suggest you call your bank first and get that settled. When he finds out he can't access your funds, he'll get in contact soon enough."

Bax felt an excitement like he hadn't felt for years. It ran through him like a hurricane. Butterflies crept from his throat to his stomach. Rory believe him. He wanted to help. As he dialed

the number to his bank, he looked at Rory gazing at him. He met that gaze and got lost in the blue depths. Could it be? Did he read desire in that look? Was it possible? Was Rory interested in him beyond helping him with his case? Nah, that'd be too good to be true.

He told the bank to remove Tom Gardner from his account and stop all access. The girl said he'd have to give that to them in writing.

"They said I have to give it to them in writing, Rory."

"Fine. We'll type up a letter and I'll take it to them tomorrow. How much money was in that account?"

"A little more than a million."

"Good grief. I wonder how much is left."

"Last statement I got, less than half."

"Don't your statements show how he spent the money?"

"No. A lot of cash withdrawals or names I don't recognize. I don't think he's been spending it on helping me get out of here."

"Now call him. Tell his receptionist that you're killing your association with him and you've stopped access to the bank account. That'll get him on the phone."

Baxter called Tom's office. The receptionist answered almost immediately. "I'm sorry. Mr. Gardner isn't in the office right now. Would you



care to leave a message?"

"You tell him I've stopped access to my bank account and I'm canceling my contract with him as of right now."

"Could you hold the line a moment, please?"

"Bax?"

"Finally. Where the hell have you been? And why haven't you returned my calls? You know I'm only allowed so many."

"Baxter, I'm sorry. The wife was sick and I had to go out of town several times. I'll come and see you soon."

"Don't bother. You're fired."

"You can't do that."

"Oh yes I can. You're fired. I've contacted my bank. Starting today, you can no longer access the funds I set up for you."

"After everything I did for you? You could have gotten life in prison for what you did."

"And that's where you went wrong. I didn't kill anyone. You should have been busting your butt to get me out of here. I would have rewarded you handsomely. But no, instead you've been using my money for your own enjoyment and left me rotting in this place. Sorry. You're gone. Goodbye." He slammed the phone down, experiencing a great sense of relief and satisfaction.

"I'll type up another letter to the lawyer for you

to sign, Baxter. It all has to be legal."

"Okay. I'm in your hands now. Where do I go from here?"

"We find you a lawyer who will actually want to help you. I'll do some research when I get home tonight."

"I don't know what to say, Rory. You've ignited a spark of hope in me."

After reading about your case, I don't think you were in any condition to kill anyone. You were set up. I don't have the time to investigate, so we need a really good investigative lawyer."

"I'm glad someone finally believes in me."

Rory walked toward him and stood right before him. "Baxter, there are so many holes in your case, it isn't funny. I really want to help you."

Was it his imagination, or did he see a bulge in Rory's crotch? Was it possible? Could Rory be interested in him as a man? As a lover? If only he wasn't in this god-awful place. Nothing could ever come of it. Rory reached out and touched his hair. Baxter shivered under that touch. Rory's fingers twirled his locks, then softly stroked his cheek.

"You're innocent, Bax. We'll get you out of here."

Bax was nervous. He hadn't been close to anyone since his incarceration. Hadn't wanted to, although several gay inmates had sniffed him out. And then there were the females who chased him

constantly. At least, the more lucid ones. There were so many crazies in this place. The finger moved from his cheek to his lips and traced the outline. Oh, God, his cock sprang to life, and in such a way that he couldn't control it. This man was too much, too gorgeous, too sexy.

"Bax?" Rory said in a very husky tone.

"Yes?"

"I feel drawn to you like I've never felt drawn to anyone before."

"I feel the same," Baxter whispered and sucked Rory's finger into his mouth.

"Oh, my God. Bax, don't do that. I can't. I really can't. It'll cost me my job if anyone found out."

"I've never felt like this in my life. I'm so hot for you, it hurts like bloody hell."

"Bax, you've been incarcerated for what, five years or more now? You'd feel like that for any attractive gay male who crossed your path. Have you made any friends here at all?"

Baxter groaned softly when Rory yanked his finger out of his mouth and walked back to his desk. "No. I don't trust anyone. The mob's probably got people in here. I'm constantly watching my back and scared shitless someone will do me in while I'm asleep."

"So I gather your nights are restless."

"You might say so. I play pool with Frank sometimes. Have you met Frank?"

"Yes, I have."

"Well, even though he's a murderer, he's kind of a likeable man and I know for sure he's not out to kill me."

"Are you really sure of that? The mob can bribe anyone with money and promises."

"I can't be sure of anything, but my gut tells me he's okay."

"You can be sure of me. I'm going to help you. When you're released, we can examine the feelings we're experiencing for each other."

"That could take a very long time."

"Bax, I'm going to get the best lawyer there is and I'm also hiring a PI."

"I can afford the best. Tom Gardner only had access to that one account. I have other accounts and my investments."

"Which will have accrued interest."

"Exactly. Rory, I don't know what to say..."

"You don't have to say anything. I've never felt so strongly about a man's innocence as I do yours."

"It could be because you feel attracted to me."

"No. That has nothing to do with it. Now don't get doubts. We're going to do this, and fast. Off with you now. I want to type your letters before the next client arrives. I'll bring them to you to sign later on."

"You've got the addresses and all?"

"I know the name of your bank. I'll look it up. Tom Gardner's is on file."

"Thanks, Rory."

"You can thank me when I get you home."

The words rang in Baxter's ears and mind as he left the office. *Home*. The word had a beautiful sound to it, the thought almost overwhelming. He'd almost accepted spending the rest of his life in this hellhole, or dying soon at the hands of a hit man. Now he had hope.

A few hours later, the door to Bax's room opened and Rory came in carrying a manila folder. "Your nurse told me I would find you here. Seems you and he had words again."

"Words? That's putting it mildly. The man is a monster." Baxter glanced at the small window in his door and saw Don's face leering at them. "He's watching us. Be careful."

Rory promptly swung around and walked to the door. He knocked on the window and Don opened the door.

"Yes? You ready to go?"

"Don't you have anything better to do than to stand there gawking through the window?"

"Sorry," he mumbled. "Just wondering what's going on."

"What's going on is none of your goddamned business. This client needs more attention and

therapy than was indicated in his file. That's all you need to know. Now go and do your job. Come back in half an hour."

The door closed again. "He'll probably still come peeking," Baxter said.

"Here are the letters. You need to sign them and I'll pop them in the mail when I go home."

Bax's hand trembled as he signed both letters and handed them back to Rory.

"I can't wait to get home and start making some phone calls." Rory closed the folder and rested his hand on Baxter's head, his fingers playing with the unruly dark curls.

Bax stiffened. Not because he resented the touch, but it caused his body to respond, his cock to spring to life, his blood to rush through his veins. Rory's finger traced his ear, then stroked his neck. "Rory," he whispered huskily. "If you don't stop this..."

From the corner of his eye Bax saw Rory glance at the door. No face peered through the window. His hand reached down and fondled Bax's taut and aching balls. Then he stroked his rock hard cock through the thin material of his pants. "Rory, there's no safe place here. We have to wait."

"I know, I know. It's hard. I want you so much. For now, we'll have to be satisfied with the occasional touch. I told the ogre half an hour. He'll be back soon." After placing a quick kiss on top of

Baxter's head Rory stepped back, just in time.

The door opened. "Are you done with him?"

"Yes, for now."

Baxter was impressed with how quickly Rory composed himself. He had trouble controlling his heavy breathing. He quickly crossed his legs so Don wouldn't see the huge bulge tenting his pants. As Rory left the room, he glanced back at Baxter, winked and smiled slightly, his lips pursed as if blowing him a kiss.

The lock clicked shut. Alone again. But now he had something to live for. *Someone* to live for. He quickly went to the bathroom and pulled his pants down. He didn't care if Don watched through the window. He took his swollen cock in his hand and jerked off while remembering Rory's touch, his kiss, his promises. He hated the fact the bathroom had no door, that anyone looking through the window could see him taking a leak or a crap, or in this case, jacking off. But right now, it didn't matter. Inmates had desires and needs. If it turned Don's crank to watch him jerk off, so be it.

Forcing the nurse from his mind, he conjured up Rory's face and within seconds his come spurted into the murky toilet. Bax waited for a bit to let his heart calm down, to catch his breath. Then he pulled his pants up, washed his hands and face, and walked back to sit on the cot. Leaning against the wall, hands behind his head,

he dreamed of freedom, of proven innocence, and of a man who was fast becoming his guardian angel.



## Chapter Four

Rory took the letters to the post office and sent them registered mail. As he drove home, he started to plan. He'd already contacted the lawyer who had been recommended to him by a friend. His name was Paul Harrison, of Harrison, Zulowski and Associates. He'd also contacted a PI by the name of Nick Buchanan and was to meet with him that evening. He'd barely have time to shower and get changed to drive to Los Angeles in time for the appointment. Paul Harrison said he'd come to the hospital in a few days and would let him know when. Things were moving fast. And that's the way Rory liked it.

Bax had left him horny all day. There'd been no time to masturbate. One client after another, but not even the distraction of dealing with highly emotional patients, or erratic ones, had managed to calm his libido.

He managed to find some satisfaction while showering, but because his adrenaline was

flowing and he was in a hurry, it didn't quite do the job. He dressed hurriedly. After locking up the house, he got into his car and started the long drive to Los Angeles.

It wasn't hard to find the Buchanan Detective Agency. The man's directions were very clear.

"I've got contacts with the mob," Nick Buchanan told him after he listened to Rory's story about Bax. "Shouldn't be too hard, but it's gonna cost you."

"Money is no problem."

"I need money up front."

"That's fine. How much?"

"At least ten grand."

Rory took his checkbook out of his pocket and quickly wrote the check. "You'll keep me updated on a daily basis?"

"Yeah, I will. Sounds to me like this guy was set up."

"Yes. I think so, too. Here are copies of the trial transcripts. I don't know if they'll help."

"I'll read them. There might be something in there, you never know. I've got contacts at the cop shop. I'll do some digging around."

The meeting was over fast. Rory was kind of disappointed, had expected more, questions, something. He didn't know what he had really expected. Now all he could do was wait and hope

that the detective's contacts would come up with new evidence. Evidence that would clear Baxter's name.

"I've fallen in love with him," he said softly as he drove out of Los Angeles. "I swore I'd never commit to another man, and here I am, head over heels in love with a convicted murderer. But he didn't do it. I'm more certain of that, than I've ever been of anything in my life." *Can a person really fall in love this fast? Or is it just instant chemistry, attraction?* Yet he felt a connection to Baxter he'd never felt for anyone, even for his past loves. A bonding, an instant touching of their souls, their spirits.

Christmas lights winked at him as he drove through the streets of Patton. He made a mental note to buy outdoor Christmas lights to decorate the exterior of his house. It was only mid November. Christmas was more than a month away. *Wouldn't it be wonderful if Baxter could be home for Christmas? Miracles do happen occasionally. But do I believe in miracles?* He'd given up on love. And look what had happened? Here he was, falling head over heels for Bax.

\* \* \* \*

A week went by without hearing anything from Buchanan. Rory called several times, left

messages, but not a word. Feeling disheartened, he was tempted to have Don bring Baxter to his office, but he thought better of it. Don was already suspicious. Each time Rory had gone anywhere near Baxter, the nurse had watched him like a hawk. He hadn't dared approach Bax, or go near his room. "I hope Bax understands," he mumbled, trying to concentrate on the case file on his computer. That nurse can't always be on duty, a little voice told him. He'd wondered about that. Several times he'd worked late and the man was still on duty. It was rather odd. Though the hospital was understaffed so perhaps Don was putting in double shifts.

Rory looked up the nurse's roster on the computer. Don was off at seven that evening. Maybe he could sneak into Bax's room that night. It all depended on which nurse was on duty the next shift. He scrolled down the screen. It was Joe. Joe was an easy going fellow, older, perhaps close to retirement. A spark of hope lit in his heart.

It was well after seven when he finally closed the last case file. Just as he was about to leave his office, his cell phone rang.

"Buchanan here."

"Finally. I'd almost given up on you."

"These things take time. Gimme a break."

"I hope you've got good news for me."

"You're not gonna like it."

"Spit it out, for God's sake."

"Paul had another lover, a young man called Antonio Giordano, the son of a prominent Italian mobster. He was the one who in a jealous rage killed Paul and Melissa and made it look like your man did it."

"That is fantastic news. Now how do we prove it?"

"I've got snitches everywhere. This gets out, Toni Giordano is a dead man walking. Paul's father still thinks your man is the killer. I can change that, but it'll cost you more."

"Are you fucking stupid? I don't want Antonio dead. I want a confession, proof that he's the killer. I need to get the cops involved."

"And tell them what? You think they're gonna believe you? C'mon, man. You're not gonna get the evidence you want."

"So how do I prove my friend's innocence?"

"Only one way to get close to Toni. I'll see if I can find someone."

"No. Let the case rest for now. I need to think about this."

"Fine. Let me know when you're ready."

Rory clicked off, then turned the ringer off. "There has to be a way," he muttered. Leaning back in his chair, he dozed off.

Rory locked his office door behind him, then headed toward Baxter's wing.

Joe was at the desk, his feet up, reading a book. "Joe, I need to talk to Baxter Kavanagh. Would you unlock his door please?"

"Evening, Doc. Sure. Isn't it kinda unusual for you to pay a patient a visit this late?"

"Not for me, Joe. Better get used to me working late."

"Follow me. How long you gonna be?"

"Don't know. Leave the door unlocked. Baxter won't go anywhere."

"I can't do that."

"Okay, give me an hour."

Rory waited impatiently for the older man to lead the way to Baxter's room. Should he tell Bax what Buchanan had said? No. No use getting his hopes up yet. A plan took root in his mind, a plan he would think about later. First he wanted to be with Bax, hold him, tell him of his growing love, the warmth in his heart just thinking about him. His cock stirred in anticipation. The lock's click echoed through the empty hallway as Joe opened the door.

The room was in darkness. Did Bax go to bed this early?

"Wake up, Bax. You've got a visitor," Joe said loudly as he switched on the light.

"See you in an hour, Doc. I'm going back to my book."

*The door clicked shut and Rory's heart somersaulted when Bax sat up, startled, his hair in disarray.*

*"What the hell..."*

*"It's only me, Bax. Were you asleep?" Rory admired Bax's body. He was lean, but very muscular, his skin a creamy color. Skin that would develop a nice tan if exposed to the sun. He was amazed how smooth and hairless Bax was, almost as if he shaved his whole body. One seldom saw that in men, except bodybuilders. Oh, he wanted to run his hands over those pecs, to suck those tempting nipples, to feel what was hidden inside Bax's boxer shorts.*

*"Hell no. I was just lying here thinking. Dreaming."*

*"About me?"*

*"Aren't you just full of yourself. Do you have good news? Is that why you're here?"*

*Rory ground his teeth together for a moment. The urge to tell him what he'd learned was great. Not now. Not yet. He switched the light off before approaching the bed. "Nothing yet, baby. Just here to see you. Come here. I want to hold you." He gathered Bax into his arms and held him tight.*

*"Rory, you can't. I mean..."*

*"Oh yes I can. Joe's on duty tonight. He's deep into a book. We've got an hour together."*

*"Are you sure? I wouldn't want you to lose your job because of me."*

*"Wouldn't be because of you, dear. This is my doing. I've got trouble staying away from you." He drew back a little and placed both hands on either side of Baxter's*

head, then slowly traced his jawline. "I've hungered for you. Bax, I'm falling in love with you."

Baxter's hands fumbled with his belt, the button on his jeans, then the zipper. He sucked in his breath as Bax's hand slipped inside his shorts and cupped his cock. He leaned forward and let his tongue slowly trace his lips, then slipped inside until his lips parted. That kiss. Oh, that first delicious kiss. He claimed Bax's mouth hungrily, his tongue dancing inside his mouth, feeling, probing, then he sucked until Bax's tongue explored. His cock throbbed, his balls ached. He yanked away from Bax, stood up quickly, and pulled down his jeans and shorts.

Rory could just vaguely make out Baxter's body from the dim light that shone in through the window from the hallway. "Bax, I can't go completely naked. We don't have enough time. Joe'll be back in about forty five minutes."

He'd hardly finished his sentence before Bax pulled him down on the bed. "We'd best make the most of it then," he whispered against Rory's lips, then claimed a kiss, that whispered slowly inside his body and crept down to his soul, a kiss that sealed their love forever.

Bax drew away, allowing his tongue to trail down Rory's neck, down his chest. Rory felt Bax move down. His hands were on his cock, his tongue gently lapping around the swollen head. He moved the skin back and forth, teasing, tantalizingly tormenting. Bax's other hand cupped his balls and kneaded them softly.

"God, what are you doing to me?" Rory's throat



constricted, his heart threatened to jump out of his chest. Had he ever thought to be in love? No bloody way. This was what it's all about. For the first time in his life he experienced real love. "Baby, I want to hold you in my arms. Come back up here?"

"Not until I've satisfied you," Bax said while licking the length of Rory's cock.

"I can do the same for you. Turn around, baby."

Within seconds, Bax's cock touched his lips. He licked the drop of pre cum from the tip, then circled the head with his tongue. He stroked Bax's butt cheeks and parted them. He licked up and down the crack, circled the tight rosette. After moistening it with his tongue he entered a finger. He took Bax's length inside his mouth and started to suck, his finger moving steadily inside Bax's anus.

At the same time, he felt Baxter's head dive between his legs and do the same for him. "Ooooooh, I can't hold it much longer."

In answer, Baxter's mouth moved faster and Rory matched his tempo. Within seconds, Bax's cum shot into his mouth. He let it sit there for a moment before swallowing, savoring every drop, the salty, musky taste. He let out a loud sigh when he came and felt Bax drink his cum. Baxter's head rested on his belly for a moment, before he turned around and took Rory in his arms.

"I don't dare believe it's real." Baxter's hands were on Rory's head, his fingers tangling in his hair.

"It's real, lover. You'd better believe it. I love you."

*"And I love you. I've never felt like this with anyone."*

*"Neither have I."*

*"Rory, you know it's pretty hopeless. Unless my innocence is proven, what are we going to do? Meet like this once in the blue moon?"*

*"It's not useless. You're innocent and I'm going to prove it."*

*"How?"*

*"You'll see. Have patience."*

*"What time is it?"*

*"Shit. That hour has flown. I'd best get dressed and put the light back on." Rory quickly jumped off the bed, kissed Bax on the lips, then started pulling his jeans up. He watched Bax pull on his shorts and sit innocently on the side of the bed. After a final kiss he ran to switch on the light at five minutes before eight. When he turned back to face Bax, he loved the tousled, loved look of him. He ached to run back and take him in his arms again, but fought the urge. And just in time because Joe returned and unlocked the door.*

*"You finished, Doc?"*

*"Yes, thanks, Joe. You're right on time."*

*"You want the lights on, Baxter?"*

*"No thanks, Joe. I'm going to sleep."*

*"Goodnight, son."*

*Rory sent Bax a smile and a wink, then followed Joe out of the door.*

*"You quitting for the night, Doc?"*

*"Pretty soon. I have some stuff to do in my office*

*first. Make notes about my visit with Baxter."*

*"Have a good night, Doc. Drive carefully."*

*"Thanks. Good night, Joe."*

*Deep in thought, Rory walked back to his office. His lust sated for now, he felt very warm inside, he felt good. He was on top of the world. He'd found his soul mate, the man he wanted to spend the rest of his life with. Now to prove his innocence so they could be together forever.*

*I know what to do. Dammit, it's been at the back of my mind all along.*

Rory woke with a start. "Damn, I dozed off. It was all a dream. What time is it anyway? His shorts felt wet and he shifted uncomfortably in his chair. *A wet dream?* He hadn't had one of those in years. Pictures flitted through his mind like a slide show, his last thought in the dream as vivid as if he'd spoken it aloud. Quickly he tidied up his desk and left his office. Should he make the dream come true and go and see Bax? Knowing that Joe was on duty that evening, he was tempted, oh so very tempted, but he put temptation aside.

## Chapter Six

A plan formed in Rory's mind while driving home. Toni was gay. So be it. That was the way to get to the man and maybe get a confession out of him. But what if Toni wasn't attracted to him? Still, it was worth a try. As soon as he arrived home, Rory called Buchanan. He was in luck. The man answered right away. "Buchanan, I need you to find out some stuff for me. And fast. By tomorrow."

"Like what?"

"Find out Toni Giordana's favorite hangouts, where he goes at night."

"That shouldn't be too hard. My contact probably knows."

"Great. Call me back tonight if you can find out that soon. I'll be up for a while."

Rory didn't have to wait very long. He was barely out of the shower and got himself a beer, when the phone rang.

"Got a pen handy?"

"Yes. That was fast."

"Told you. I have contacts everywhere. This wasn't hard to find out. Toni hangs out mainly at Revolver. It's a gay bar in West Hollywood, on Santa Monica Boulevard."

"Number?"

"Eighty-eight-fifty-one."

"How often does he go there?"

"Nearly every night."

"Thank you."

"What are you planning? I wouldn't advise you to approach Giordana. You'd be putting yourself in a lot of danger. Let me find someone competent to handle it. Plenty of pretty boys around looking for an extra buck."

"No. Lay off for now. I'll contact you in a few days."

Rory hung up the phone and looked at the clock. "Damn, it's getting too late to drive to Hollywood. I'll put my plan into motion tomorrow night," he told himself, then drank his beer and went to his bedroom.

Once in bed, all he could think about was his earlier dream meeting with Baxter—the love that had flowed between them, the promise of the future. Was the dream a psychic prediction of what was to come? Or were his feelings just carnal lust for a beautiful man? Imagining Baxter in bed with him, feeling his body against his, his dark,

curly, tousled hair against his chest, he dozed off.

\* \* \* \*

Rory could hardly wait to go home the next day. Since he had no more appointments after four, he decided to quit early. It would be a long drive to Hollywood. He'd hardly been able to concentrate on his work, or on the patients he'd seen. His mind was on other matters, on Baxter, on Toni Giordana, on how he planned to get the evidence he needed to free Baxter.

He broke the speed limits driving home and had never showered and dressed so fast in his life. Taking great care with his appearance, he brushed his hair once more. Could he seduce Toni? He hoped desperately that Toni liked blond men. Would the man even be at the club that night? It didn't matter. He'd go there every night if he had to until he met the man.

With the recorder safely hidden in the pocket of his jacket, he locked the house, got into his car, and started the long trek to West Hollywood. Once he got there, he'd ask directions.

The club was teeming with gay men, mostly young men, although Rory did see the odd man in his forties or so. He had no clue what Toni looked like. Probably dark, like most Italians. Maybe he

shouldn't have been so hasty and asked Buchanan to provide him with a photo first. Nah, that would have given away what he'd planned. He'd casually ask around.

It didn't take long before a young man approached him. "Hi, honey, want some company?"

"Sure. Let's go to the bar and I'll buy you a drink," Rory said, eyeing the man. He looked to be in his early twenties. Not unattractive.

They settled at the bar. Rory ordered a beer and told the young man, who introduced himself as Matt, to order whatever he wanted.

"Is this your first time here?" Matt moved a little closer to Rory.

"Yes. I moved into the area not long ago."

"You alone?"

"Yes. You?"

"Since a week ago, yeah. My ex turned out to be a total slut."

"I'm sorry."

"No need to be sorry. Thinking about it now, I'm well rid of him. You want to come to my place later on?"

"Matt, I just got here. How long have you been coming to this club?"

"A few years. How about a dance?"

Rory didn't really feel like dancing, but agreed anyway. While they danced, Rory asked carefully,

"Ever met a man called Toni Giordana?"

Matt pulled away from him suddenly and looked at him with a frown. "You don't want to mess with the likes of him."

"Why not?"

"He's bad news, that's all."

"I need to do some business with him. Is he here tonight?"

"He's always here. Just look for a guy surrounded by a bunch of gangster dudes and you'll find Toni."

"Can you point him out to me? I don't know the difference between gangsters and other men."

"Where have *you* been? Shit. Okay, he's over there in the far corner. Hear that loud voice overpowering the music? That's Toni. Just follow the sound. Nice to have met you." Matt stalked away and left Rory standing alone on the dance floor. Not for long. Before he realized, another pair of arms wrapped around him and he was forced into another dance.

Glad when the music ended, he walked back to the bar, ordered another beer, and casually strolled around the room. He felt the glances thrown his way, saw the lust in quite a few pairs of eyes. He'd seen it so often. Golden boy, many had called him. His blond good looks and very blue eyes had attracted many men to him. And not only men. Women had followed him, hounded



him, almost stalked him, until he'd come out of the closet. After that, he'd only had to deal with the males who desired him.

Just like Matt had told him, Toni wasn't hard to find. The musicians were taking their break, and though there was still a lot of noise, Toni's voice overpowered it all. Rory casually walked toward the group of men. He guessed four of them were bodyguards. They stood stiffly, hands behind their backs. The man with the loud voice reclined on a chair, a young man sitting on his lap.

Rory studied Toni for a moment. He was short and squat, his face matching his body. He shuddered at the thought of kissing that face. Still, he knew he had to do it for Baxter. The face reminded him of a pug dog. Greasy, black hair was slicked back from a short forehead above beady dark eyes and heavy jowls. The man couldn't be more than in his late twenties. Suddenly Toni felt Rory gaze upon him. He stopped talking and stared. Swiftly, he pushed the young man off his lap and bellowed at him to get lost.

"You over there! Who are you?" He pointed at Rory.

Rory walked over slowly to stand before Toni. "My name is Rory. I'm new here."

"Why were you staring at me?"

"I don't know. Something inside me drew me

to you."

The man's eyes narrowed and scrutinized Rory from head to toe. "You're fucking beautiful. Do you know that?"

"Yes, I do."

"Mm, I love self confidence in a man. Do you know who I am?"

"No."

"I'm Toni Giordana. No one fucks with Toni. Hear that?"

"Oh, I'd like to fuck with Toni, but not in the way you meant." Rory could hardly believe he'd said that. "Do you dance, Toni?"

"Only in private. Do you like private?"

"Yes, I love it. What are you suggesting?"

"How about we get out of here and go to my place?"

This was going better than Rory had hoped. It was all too easy. Was it going to be that simple to prove Baxter's innocence? "Sure. I'd like that. Where do you live?"

"Wait a minute, boss. You don't know this--"

"Shut the fuck up and go get the limo." Toni stood and walked toward Rory. "So, Rory, what do you do for a living?"

"I'm a doctor."

"A doctor, huh? What kind of doctor?"

"Just a doctor. I'm planning to set up practice in Los Angeles."

"Where do you live? In LA?"

"No. I'm staying with relatives in Hollywood right now until I find a place of my own."

"I can help you with that. Hell, maybe it'll work out so good between us you can come live with me. That'd be something huh?"

"Eh...yeah. Sounds good. You didn't answer me earlier. Where do you live?" The man ignored his question.

"I hear some hesitation there."

"I've only just met you, Toni, and you're talking about me moving in with you. Bit fast isn't it?"

"Life is too short. I don't believe in wasting time. Let's go. Andy should have the limo in front by now."

They left the bar and walked out. Toni's hand was on Rory's arms in a familiar way, one he didn't care for at all, but he had to persevere. Frankly, the man disgusted him with his bravado and his looks were a complete turnoff. "What do you do for a living, Toni?" The chauffeur held the limo's door open for them.

"Me? I...eh..." Toni roared with laughter suddenly. "Nothing, I guess. I've got enough money to last me ten lifetimes."

Rory sank onto the luxurious seat and leaned back. "Even if I was loaded, I couldn't imagine not doing anything."

"Brave man. So, do you like groping around

people's bodies? I guess it's okay if it's a hot man, huh?" He roared again.

"I'm a doctor. I don't care who I examine, be it old, young, man, woman, or child."

"Sorry. I suppose that was crude."

"Rather."

"I apologize. If we're going to get off on the right foot, I'd better behave. So, Rory, has anyone ever told you you're damn sexy?"

"A few have, yes."

"You're very sure of yourself. I love it. Obviously you're not involved with anyone or you wouldn't have accepted my invitation. Have you had many relationships?"

"Again, a few."

"Suffered a broken heart?"

"That, too. You?"

"Yes."

Rory carefully watched Toni's expression and saw the man's face turn into a stone mask. "That's too bad. Recent?"

"No. I haven't been heavily involved with anyone for a while. Mainly one night stands."

"I see. Before we go any further, I'm not interested in a one night stand." Rory remained very calm outwardly, although inwardly he shuddered at what he was saying.

"Would you like a drink, Rory?"

"I'll have a beer, please."

"A man after my own heart. Although, personally, I prefer Scotch on the rocks."

"Why do you admire a man who drinks beer?"

"Reminds me of my grandfather. I idolized him. He always drank beer. Nothing else. He left me everything. I was his favorite grandchild."

"Bypassing all others?"

"Yes, even my father, his only son. But my father didn't care. He'd made his own millions."

"Doing what?"

"Investments."

They were quiet for quite a while. Wherever Toni lived, it wasn't close to the club. "Where do you live? Are we almost there?"

"Another fifteen minutes or so." He glanced at his watch. "We've been driving for more than half an hour."

"Your chauffeur will take me back to the club later, right? I'm sorry. I can't stay the night."

Toni frowned. "Means you have to leave early? That's too bad. Maybe you can come back this weekend and spend a couple of days with me?"

"I'll need to leave by midnight at the latest. I'll think about the weekend. I don't like to be rushed, Toni." Rory thought about the hour it would take to go back to where his car was parked and the long drive home. He wouldn't get to bed before three.

"That only gives us a couple of hours tonight."

Sorry if I come across as rushing into things. I've never met anyone like you. I long for a more permanent relationship, but with the right person, and I have a gut feeling you may be the one."

Toni lived in a mansion right on the beach although Rory still didn't have a clue where. He had to admit that he was impressed and he honestly admired the house and decorations.

"I hired a top of the line interior decorator. She's very good. Would you like a beer, Rory?"

"No thanks. I have to drive home. A soda would be nice."

"I guess you don't do drugs, being a doctor and all."

"No, I don't. Who was the model for that painting on the wall? He's hot." Rory suspected who it was, and it was an excellent way of getting Toni to open up about his relationship with Paul. He unbuttoned his jacket, casually put his hand in his pocket and turned the recorder on.

"That was done in memory of my lover. His name was Paul."

"I'm sorry. How long ago did he pass on?"

"About five years ago. I really don't like talking about it. His memory is very dear to me."

"Again, I'm sorry. I know what it's like to lose the one you love."

Toni filled his glass with ice and Scotch and drank it down in one gulp. Soon as he drained the

last drop, he filled it again, but sipped more slowly this time. His words were slurred when he answered Rory. "So you know what it's like. Did he die as well?"

"Yes, in a car accident. It took me a long time to get over the pain, but time heals all." Rory hated the lies, but he had to get the man to talk. There was no way he felt like spending the weekend there, although he would if he had to.

"How about we get comfortable?" He barked a curt order to two of the bodyguards who hovered close by, for them to get lost and told them he didn't want to be disturbed for the rest of the evening.

"Comfortable?"

"Take your jacket off, lose the tie."

"Oh. Okay." Rory took his jacket off and folded it neatly, then hung it over the back of the chair, making sure the pocket containing the recorder was facing outward. After taking off his tie, he undid several buttons of his shirt.

Toni, meanwhile, had taken off his clothing and stood in nothing but a g-string. "That's how I usually am at home, as naked as possible. I hate clothes."

Rory looked at the squat little man, who strongly resembled a small gorilla. He was virtually covered in black hair all over his body. Even his back was matted with hair. Rory's

stomach turned and he quickly sipped the soda so he wouldn't show his feelings. Although the man was so drunk now, he'd probably not even notice his aversion. Toni sidled up to Rory's chair, swaying his hips seductively. "C'mon, lover, make a move. Or is it all up to me? You like being seduced, huh?"

A cold shiver of repulsion ran up Rory's spine when Toni's hand grabbed him in the crotch. The hand squeezed, rubbed, then traveled to his belt and undid it. Rory's cock responded, but he didn't feel horny at all. It reacted to the stimulation. Toni stood, then knelt between Rory's legs. He pulled Rory's pants down, then his shorts. Rory glanced down. His cock was only half erect.

His shirt buttons were next. Toni glanced up at him. "I've been told I'm the best cocksucker around. I'll show you, and you'll never want another."

*That's what you think...* Rory closed his eyes and waited for the man's thick lips to touch his cock, but when it didn't happen, he opened them again. Music started softly in the background. Toni had stripped off the g-string and now stood swaying to the music, a remote in his one hand, the other held behind his head. Rory almost burst out laughing when his gaze rested on the man's cock. He'd heard of underdeveloped men, but he'd really never seen one quite like this. Toni's poor



penis, erect and swaying back and forth, was curved, and no bigger than Rory's pinkie finger. In a way he felt sorry for the man, to be born with such an underdeveloped sex organ. With all the money Toni boasted, he could easily have had it surgically enhanced. Why hadn't he done so?

Almost as if reading his mind, Toni answered that question. "I know I've only got a little one, but men like it. It doesn't hurt when I penetrate them."

"I don't do anal sex."

"You'll learn to love it. But I won't insist on it tonight."

"Did Paul like it?"

"Oh yeah. He was involved with another man who didn't allow it, so he turned to me. Enough talk."

Toni fell to his knees and started working Rory's cock. He was rough, not just with his hands, but with his mouth and teeth as well. Rory hated that his cock responded, almost as if it betrayed him, betrayed what he felt for Baxter. Toni's lips sucked, then tightened and his head bobbed up and down while his hands fondled, stroked, cupped his balls and squeezed them. Rory felt the need to come. His balls needed release. As his cum spurted into Toni's mouth, he let out an exaggerated yell. "Yes, baby, oh yes... oooooooh, that felt so good." He breathed heavily,

simulating his orgasm to the full.

"Your turn now," Toni said, licking his lips. "Let's get on the floor."

Rory's stomach turned again. He fought to conquer the nausea, quickly dug in his pocket for the condoms, took one out, and got down on the floor with Toni. When Toni tried to kiss him, he avoided the fleshy lips by giving the man butterfly kisses from the forehead down, then down his neck, down his chest, to the object he didn't want to touch.

A heavy scent of cologne hit him in the face when he neared Toni's crotch. He almost gagged. The little pecker was still pecking away at the black bush surrounding it. Forcing himself to be the lover Toni expected him to be, Rory cupped the hairy balls and squeezed them. His other hand reached for the condom hidden in his coat pocket. He glanced up at Toni. The man's eyes were closed. Tearing the wrapping with his teeth, he took the condom out and slipped it over Toni's cock. It was too big, but he didn't care, as long as it was covered.

"Harder, baby, harder. I like to hurt. What the fuck are you doing? I hate those things."

"I'm a doctor, remember? I practice safe sex with someone I barely know. I don't swallow."

"If I wasn't so fucking horny, I'd be madder than hell. Now hurt me, lover."

After slipping the much too large condom over the little cock, almost causing Rory to burst out in laughter, Rory did as he was told until the man squirmed beneath him. In a way, knowing that this creature had set up Bax, it felt good to hurt him. The tiny cock almost disappeared in his mouth completely. He felt like biting down on it, hard, but went through the motions. When Toni's body started to shudder and he knew release was seconds away, he let go of the cock, pulled the condom off, and used his hand instead. "I like to see it spurt out," he said in his softest, sweetest voice.

"Ooooh, yes, yes, Paul...yes, I know you like it that way. I'm coming, I'm coming, lover."

*My God, am I in luck. So Paul didn't like to swallow either, at least not with Toni. But according to Toni, he did like being fucked in the ass by the little man. Thank God it's over. Now to get him to talk.*

Toni's breathing was heavy. Paul grabbed his soda and took a big gulp from it, rolling the soda through his mouth, washing away the idea of Toni's taste, although he'd used the condom, it was almost as if he had the spicy cologne in his mouth. He sat next to Toni on the floor, whose breathing had calmed. He started to fondle Rory again.

"I'm sorry. The way you make love to me reminded me so much of Paul, I think I called you

by his name when I came."

"Yes, you did."

"I apologize."

"No need. It's getting late, I have to get going soon."

"Aw, Rory, not yet. Have one more drink with me before you go? Hold me in your arms?"

"I have to drive, remember? I've still got soda, but you go ahead."

Toni stood and walked to the bar where he filled his glass with Scotch. "So how about the weekend?"

"I'll think about it, Toni."

"I hope you'll come. I think I'm falling in love with you, baby."

Would this last drink do it? Would he talk finally? Admit to the murders? "Tell me about Paul, Toni. I'd like to learn more about the man you loved."

"Oh, Rory, that's about the nicest thing anyone has ever said to me. Lie down with me, hold me in your arms?"

Rory lay back and when Toni had gulped down his drink, he lay next to him and curled up against him. Rory placed his arm around Toni's body and pulled him closer.

"That's just how Paul and I used to be."

"Yeah? Tell me about him." And Toni started and didn't stop. Rory listened to the story of

Paul's relationship with Baxter, how Paul had wanted out of that relationship, how the family had finally put a stop to it. About Melissa, the girl he was forced to fuck and marry. How much Paul had loved Toni and how much they wanted to be together.

"And then Paul wanted to break with me, too."

"Why, Toni?"

"Because of the family. Because of her. Because of that little bitch."

"You didn't like her?"

"No. She was a prude possessive little bitch. She wanted Paul all for herself. And she kept inviting that other man, said he was their friend. But I taught them a lesson. No one fucks with Toni Giordana."

"Oh?" Rory's voice was very soft. He tried to make it as sweet as possible. "How did you teach them, Toni?"

"Listen, lover, I have people beaten to a pulp for arguing with me. I've got contacts. I can have anyone killed if they cross me."

"So you had them killed? Is that it? And now your guilt is pestering you?"

Toni's body shook with silent laughter. "Had them killed? No. I wanted that satisfaction myself. We were all at a party and when I saw the three of them arrive, I was furious. That little bitch had gotten her way again. I killed them. I took a

twelve gauge shotgun and shot Paul's brains out. Oh, I can still see them splattering all over the front seat. And then she got the same treatment, except I took her face out. I never wanted to see that blue-eyed starry gazed bitch's face again."

"What about the other man? What was his name?"

"Oh, him. Baxter. Paul's former lover."

"Did you kill him, too?"

This time Toni laughed aloud. Spittle dribbled from his lips. He swiped his mouth with the back of his hand and sat up to look down at Rory. His black eyes were bloodshot and glazed from too much alcohol, and iron hard, devoid of any expression. He stopped laughing. "That's a good one. He's rotting in some mental asylum. I pinned it on him."

"Where did all this take place?"

"I didn't use the limo. I decided to follow them around in my own car. The night of the party, I didn't know if I'd get the chance to do them in. I had to do it in a quiet place. But they gave me the perfect opportunity. When they left the party, I followed them. Paul pulled off the road into a park. He stopped the car and got out to puke. I had turned off my headlights and parked not far away from them. There wasn't a soul around. Paul had a convertible, so it was easy. Just as he got back into the car, I sneaked up on them, blew

his brains out, then finished off the bitch. Baxter was passed out cold on the backseat. I wore gloves, so there were no prints on the gun and I'd registered it in the creep's name. I took his hands, put his fingers all over the gun, then placed it beside him. The next day it was all over the news and he was in jail. I got my revenge."

"Were you drunk?"

"Oh, probably. I drink too much. But you can help me with that. Paul was going to."

"You weren't that drunk that you don't remember what you did."

"No. That night I'd sobered up enough to remember what I'd done the next day."

"Aren't you sorry? Don't you live with that guilt twenty-four-seven?"

"The only guilt I feel is for killing Paul. I should have just killed the bitch and messed him up a bit. Then he'd still be around. It's all in the past. Life goes on. And now I've found a new love and I'll forget all about Paul. The other creep got off lucky, being declared insane, but he won't last long. The mob's got a contract out on him."

"Why have they taken so long to get rid of him, do you know?"

"I'm not on good terms with Paul's father. Everything I hear is via my contacts. I think it's because of the place they put Kavanagh in. It's hard to infiltrate. That's my best guess. Last I

heard, they have a man in there now, so the bastard won't be around much longer."

"Ah, I see. Well, thank you for confiding in me, Toni. I feel honored you trust me with your deepest secrets."

"It felt good to tell someone. You won't tell anyone, will you, lover? You're falling in love with me, right? You wouldn't do that to me? Ha, no one would believe you anyway, so why even bother asking you. But it would kill our love before it's started. If I found out you blabbed... I don't want to hurt that pretty face of yours."

"Watch it. I don't take well to threats, Toni." *Little do you know that others do know about your deeds! You probably blabbed to more people while under the influence.*

"Sorry." His hand stole to Rory's cock again, but Rory drew back. "Toni, I really have to go. I have an early appointment in the morning."

"Aw, lover, don't go yet?"

"I'm sorry. I have to."

"The weekend?"

"Sure. Give me your card and I'll phone you." *Like hell I'll be back this weekend...*

Toni jumped up, swayed on his feet for a moment, then walked unsteadily to where he'd discarded his suit. He dug in the pockets for his wallet and took a card out of it. He dug in another pocket and came up with a wad of bills. "This is



for you. For giving me the happiest night I've had in years."

"I don't want your money, Toni. Give it to someone in need."

"It's a present. Please? Take it? For me?"

"No. No money." Rory quickly dressed and wished he could go shower first, but all he wanted was to get out of there. "Can you ask your chauffeur to be ready for me?"

"Aw, okay then." Toni stuck out his bottom lip, a sulky expression on his face, then walked away and clicked an intercom. "Charlie, my guest would like to leave. Drive him back to the club."

Rory suffered Toni's fleshy lips on his, and his thick, alcohol-laden tongue when they said their goodbyes. Another squeeze of his balls, his cock. He struggled to remain flirty, to leave with a smile.

During the drive back to the club he wondered how much Toni would remember. Had he passed out after the limo left? Or had he ordered his men to follow and have him beaten or killed? When he finally got into his own car, Rory sighed with soul felt relief. His fingers shook as he started the car. Fear was usually not in his make-up, but Toni had instilled real terror within him. The man was a monster. He'd have to handle this carefully, tread with utter caution. First thing in the morning he'd

call Buchanan and ask him for advice. He felt in his pocket and turned off the recorder. Had it picked up the whole conversation? Butterflies scurried through his stomach as he left the city behind him. What if it had all been for nothing and there was nothing more than some garbled words and sounds on the disc?

## Chapter Seven

He couldn't wait till the next morning, even as tired as he was, both emotionally and physically. Shower first? No. The recording first. He got out of his clothing, threw everything in the dirty laundry hamper, then went to his study and popped the tiny disc in. He'd grabbed a beer on the way to the study and impatiently screwed the cap off. He was thirsty as hell. Within a few seconds, his and Toni's voices bellowed through the study. Rory hit the leather chair with his fist. "Yes! Yes!"

His adrenaline now flooding his body, he listened to the whole conversation. Every word, every syllable was there. He finally shut it off and almost felt too excited to go to bed, but if he didn't, he'd be a zombie the next day at work.

Should he tell Baxter? Let Bax listen to the confession? No. He had to figure out what to do first. Take it to the cops? Let them deal with it? Ask Buchanan to deal with it? Too many questions

that couldn't be answered until the next morning. He quickly went and showered, which relaxed him at least a little bit.

After a restless few hours of sleep, Rory got up much earlier than usual. His morning shower, helped him to feel felt more refreshed, but somehow, Toni's cloying cologne still seemed to infiltrate his nostrils. It was probably his imagination. He'd showered twice since being with the man, gargled with antiseptic mouthwash several times the night before, and again that morning. There couldn't be any scent left. The washing machine was already on. His pants and jacket were in the dry cleaning bag in the garage.

Usually, he made a good, hearty breakfast, but this time he could barely stomach a muffin and a glass of milk. He left early for work. It wouldn't hurt to start the day early and make the time go faster. He'd have to wait till at least ten to call Buchanan. He fingered the disc in his pocket and reminded himself to make a couple of copies. Just in case. Buchanan would probably advise him to go to the police, but the detective had also told him that the mob had some cops on their payroll. This way, if this piece of valuable evidence went missing, he'd have backup copies.

He saw two clients, before he felt it was time to make the call. Keeping his fingers crossed that

Buchanan would answer, he waited. The answering machine clicked in. Rory slammed his fist on the table. "Damn that man." After the beep, "This is Rory. Give me a call. It's urgent."

He'd barely spoken the last word before Buchanan picked up. "What's up?"

"I have the evidence."

"What? How the fuck did you manage that so fast?"

"You gave me the name of that club. I went there last night and approached Toni Giordana."

"And?"

"And he fell in love with me. We ended up back at his place."

"You realize you're putting yourself in a lot of danger? Toni gets any wind of this and you're dead. You might as well plan your funeral now. How the fuck did you manage to get him to confess?"

"I don't think you want to know all the details. He did, and that's all that matters. I have it all recorded."

"We have a problem here. I don't think it would hold up in court. Californian law is very strict about recorded conversations."

"So how can we use this?"

"I suggest you go to the cops and give it to them. They might be able to use it one way or another to get him to admit his guilt. Get a

detective on the case. Do you know who the original detective on the case was?"

"Yes. His name was Martin Boon."

"Good. He's a straight shooter. Go see him and give him the tape. He'll take it from there."

"Thanks. Did you use up the ten grand? Do I owe you more?"

"Another thousand will square us. Be careful. Watch your back. Did Toni want to see you again?"

"Yes. This weekend."

"Was he drunk when you made the recording?"

"Yes."

"I hope for your sake he doesn't remember. Just in case, I'd go and see him this weekend."

"You're joking. Like I want to spend another minute with that slimy little grease ball."

"It's your life. If he gave you his private number, call him. Feel him out. See if he remembers anything. If not, you're probably safe until he starts getting flashbacks."

"I knew it was too easy."

"Good luck. Nice doing business with you. Call me if you need me again."

Rory could hardly wait until his last patient left. He'd already called Martin Boon, the detective, and set up a time to meet him at the police station

in LA. All day, he'd fought the urge to either go and see Bax, or have him brought to his office. He really didn't have enough time in between patients so he squashed that thought. And to go and see him, with Don on duty, could be dangerous. He didn't trust that nurse for a second.

He didn't bother to go home to change and drove straight to Los Angeles, the envelope containing the disc, in his pocket.

The drive seemed to take forever in peak hour traffic and he was glad when he finally arrived at the police station. He parked his car and hurried inside. He was only ten minutes late. "I'm here to see Detective Boon," he told the officer at the front desk.

"Just a minute. Boon, are you expecting someone?" he called out to someone behind him.

A tall, black man approached. "Rory Quackenbox?"

"Yes. Detective Boon?"

"Follow me." As they walked to the detective's office, he asked, "I can't help this, but is your name for real?"

"Yes. Most call me Quack. It goes with my profession."

"Which is?"

"Psychiatrist."

The detective roared, causing many to look at them. "I'm glad you have a sense of humor." Rory

chuckled. The man's laughter was contagious.

Boon sat behind his desk and motioned for Rory to sit down. "Now, what can I do for you? You mentioned a closed case. Which one?"

"It happened about five years ago. Do you recall a double homicide? Baxter Kavanagh?"

"Ah, yes. Open and shut case. Although..."

"Although what?"

"It didn't make sense to me. Why would Kavanagh shoot them? From what I found out, the three of them were good friends. And he didn't come across as insane to me."

"Why didn't you reopen the case?"

"I tried. My superior wouldn't let me. And we have so many unsolved cases on file, that to waste the state's money on an open and shut case was not an option."

"What if I told you I have evidence pointing to the real murderer?"

"What's your interest in this case, Quack?" Again, the detective laughed. "Sorry. I can't help it. Your name cracks me up."

"Just call me Rory. I'm a psychiatrist at Patton State Hospital. I started there not too long ago and for some reason, I believed Baxter's story. I decided to do some investigating."

"So who is the real killer?"

"Toni Giordana."

Boon's attention was now fully focused.



"You've got to be fucking kidding me. Although it wouldn't surprise me. And pray tell me, when and how did you get this evidence?"

"Last night. I'm gay. I went to his hangout, flirted with him, and ended up back at his place where we, eh..."

The detective frowned. "I see. And the evidence?"

Rory took the envelope out of his pocket. "The disc is in there. His confession is all recorded."

"Do you go around fucking mobsters for all your patients convicted of murder? Sorry, I had to ask."

"Baxter's case is unique. The man's not insane, and I believed him. I decided to make it my personal task to prove his innocence. That meant making this sacrifice, which is little compared to the years he's lost."

"You do realize this won't stand up in court."

"Yes. The detective I hired told me. But he also said you might have a way of getting to the truth, of putting Giordana behind bars."

"You know how hard it is to infiltrate the mob? Also, the fact you got this bozo to confess is a sheer miracle. What makes you think he'd talk about it again? You've also put your life in great jeopardy, unless you plan to see the man again."

"I was told that as well. He wants me to spend the weekend with him."

Boon leaned back thoughtfully, his hands folded behind his head. He gazed at Rory for what seemed a long time, making him feel extremely uncomfortable. "What?"

"Are you willing to keep that date?"

"You're kidding me. I never want to be with that greasy little pig again as long as I live."

"Not even to save Kavanagh?"

Alert, Rory leaned forward. "Okay, what are you planning?"

"It'll be dangerous. Basically, you'll be the bait."

"I'll do anything, anything at all, to get Baxter out of that hellhole."

Boon's eyebrows rose, his forehead crinkled. "I detect more than a medical interest here. Am I right?"

"Think what you want. Yes, I'll do it. Just tell me what you want me to do. Hotwiring me wouldn't be an option. The guy will want me naked."

"That poses a problem. Leave it with me. I'll come up with something. By the way, does Kavanagh have a lawyer?"

"Yes, I just hired a new lawyer for him, although he hasn't been to see Baxter yet. He was supposed to come last week, but had to cancel. When will I hear from you? It's already Thursday. Giordana will expect me Friday night or

Saturday."

"I'll be in touch with you early tomorrow morning. Meanwhile, call Giordana and confirm you'll join him for the weekend. Make out you can't wait to be with him, or something to that effect. On your way. I have a lot to arrange."

"I'll be waiting for your call."

While driving home, Rory couldn't stop thinking about Bax. He wanted so badly to tell him what he'd accomplished, but knew it was best not to say anything just yet. And he didn't think Bax would approve of what he was going to do this weekend. He longed for him, wanted so much to be with him, and wondered if Bax's thoughts were the same.

## Chapter Eight

Baxter hoped every day for even a glimpse of Rory, but no such luck. Empty promises. Surely, Rory could have found a little bit of time to see him? Even on the pretense of giving him medication. Something was wrong. He sensed it deep down in his gut. He'd never before felt so connected to a man. It was as if their souls had touched in the few times they'd been together, had melded, their minds become one. Were Rory's attempts to prove his innocence in vain? Was he afraid to tell him? He couldn't really blame the man. After all, what kind of future could they have if he was stuck in Patton for the rest of his life?

The door opened, interrupting his thoughts. Don walked in. "Get ready for dinner, asshole. You missed your class. You've been holed up in here long enough. Get up off that bed!"

"Fuck you!"

"That'll cost you. No vittles for you tonight."

Matter of fact, some cooling off is in order. I'll be back."

"Do what you want. I don't give a damn." Bax knew he'd deliberately provoked the man by answering his verbal abuse in kind. And he really didn't care. The spark of hope Rory had lit in his heart was slowly fading. Pretty soon, unless he got some good news, that little flame would fan out, and his heart would return to the black gaping hole it had been before he'd met Rory. His only hope was that the mob would get rid of him soon. He didn't trust Don for a second. The man had started to work there only four months before. Joe had told him the previous nurse had suddenly died under mysterious circumstances. He'd been a gentle soul, very kind to the patients.

And then came Don. Bax suspected something evil about this man from day one. It was almost as if he sought him out, goaded him into reaction. And really, he didn't care if Don had been placed there by the mob. The way he felt right now, the end would be welcomed. He just hoped it would be fast and relatively painless. But Don, for some reason, loved to torture him. Several times he'd had Bax put in a straight jacket and left him in the cool off room for hours. So long that he'd even wet himself, unable to hold his water any longer. Why the delay? Why not get it over and done with? His stomach rumbled. That was another of Don's

punishments. No food.

He lay down on his bed and hugged the pillow. Rory's face wouldn't leave him alone. He felt his cock stir, his balls starting to ache. There was no way he could satisfy himself now. Don could walk in any time.

Suddenly he figured it out. If he was the hit man, Don wouldn't kill him. Don was trying to drive him completely insane. Baxter felt his strength return. That he could fight against. No one on the planet could drive him out of his mind, no matter what they did to him. But what would that accomplish? Maybe try and get him to commit suicide? Suicides occurred periodically in Patton. How they did it, he was never told. Through the grapevine, the buzz at the dinner tables and in the common room, he'd find out that another had died.

*Rory, where are you? I need to see you so badly.*

His cock stirred again and he was about to shove his hands inside his shorts when the door opened.

"Get up."

Baxter got off the bed and stood.

"Come with me."

"Where to?" He had a slight hope that Rory had worked late and had called for him.

"You'll see. Now shut up and come along."

To his surprise, Don took him to the showers.

"Take your shorts off and get under the shower."

"That's my punishment?"

"Shut the fuck up and do as you're told."

Don pulled handcuffs from his pocket and cuffed Bax's wrists to a pipe. Bax didn't care. Standing under a shower for a long time wasn't that bad, even a cold one. After Don cuffed him, he turned on the water full blast. He stood under the stinging warm stream with his eyes closed and let it soothe his unsettled nerves. He was surprised at the punishment, which it wasn't really. He was glad when Don meandered off and left him alone.

Suddenly, the water turned hot, hotter still, until it was boiling hot. He yanked at the cuffs, tried to wriggle out of the way of the water, but there was no escape. The scalding water hit him everywhere. He screamed. He couldn't help it. Screamed again. "You fucking asshole. Motherfucker. Wait till I report you." He was afraid to open his eyes for fear the hot water would scald the light out of them. And all the while, he heard Don's maniacal laughter. The man was the devil himself. He screamed again, continued to try and escape the boiling hot water. "Rory! Rory! For God's sake, where are you?"

The patients had often complained that the hot water was far too hot, but no one had ever done anything about it. He dare not look at his smarting chest, his arms. After a while, he felt no more pain.

Dizzy from the steam, barely able to breathe, Bax fought to retain consciousness. He failed. His mind swam, the sound of the water fading as he sank into blessed oblivion.

\* \* \* \*

Don figured he'd left Baxter under the hot water just long enough to do the trick. He looked at the red blistered body slumped almost to the floor held up by the cuffs. He ran to turn on the cold main, ran back to turn the shower off, then quickly unlocked the cuffs and let Bax fall to the floor. His head hit the floor with a thud, breaking the skin. Blood mingled with the pooled water beneath the unconscious man.

After kicking Bax viciously in the side, Don hurried to the door. He left without looking back. His job was done. By the time someone found Bax, he'd probably be dead. And if not, he'd kick the bucket soon after.

"What's going on?" one of the other night nurses asked.

*Damn, just my luck running into someone.*  
"Nothing much. Everything's quiet."

"Good. Want a game of cards later?"

"Maybe. I have to do my rounds first."

*Damn the rounds.* He was out of there. The boss



would be happy with him and maybe give him a bonus for a job well done. For a moment he wondered if he'd left the scalding water on long enough. *No, fuck it, the bastard is toast, I'm sure. Now to sneak out of this hellhole.*

\* \* \* \*

"Where is he going?" Harry muttered as he looked back to see Don hurrying to the exit door. "Mm, out for a smoke? He knows he's supposed to tell me." He swiveled and started to hurry after Don, only to stop short near the bathroom door. Steam escaped through the cracks and from underneath.

"What the fuck..." He quickly unlocked the door and turned on the light. For a moment it was hard to see through the thick steam. A shape took form, a naked man on the tiled floor, a pool of blood surrounding his head. Harry hurried back to the alarm and hit the button. He opened the door wide and pushed the stopper down so it would stay open. The steam started to stream out of the bathroom.

Two nurses ran into the bathroom. Harry sat on the floor beside Baxter with a towel tight against the cut on Bax's head. "Call an ambulance. This man is badly burnt," he shouted to the female nurse.

"How the hell did that happen? Where is Don?"

"Good question. I saw him heading for the exit door."

"God, look at those blisters. I don't think there's a spot on his body that wasn't burnt. Not only that, what are those marks on his wrists?"

Harry lifted one lifeless hand and examined Baxter's wrist. "Looks like he was cuffed and fought to get loose."

"That's mighty suspicious. Don?"

"I don't know, but there'll be an investigation."

Mary ran back in with the portable oxygen tank. "How is he?"

"In shock I think. His pulse is weak."

"They're sending a helicopter. It'll fly him to the burn unit in LA."

"I'd say thirty percent of his body got burnt. The rest is red, but not blistering. Soon as they take him out of here, we'll have to call the cops. This reeks of a hit."

It didn't take very long for the helicopter to arrive. The paramedics had Baxter hooked up to an IV and on a stretcher in just minutes. They whisked him out of the bathroom, down the corridor and to the helicopter, the director of nursing running ahead, unlocking doors for them.

## Chapter Nine

Very early Saturday morning, Rory, with a heavy heart, drove to West Hollywood. Though Toni had been very excited that he'd agreed to join him for the weekend, he still wouldn't give him his address. He told Rory to park his car at Revolver and the limo would pick him up.

Obviously Toni didn't trust him. Did he have memory flashes of his confession? If Rory was killed, Bax wouldn't stand a chance in hell of ever getting out of Patton. Matter of fact, from what Toni had said, Bax wouldn't live long. A stab of pain shot through his heart at that thought. He had just found the man he wanted to spend the rest of his life with, and he'd lose him just as fast? *No way in hell. God couldn't be that cruel.*

Detective Boon had phoned him and told him he'd have his people in place that Saturday night and to act normal. That meant Rory had to put up with Toni until then. Boon had given him no details. He said it was better that way. Except that

Rory had to try and get Toni talking about the killings tonight. Rory felt very uneasy. The thought that eyes could be watching him as Toni put on his little performance, for others to see them both naked, possibly screwing, made him extremely uncomfortable. It was bad enough he had to endure the man again. The knowledge that there were hidden eyes watching, was just sickening. But those witnesses were important if they were going to nail Giordana. Their testimony along with his and the recording of the conversation, and any more confessions Rory could get out of Toni, would put the gangster away for life, and more than probable, a death sentence. Unless of course he claimed temporary insanity and ended up in a place like Patton.

He'd been so deep in thought while driving, he'd not even noticed entering West Hollywood. He was very good at remembering locations, so this time the bar didn't take as long to find.

The limo was already waiting for him in the parking lot. He parked, grabbed his overnight bag, though he hoped he wouldn't need it, and headed for the limo. When he got there, one of Toni's bodyguards got out.

"Need to frisk you, man. Lean up against the car. Hands above your head."

"What is this for? Did Toni order it?"

"No. We're just being careful. Toni might

believe you are who you say you are, but we're not as naïve."

"I'm clean."

"We'll just make sure of that."

Rory suffered their hands on his body. They even felt his crotch area. Finally, they were satisfied and told him to get into the limo. The bar was fully stocked with all kind of liquor, but also different kinds of beer. He chose a soda instead. It was important he kept his head together, and starting to drink that early in the day wasn't his forte anyway.

He leaned his head back and tried to relax. Concentrating on Baxter, it was as if he suddenly heard a plea for help. Baxter missed him, wanted him, wondered why he hadn't heard from him. *Oh, God, let this weekend be successful. I need to get him out of that place.*

He was thankful the bodyguard sat in the front. He had the limo virtually to himself. Closing his eyes, he tried to send a mental message to Baxter. *Baby, I love you. Don't despair. It's all going to happen, and sooner than I ever thought possible. I'll come and see you very soon.*

Toni came running out of the front entrance to meet the limo. He acted like an excited little boy. Rory's feet felt heavy as he stepped out of the limo. They felt even heavier when Toni embraced

him in full view of his bodyguards.

"How was the traffic?" Toni asked.

"Busy as hell."

Toni laughed. "You'll get used to it. You never told me where you're originally from."

"England."

"Oh? Where? I own an old mansion in England."

"Do you?" Toni's arm was around his shoulders as they walked into the mansion. He didn't really want to tell Toni anything, but he had to make up a fictional place.

"Yes. So where did you live in England?"

"Small town in Northumberland," Rory lied.

"Never been there. Strange, you don't sound English."

"I'm not English. I was born and raised in the USA." Rory was grateful Toni had never visited Northumberland. He wasn't that familiar with the area, though he had been there when on vacation in Scotland. He wondered about Toni's mansion in England but didn't ask any questions. Born and raised in Whistler, Canada, Rory still owned his log cabin, built after his parents died and left him their old house. He'd torn the house down and built the chalet. It'd be worth a fortune now, but it was his home, his getaway. He was grateful Toni let the subject drop.

*When Baxter is free, I'm going to take him there.*

*We'll spend our Christmas in Whistler. He'll love it, I'm sure. "So what do you have planned for the weekend, Toni?"*

*"I thought we'd play it by ear. I've invited some friends over this evening. I hope you don't mind."*

*Yes, I do mind, dammit. "Friends? I'd hoped we would be alone."*

*"Oh, we will. They're only coming over for dinner. I'll get rid of them after that."*

*"Good. I'm not much in the mood for meeting a bunch of strangers."*

*"Have you had breakfast? I thought we'd do brunch."*

*"I always eat breakfast, but I wouldn't mind a light snack."*

*"Aw, and here I had this delicious brunch planned for us. Guess I'm gonna have to change my habits, huh?" Toni leaned in closer and planted a slobbery kiss on Rory's cheek. "You smell so good. What's the name of your cologne? I'm gonna change to it."*

*"Oh, I don't know. It was a gift. I'll look at it shortly. It's in my bag."*

*"Great. I'll get the maid to take you to your room and you can change into your swim gear. After brunch, I thought we'd go to the beach."*

*"Sounds great."*

*"And then maybe a game of tennis? I have my own tennis court. Or don't you play?"*

"Yes, I play."

He was rusty, but anything to keep Toni out of his pants. "So who did you invite for dinner?"

"Some friends, some new people I met at the club last night. Guys and gals. I do associate with women, too, you know. Hell, sometimes I fuck them when I'm in the mood. Have you ever fucked a woman, Rory?"

"Yes."

"How did you like it?"

"It was okay. Different. I prefer hard male bodies. Women tend to be soft, curvy, some of them even sloppy."

"Do you get turned on by a woman?"

"Very few women have been able to do that for me. Matter of fact, only two." Rory reflected on his teen girlfriend, then on the woman he'd been engaged to in his early twenties. He had really loved Mary, but she cheated on him, wounding him to the core. "I find them too demanding."

"Ain't that the truth. My father has been after me to get married for years. Even has a wife picked out for me. No fucking way. I'd not marry that bitch if he paid me a million."

"Your father doesn't know you're gay?"

"No. People have tried to tell him, but he sticks his head in the sand. Won't believe it. Refuses to face the truth."

"That's too bad."



"What about your parents, Rory? They know?"

"They're gone. I lost them a long time ago."

"I'm sorry. Family is important. How?"

"Car accident."

"Do you have brothers and sisters?"

"No. I was an only child."

"Same as me. What a coincidence. No, nothing is a coincidence. You and I are meant to be together. Maybe we can adopt children? Or, we can find surrogate mothers. For money, women will do anything, even bear us our own children. One of yours and one of mine."

In a way, Rory felt sorry for the man. He acted like an overgrown child. A child with an apparent unhappy childhood, a lonely childhood, and unforgiving parents. His wish for a family of his own told Rory a lot. But it didn't excuse the cold blooded murder of two people. "What you told me the other night, do your parents know about it?"

"Yes, my father knows. Shut up, Rory. Don't ever mention it again."

"Sorry." It was too early to draw him out. Rory realized he'd have to wait until Toni was good and drunk. He was glad when the maid came to show him to his room.

"Haven't seen you before. What's your name?" Toni asked the pretty redhead. "What happened to Carmen?"

"Maggie, Sir. Carmen is sick. I'm a temp."

"When did you start?"

"Couple of days ago, Sir."

You're certainly more pleasant to look at than Carmen. Well, I hope you'll be happy working here. Now take this gentleman to his room."

Rory followed the maid, at the same time admiring statues and paintings. Toni might be a scoundrel, but he had good taste. Rory's room overlooked the ocean. Wide sliding doors opened to a large balcony. Maggie opened the doors and the briny ocean air wafted in. "I love the smell of the ocean," he told her.

"Yes, Sir. If you need anything, please press the buzzer beside the bed."

She left the room. Rory frowned. "Not very friendly," he said aloud. "Maybe it's because she's new." A thought occurred to him. Toni seemed surprised at the new staff member. Could she be an undercover cop? He quickly changed into his swimsuit, a tiny speedo. Normally he wore swim shorts, but he needed to keep up a sexy image for Toni. Wrapping a towel around his waist, he went downstairs to join Toni.

"Brunch is waiting for us on the balcony, lover."

Toni had changed as well and only wore a G-string. Rory couldn't help but shiver at the thought of having to go through the whole sex

scene again that night.

"You couldn't be cold, surely. There are robes in the changing room by the pool. Want me to get you one?"

"No, I'm fine thanks." When Rory looked at the lavishly laden table, his stomach did start to growl, even though he hadn't been hungry before. "It looks delicious."

"I've got the best chef in Malibu. Wait till you see dinner. It'll be a feast. I ordered some of his specialties, just for you."

"That's sweet of you."

"Hon, you're so short and abrupt. Is something wrong?"

"Huh? No, sorry. I was up very early. Guess I'm not quite awake yet. I'm not a morning person. I'm also a bit preoccupied with some personal issues going on in my life."

"You can always talk to me, baby. Here, let me pour you a coffee. I'll lace it. That'll fix you up."

"No. No alcohol this early. Just coffee thanks."

"C'mon, baby, a shot of Irish cream won't hurt you."

"No, please don't."

Rory shivered. The thought he'd have to spend the whole afternoon with Toni was appalling. But, he had to do it. For Baxter. *Baxter*... for a moment he let his thoughts dwell on him, allowed his beautiful face to filter through his mind. His

stomach knotted. A strange sensation shot through him. Fear? No, it didn't feel like fear. A premonition? Was Bax in trouble? He hoped and prayed he could get Toni to talk again. Here the little man was trying to get him to drink, but instead, *he* was the one who needed to get drunk enough. But the man's body was so accustomed to a lot of alcohol, it could take all day. *And where are the cops? How do I even know they'll be there listening, if, by a miracle, I can get Toni to talk about the murders again. What if this is all for nothing? What if Toni doesn't talk?* He wished the cops would have filled him in.

"Rory, what the fuck is wrong with you, man? It's almost like you're brooding about something. Another lover?" Toni asked suspiciously.

"Huh? No. No other lover," Rory lied, while lading his plate with omelet, toast, and bacon.

"After we've eaten, how about we go for that swim? That'll wake you up," Toni suggested and blew Rory a kiss.

"Sounds like a plan." He ate nearly everything on his plate. At least that would help to stop the alcohol from getting to him. He couldn't very well keep refusing drinks. Just as he wiped his mouth with the napkin, he felt that strange sensation again. Baxter's face surfaced before his eyes, his sweet, beautiful face. Something was wrong. He felt it deep down in his gut. Toni had told him

they had someone inside Patton. Had the hit man gotten to Bax? Was this Baxter's ghost haunting him, telling him something was wrong? *My God, surely it can't be?* A pain, so fierce that it cut off his breath started in his chest, his heart. The thought that he'd finally found the man he wanted to spend eternity with could be gone, tore at his soul. If he could get a minute alone, get his cell phone from the bedroom, he could call and see if there were any messages on his answering machine. His heart thudded so loud, it vibrated through his ears, his head.

"You ready?" Toni's irritating voice cut through Rory's anguish.

"Shortly. I need to go to the bathroom before we go." With that, he stood and hurried to his room.

There were no messages on his answering machine. Surely, if anything had happened to Baxter, they'd call him. Maybe not. He thought of calling Patton, then thought better of it. They'd find it strange.

His heart was still beating a staccato rhythm, tears burning to escape. Taking control of his emotions, Rory went back downstairs and joined Toni. The sooner this day was over and done with, the better. And he had to play the part, pretend to have fallen in love with Toni. *For Baxter...if I'm not too late.*

## Chapter Ten

Baxter tried to open his eyes, but couldn't. Voices, all around him. Where was he? What had happened?

"Keep that IV going. He needs plenty of fluids," a male voice said.

"Poor bastard. Will he make it?" a female voice asked.

"I think so. Part of his body has first degree burns. Only a few second degree. Whoever did this to him turned the boiling water off too soon to finish him off. "

"That sounds callous."

"Well, from what the paramedics told me, this was deliberate. Look at the bloody mess his wrists are. Before they found him, he was handcuffed and yanking at the cuffs to escape the scalding water."

"Did anyone find out the temperature they have their tanks set at?"

"No, but looking at the burns, it can't have been

higher than one hundred. I think he twisted and turned to try and escape the shower. That's why his wrists are so bad. We'll know more tomorrow. The first twenty-four hours are crucial, but I'm quite positive that this young man won't die."

Bax only caught bits and pieces of the conversation. The word 'die' seated itself in his fogged mind. *Die? Am I dying or am I already dead? Who are these people?* He tried to move, but it hurt. A vague recollection, pictures of a man. Who was he again? A shower, hot water. *Rory, I need you. I need you so bad. Am I dead? Am I finally released from this miserable existence? Did the mob get to me? Rory, you promised to help me, but you're too late. My love, my heart... I'll be with you always, Rory. Don't forget the brief love we found. Don't forget me, my darling Rory.* The thoughts roiled until he felt himself falling, falling...a deep ravine beckoned. What was at the bottom? Darkness, nothing but black. *Oh fuck, this has to be hell. Was I that bad a man? Rory...I love you...* then nothing as his brain swirled and he blanked out.

*Baxter struggled upward from a dark abyss. He saw a figure coming toward him. "Rory, what are you doing here?"*

*Rory didn't speak, just kept walking toward him, his electric blue eyes riveted on Baxter, those eyes, those gorgeous eyes that changed with the tides of passion. His angel, his blue-eyed angel. Why didn't he come any*

*closer? Bax struggled to see, to go to his lover, the man who'd believed in him, but he couldn't. Something was holding him down, he couldn't move. "Rory, I love you so much. I think we could have had a good life together," he whispered. Still no answer. Slowly, Rory faded into the dark and Bax felt alone again, lost in a place he didn't know, a place with no others but himself. "Rory, my love...come back..."*

\* \* \* \*

The afternoon had passed by rather quickly, thanks to swimming, a game of volleyball, tennis and snacks in between. Rory was glad when Toni suggested they go inside to shower and change for the dinner party.

Once back in his room, hoping against hope, he checked his answering machine again. Still no messages. After pondering for a minute, he decided to bite the bullet and call Patton anyway.

"Hi, this is Doctor Quack. I think I forgot to lock my office. Could you check for me please?" He'd come up with the excuse to call just as he'd dialed the number.

"Sure. I hope your patient pulls through."

"What do you mean?"

"No one called you?"

"No. What are you talking about?" A heavy feeling settled in the pit of Rory's stomach.



"Kavanagh. They found him near death in the showers."

"Oh my God! How? What happened?"

"I'm not sure. He was badly scalded and hit his head on something. That's all I know."

"Thank you. Please go and check my office?"  
He had to keep up the pretense. While Rory waited for the nurse to come back to the phone, he tried to pull himself together. The shock had cut him to the core. *Bax, my love... what have they done to you?* A tear trickled down his cheek. He swiped at it angrily. His new found love, hurting, needing him. *Where is he?*

"Dr. Quack?"

"Yes."

"Your office is fine. It's locked."

"Thank you. Where is Baxter now?"

"They took him to the burn unit in LA. I can't remember the exact name, but it's the University of Southern California and LA or something."

"Thank you. Anything else? How is he doing?"

"I'll be damned if I know. He's a killer. Probably deserved it."

Anger welled deep within Rory. "Goodbye. Thanks for your help," he said through tight lips. Fury sent a red haze before his eyes. He was too late. But he wasn't too late to make Toni pay for what he'd done. Swiping angrily at his eyes, he hit the shower, at the same time imagining Baxter

standing under scalding water. He'd never showered so fast in his life. It ate at him, fueled his anger, caused him to want to murder the bastard. And he had to pretend to care for the twerp? To try and get a confession out of him? *Oh, God, how can I keep my hands from his throat?*

He heard cars arriving, guests. Reluctantly, he finally went downstairs. The living room was filled with people. And not just ordinary people. Waiters, dressed in nothing but a very tiny apron, gorgeous hunks, flitted about, offering hors'd'ouvres and serving drinks. As upset and angry as he was, Rory couldn't help but admire some of them. They had gorgeous bodies. The tiny aprons hardly hid the crown jewels. But he couldn't get turned on by any of them. His body was for Bax and Bax alone. And if Bax didn't make it, he'd spend the rest of his life alone. He wanted no one else. No one else could fill that void in his heart and soul. Bax was his soul mate, and even if he'd gone to the afterlife, he would always be so. One day they'd be together for all eternity, be it as man and woman, woman and woman, or man and man. Their hearts were matched, their souls were one. What their return to Earth would bring, he didn't know, but they would once again be together in a next life.

As he wandered through the laughing and chatting crowd, he vaguely wondered if Bax

believed in reincarnation. They never really had the chance to discuss the deeper side of each other. Matter of fact, they hardly knew anything about each other. Yet there was that strong connection, that feeling of belonging. He looked at Toni openly fondling someone's cock. *Slut! You fucking slut!* Not that he really cared. He felt so much hatred for the little man that it ate at his stomach.

"Rory, darling, come here," Toni yelled out loudly.

Reluctantly, Rory joined Toni while grabbing a flute filled with champagne from one of the trays passing by. "Sweetheart, it's quite the party," he said in a voice laced with honey. *Fake honey.*

Toni's gaze flitted from Rory's head to his toes. "Honey, you're a tad overdressed, don't you think?"

"I didn't know what to wear. You didn't tell me."

"Oh, my mistake. So sorry, my love. You took a long time coming down. Dinner is almost ready."

"I'm sorry. I had a little nap. You tired me out this afternoon."

"You're so cute. I just love you so much. Hey, everyone. Rory here is my new love. Come and meet him!" Toni yelled out loud.

Rory felt mortified, but acted the part when Toni cuddled up against his chest and held his lips up for a kiss. Inwardly, he seethed. He wanted

nothing more than to strangle the little bastard, but he controlled his anger. He watched Toni pour one drink after another and hoped it would loosen his tongue enough. That's if he didn't eat too much and neutralize some of the alcohol effect.

Dinner was a smorgasbord. Rory watched carefully and noticed that Toni didn't eat that much. He was glad. Maybe he'd have the chance after all to get that confession out of him.

The guests filtered out between ten and eleven. No orgies, as Toni had predicted. At least, none that he'd been invited to, and he was glad. Each pet, every affectionate move on Toni's part, caused Rory to feel betrayal. An orgy would have made it worse.

After the last guests left and they were alone, Toni sidled up to Rory. "Lover, let's relax now. I couldn't wait for everyone to leave and have you to myself. You're gonna get fucked so hard tonight, you won't be able to sit down tomorrow."

"Toni, let's just talk for a while? I told you earlier today, I'm really tired."

"Oh, babe, I'm so sorry. Let your lover take care of you. How about you get out of that stuffy shirt and those pants?"

Rory stripped down to his boxers. He glanced around, wondering again about the undercover cops in the house. Who were they? Where were they? Were they even there? He'd taken note of

everyone all evening, and no one came across as a cop.

"Where did you find all those gorgeous waiters, Toni?"

"Aren't they just delicious? I called an agency who specializes in out of the box waiters and waitresses."

"Yes, they are. I'd love to get my hands on some of them."

"Hey, you watch it. You're mine. All mine."

"I am no one's, Toni. I don't like possessive people. I didn't say I'd sleep with them, but one can wish."

"I'm sorry, babe. Would you like a drink, sugarpie?"

"Sure. I'll have a beer."

"Just a beer?"

"Anything wrong with that? I like my beer."

"I'm sorry. I guess there's a lot I need to learn about you. How about joining me on the floor?" Toni promptly removed his G-string and lay down on the floor in front of the fireplace, completely naked now. He had a full glass of scotch in his hand and sipped it steadily, his words already slurry. "Take your clothes off, my love."

Rory left his shorts on and sank to the floor beside him, hating every second, dreading what would follow. Once next to Toni, he put his arms

around him and pulled him tight against his chest. Placing a kiss on top of Toni's head, he said, "Honey, I'm so glad we're finally alone."

"Oh, babe, so am I," Toni slurred.

"I'm not one for big parties."

"I noticed, honey lamb. You were very quiet all evening."

"Baby, remember what you told me the other night?"

"I don't want to talk about that, Rory."

"Why not? If we're going to be together, we need to get into the deepest recesses of our souls and bare all."

"Aw, that's so sweet. I love your words. You're so poetic."

"Then talk to me. Tell me again what all happened with you and Paul. I had too much to drink the other night and can't remember it clearly." At the same time he asked the question, Rory made sure to fondle Toni's little cock. It disgusted him, made him feel sick to the stomach, but his anger burnt so bright that he didn't care.

"Ooooh, yes, I like that. Hold my balls, baby. Squeeze them, hurt me!" Toni yelled.

"Talk to me, Toni. Tell me about Paul. It turns me on."

"I loved him so," Toni said in a whiny tone. "I would have married him. But that bitch..."

"Yes? What about the bitch?"

"Hell, you know the story, darling. Do I have to tell it all over again?"

"Yes, you do. I told you, my brain was fogged the other night. Honey, I need to know everything about you," Rory said, trying to make his voice as loving as possible under the circumstances.

"I killed them. You know I did. I told you. And that bastard died for it instead of me. Well, he's gone now. I heard they got to him."

"They did?"

"Yeah. He's probably dead by now."

"Poor guy." A knife twisted slowly inside Rory's chest.

"Hey, nothing poor about him. He deserved what he got."

"So how did you kill Paul and his fiancée again?"

"Aw, Rory darling, do you really want to hear it again?"

"There has to be absolute truth between us, Toni," Rory said as he squeezed Toni's balls and twisted the little cock.

Toni groaned, then started to tell the whole story again, his words slurring even more.

Rory waited, wanted the cops to jump in, whoever they were, wherever they were. He hoped to God they were listening, at the same time he endured Toni's fondling, his hands constantly on Rory's cock.

"I guess being a doctor and all you've seen shitloads of dead people, huh Rory?"

"I'm a psychiatrist, Toni. I work with people's minds."

"Right." Toni laughed suddenly. "You ever seen a brain? It's interesting when it explodes all over the fuckin' place."

"Like Paul's did?"

"Yeah. It was everywhere. Weird lookin' stuff. After I blew his brains out, I stared at it for a bit. It kinda fascinated me."

Rory felt sickened. Where the hell were the cops? How much more did they need?

"Taking off the slut's face was even better. That really satisfied me."

"The way you talk, it's as if you get off on killing people."

"I don't kill a lot of people. I have my men do it for me and sometimes I watch. I told you, I wanted to do this job myself. Enough talk. Fuck me, Rory. Please? I'm so fuckin' hot for you."

Rory groaned inwardly. He'd hoped not to have to give the cops a show, but now he doubted if they were even there. Toni grabbed his still flaccid cock and started to work it. This time it refused to react. The tension within Rory, accompanied by the disgust he felt for Toni, had traveled down to his loins.

"Babe, what's the matter? You feel all tense.



Come here," Toni murmured, at the same time turning and pulling Rory's head toward him.

Rory shivered as the fleshy lips parted, a fat tongue flicking in and out. Just as Toni's lips touched his, a click sounded behind them. Toni jumped up, heedless of his nudity. "What the fuck! Who are you?"

Rory heaved a sigh of relief and quickly stood up. He backed away slowly.

"Hands up!" a voice bellowed. It was almost like a scene from a movie, a comedy. Two naked waiters, their little aprons covering their genitals, slowly approached Toni. Each had a gun pointed at Toni.

Toni's head swiveled from side to side, looking for aid. Slowly he started to walk backwards, away from the cops.

The tallest of the two waiters cocked his gun. "Stop or I'll shoot. Put your hands on your head!"

But Toni didn't stop. Instead, he dove to the couch, his hand groping behind one of the pillows. It all happened so fast, Rory hardly had time to absorb the scene before him. Suddenly, there was a gun in Toni's hand. But he didn't point it at the cops, he aimed it at Rory. "You fuckin' bastard, you set me up!" Toni shouted.

Rory heard the click, dove for the floor and waited for the bullet. A shot. A shout of pain. Something fell to the floor. Rory opened his eyes

and saw the gun on the floor. He looked up to see Toni clutching his arm, blood dripping steadily from a wound in his forearm.

A female voice shouted. Rory's hunch about the new maid was right on. Maggie read Toni his rights.

"Anthony Giordana, you are under arrest for the murders of Paul Mancuso and Melissa Pacelli. You have the right to remain..."

While Maggie's voice droned on, one of the other cops cuffed Toni. Other men appeared, although clothed. Rory wondered where Toni's goons were. He expected to see them burst into the room at any moment, but it didn't happen.

"Take me to the fuckin' hospital. You shot me, motherfuckers!" Toni cursed and yelled until one of the cops grabbed him by the hair and yanked Toni's head back.

"Put a cork in it, you little cunt! Take the bastard away before I do something to shut him up for good!" the cop ordered. "Are you okay?" he asked, turning to Rory.

"Yes, a bit shaken, but I'm fine."

"Good. Why don't you get dressed. You'll need to come with us to make a statement. After that we'll take you to a safe place. From now on, you're under police protection."

Rory suddenly realized that by proving Baxter's innocence, he'd put his own life in danger from

the mob. Though Toni and his family didn't get along, the mob wouldn't take this lightly. He vaguely remembered Detective Boon talking about a witness protection plan for both Rory and Baxter.

"Baxter...I phoned Patton and they told me..."

"Kavanagh is alive. He's in the burn unit at University hospital."

"How bad is he?"

"The doctors are optimistic. The burns aren't as bad as they first thought."

"I want to see him first. Please?"

"Boon warned you what would happen. You can never go back to your house, your job. From now on, Rory Quack has to disappear. And after the trial, you'll disappear forever or your life won't be worth shit."

Rory could still hear Toni's shouts as they took him out of the house and to the police car. A lot of the curses and threats were aimed at Rory.

Maggie came back. "Okay, I'll take it from here. Go put some clothes on," she told the two naked cops.

"Aaaaw, Maggie, you don't like us this way?"

"Shut up! On second thoughts, maybe I'll take you home with me after this shift. Both of you."

"Ha, Maggie likes kinky sex. You into a threesome, Gordie?"

"Enough already. If my wife even knew what

kind of undercover job I did today, she'd have a hissy fit."

They joked back and forth during the drive to the police station, but Rory couldn't laugh. His thoughts were on Baxter and his need to go and see him.

## Chapter Eleven

After Rory made his statement, Detective Boon drove him to a hotel. He nagged to go and see Baxter, but was told that Bax was in isolation in intensive care and was allowed no visitors. Rory was worried sick about him. The fact that his own life was now in danger, that he no longer had a job, could never go back to his house, would be given a new name, didn't matter. All that mattered now was that Baxter survived and got better.

Toni's arraignment was the next day. He pled not guilty and request for bail was denied. The long wait for the trial had begun.

Detective Boon had everything mapped out, but Rory had his own plan. No one knew where he was from. Not a soul knew about the cabin in Whistler. He and Bax would disappear after the trial, but not to where the FBI wanted them. Their roles were reversed now. No more contracts out on Bax. Instead, the mob would be after Rory for

his role in bringing Toni to justice.

None of it mattered, as long as he and Baxter could be together. Bax, too, would be given a new identity, because the mob could still find Rory through Bax.

Rory was about ready to climb the walls of his hotel room on Christmas Eve. He was sick of TV, tired of reading, and bored with playing cards with the security guard. All he wanted was to see Bax. But all this time, they told him Bax wasn't allowed visitors. Rory had tried calling the hospital, but they wouldn't tell him anything. Even when he told them he was Baxter's fiancé, they still wouldn't give him any information. All he knew is what Detective Boon told him. Bax was doing fine, healing well.

Night after night he'd spent tossing and turning, worrying, longing for his love, praying for his recovery, wishing for just one brief moment with him. The dream of a Christmas with Baxter was shattered. They'd each spend it alone, Bax in the hospital, and Rory holed up in his hotel room, his only company the various security guards, and an occasional visit from Detective Boon.

Angry, he switched off the TV, tired of listening to Christmas carols, watching Christmas movies. It wasn't the season to be jolly for him. He didn't feel like the guard's company, either.

Flopping down on the bed, dressed only in his boxer shorts, he lay staring at the ceiling. He conjured Baxter's face up and thought about their very brief interlude. *Soon we'll be together, my love.*

A loud knock on the door interrupted his thoughts. "Damn, I told Steve I didn't feel like company tonight," he mumbled and jumped off the bed to open the door, to find Detective Boon standing there with a big grin lighting up his face.

"Up for some company tonight?" Boon asked.

"Not really. I just want to be alone." He turned and walked back into the room to stand before the window. Boon's footsteps sounded behind him. "I told you. I don't want company tonight. Have a great Christmas," he snapped, swiveling around.

"My, we're in a good mood," a familiar much missed voice said.

Rory stared. It couldn't be. Surely he was still on the bed and this was a dream? The vision stepped toward him, put out a hand to touch his face. Bandages still covered a wrist. The touch was real, the man was real. "Oh, my God. Bax? It's you? It's really you?"

Tears escaped. Happy tears, grateful tears. Wonderingly, Rory reached to touch Baxter's face, his lips. The burns had left some white spots on Bax's skin, but no scarring. The white patches would fade with time. He took all this in, in a glance. Then he reached out and hugged Baxter so

tight that Bax struggled a bit.

"Hey, you're killing me. Merry Christmas, Rory."

Rory held Baxter at arm's length. Behind Bax stood Detective Boon, a huge grin on his face. "How...when..."

"Merry Christmas, you two. I'll leave you alone now. Bax, I'll have one of my guys pick up clothing for you. From now on, you're stuck here with Rory, except when we have to take you back for your last checkup."

"Am I complaining?" Bax turned to Boon and pumped his hand. "Oh, what the hell. Come here." He promptly embraced Boon, who looked a bit embarrassed at this show of affection and gratitude.

"Okay, okay. Enough of that. I've ordered a special Christmas dinner for the two of you for tomorrow. And champagne is on the way as we speak. Goodnight."

Boon left the room and no sooner had the door closed behind him, and Rory took Baxter in his arms again. All he wanted to do was hold him, make sure this was all real and not a dream.

After a few minutes, Rory pulled Bax to the bed and lay down with him, still holding him in his arms. "This is the best Christmas gift anyone could ever have given me," he said softly near Baxter's ear. "Man, I've been begging to go and



see you, but they wouldn't let me out of this room."

"I don't blame them. Hon, what you did for me is unbelievable. Yes, they told me what all happened. And now the roles are reversed. Your life is in danger because of me and it always will be."

"I'd do anything for you, my love. I'd have died for you." Rory tenderly wiped a tear off Baxter's cheek.

"And you could have easily. What you did was dangerous as hell."

"I'd like to get my hands on that son-of-a-bitch who put you under that hot shower. Thank God he didn't leave you under it long enough. Too bad they haven't found the bastard yet."

"Probably took off to Mexico. I always suspected Don to be the one."

Rory stroked Bax's unruly hair, then lovingly traced the contours of his face, his lips. Baxter's arms stole around Rory's neck, his body pressed tight against his. Their lips met, their kisses as soft as the touch of a butterfly's wings. Their kiss deepened, until all their hunger, their thirst for each other, broke loose.

Baxter's clothes flew across the room, Rory's shorts followed. Naked, they hugged, kissed, until Bax drew back.

"Careful, baby. My cock got it as well. I'm not

allowed to do anything until this newly grown baby skin has strengthened."

Rory lovingly traced the white patches on Baxter's chest, his arms, his belly, then he looked down at Baxter's fully erect cock. It, too, showed white patches, as did his balls. "Ouch, that must have hurt more than any other place on your body."

"It did. Especially when erect. At first I couldn't get a hard-on. I was doped up for a while, and then I was too sore to feel horny. But you know what got me through it all?"

"What?"

"You. Your face. I couldn't stop thinking about you. Dreaming..."

"Oh, baby, how you must have suffered. I'm so sorry."

"Not your fault. You were out there trying to prove my innocence. Even if you'd been there, you couldn't have stopped it. It all happened very fast. Although when that hot water hit me, it seemed like an hour."

"Maybe we can't have sex, but I can do this," Rory said, moving down to Baxter's cock and licking the purplish head. His tongue lapped, licked the precum from the tip, then he gently took the cock in his mouth and sucked. It only took a minute and Baxter came. Rory caught the jet of thick cream and savored the musky taste. At

the same time, Bax had Rory's cock in his hand and moved the skin back and forth swiftly, faster and faster. Though Rory had masturbated regularly, release was never satisfying. All it did was stop his aching balls. This, this was different, this was Bax, his love, his dream, his soul mate, his partner for life.

Neither of them heard the knock on the door as they kissed again, then just quietly lay in each other's arms. Outside, a church bell announced the arrival of Christmas. Rory leaned on an elbow gazing down at Baxter's handsome face. "Merry Christmas, my love."

"More than a Merry Christmas, my blue-eyed angel," Bax whispered. "That's what you'll always be for me. My angel, my angel with the haunting electrifying blue eyes, my angel who saved me from a life of hell."

## Epilogue

One year later...

In private, to each other, they were still Rory and Baxter. For the outside world, they were David O'Malley and Robert Fisher. After the trial, the FBI had given them their new identities, new passports, drivers licenses, birth certificates, everything they'd needed to make their identity real. They had also arranged for the sale of Rory's house and the withdrawal of both their funds from bank accounts and cashing in stocks and bonds.

Toni had received the death sentence, though Bax and Rory realized there would be countless appeals and it could take years for Toni to finally pay for his crimes, if ever. A private plane had flown them to another state, but they had not stayed there for long. Rory had arranged to change the deeds for his cabin into his new name and Baxter's by buying his own property, albeit

for much less the value of the cabin of course.

"You think they'd ever find us here?" Bax asked, looking out at the snow storm outside the cabin.

"I hope not."

"Just thinking about movies I've seen where a witness became part of the witness protection program, and the bad guys found him anyway and killed him."

"We'll just take each day as it comes, my love. I'm so glad we were able to come home in time for Christmas," Rory said while dipping into the bowl of eggnog. "Mm, this is good. You want some?"

"Please. Home. The word sounds so good, but I still can't help still that little pang of fear deep inside me." He turned and glanced around the living area of the cabin. Together they had decorated and a tall Christmas tree graced the far corner. The silver decorations sparkled as the little white lights flickered on and off. Garlands hung from the edge of the loft and there were candles of all sizes everywhere, all lit, their flames sending shadows over the walls. The fireplace was blazed with a roaring fire, crackling and emanating cozy warmth.

They had arrived at the cabin just a week ago and had spent that week shopping and cleaning the cabin and getting it ready for Christmas.

"I've always dreamed of a white Christmas,"

Baxter said, once again looking out of the window at the snow laden pines.

"It's always a white Christmas here. Wait until I take you skiing. You'll love it. Now come here. I want this Christmas Eve to be super special for us. Our first Christmas together as a couple in our own home."

Baxter joined Rory on the huge bear rug in front of the fireplace and sat close to him. Rory reached out and pulled Bax toward him. He tilted Baxter's face and looked directly into his eyes. "Bax, this is for you," he said, producing a small velvet box.

"It's not Christmas yet, hon."

"Family tradition. We always open one gift on Christmas Eve."

Baxter took the little box and flipped it open. "Ooooh, this is absolutely gorgeous." He carefully took out the heavy gold ring and held it up. A diamond sparkled in the light of the flames, turning the gemstone into a rainbow of color. A small engraving of an angel with a blue sapphire in the center rested beside it. It was a striking ring.

Rory took the ring from Baxter and held his hand. He slipped the ring on his ring finger. "Bax, will you marry me?"

Overcome with emotion, Baxter could hardly speak. He threw himself into Rory's arms and rained kisses on his face. "Yes, oh yes. I love you so much. I never dared hope..."

"I told you, we'll be together always and beyond." Rory held Baxter's face. "Don't you ever forget that, and how much I love you."

Baxter kissed Rory then. Their tongues met, explored, firing their passion. The buttons tore off Rory's shirt as Baxter impatiently tore at it to get it off. His own flew across the room next. Naked, they lay in each other's arms before the fire, whispering of their love, until their need overtook everything.

Rory turned Bax so that he was on hands and knees. Sitting between Bax's legs, he spread them far apart. Bending down, he lapped at Baxter's balls, now hard as a rock. He suckled them, at the same time stroking Bax's cock, pulling the skin back and forth. He let go off the hard sack, then licked upward until he reached the spot he wanted. Flicking his tongue in and out the tight hole, he moistened it with his spittle. His cock pulsed, throbbed, needing entrance. But first he entered a finger and rotated, spitting on Baxter's hole again, moistening it, making it ready. Two fingers. Bax groaned, pushing his ass against Rory's fingers. It was the first time for Baxter and Rory knew to take it slow, even if Bax was eager. All this time they'd only used their hands and mouths.

"Please..." Bax begged.

Rory held Baxter's hips. He placed his cock at

the inviting entrance and started to push in, slowly, carefully. He felt Baxter stiffen at first. "Relax, baby, relax, enjoy the moment of this loss of your virginity," Rory said in a husky tone. He could hardly wait to gain full entrance, but he had to. The thought of his own first time made him even hornier than he already was. His body was on fire, and not from the heat of the fireplace. His heart pounded against his ribs as he carefully inched in. Finally, Baxter relaxed fully and Rory pushed in completely. He watched Baxter's anus stretch around his cock, waited for a moment, then started to thrust.

"Oooooooooooh, my God," Baxter shouted. "Rory, this is heaven. Harder, please, harder. Fuck me hard!"

Rory grasped Bax's hips and moved him back and forth in time to the thrusts. He couldn't hold his release. A shudder shook his frame as he felt it coming. Another shudder, his breathing ragged, he withdrew almost completely, then with one final thrust came. Out of breath, he waited for his erection to wane, then withdrew and collapsed on the floor beside Baxter who crawled on top of him. Bax kissed him, a slow lingering kiss.

"Your turn to lose your virginity, my love, Bax whispered against Rory's lips. I can hardly wait. If we don't do it soon, I'll come without doing anything." He waited for Rory's breathing to calm.



Rory sat on hands and knees. Baxter rubbed his cock between Rory's ass cheeks first while fondling his balls. Even though Rory had just come minutes before, his cock was already starting to rise again. Baxter reached behind him for his pants. He'd anticipated this and had bought a tube of lubrication. Though Rory had a large cock, it was thinner than his. Bax's wasn't only very long, it was also very thick. He quickly squeezed lubrication onto his cock. He wondered if Rory could take him, if it wouldn't hurt too much. If it did, he wouldn't do it. He'd be disappointed, but there was no way he wanted to hurt his angel. He squirted a good amount of lubrication onto his fingers, then started to work Rory's hole, his left hand cupping his taut sack, gently kneading the small hard balls within. He felt it tightening and knew that Rory was horny again. He felt the blood rush through his veins, the fire in his loins, and his heart hammered, pounded. He entered a finger, two fingers, rotated them. Rory's hips pushed and Bax pushed his fingers in all the way. Pulling them out, he squirted more lubrication into the hole and pushed it all the way inside with his fingers.

"Do it, Bax, please do it..."

"Honey, you know how big I am. I'm afraid I'll hurt you too much."

"Do it. Please?" Rory begged.

"If it hurts too much, tell me to stop. Promise?"

"Yes... please, take me?"

Baxter placed the mushroom tip near the entrance and started to push. The hole resisted at first, so he kept squeezing more lubrication as he pushed. Rory didn't utter a sound so Baxter continued to push against the tight anus until finally the edges gave way and he was able to get in just a little. He waited for a moment before pushing in deeper. More gel along the entire length of his cock. He pushed in a little more, still a bit more, until suddenly, Rory bucked up and took almost his entire cock within him. Rory groaned and Bax didn't know if it was from pleasure or pain. "Rory?"

"It feels so good. You're filling me completely, my love."

Baxter pushed in all the way and waited again. It was hard, he was ready to explode. Rory's hips were moving, he was bucking up. He wanted Bax to fuck him. Bax started to thrust, slowly at first, then faster and faster. His balls felt so good slamming against Rory's backside. When Rory lifted one shoulder and Bax saw his hand move toward Rory's cock, he yelled, "Noooooooooo, don't, that's for me." At the same time tremors shook him and he came. Not even waiting for his cock to sleep, he quickly pulled out and dove beneath Rory's body. He yanked Rory's hand away from

the hard shaft and took the cock into his mouth, his tongue flicking in and out of the tiny hole. Then he lapped Rory's cock as if it were a popsicle, relishing the taste of the cum that still clung to it. Sucking hard, he felt Rory's cock become rock hard, pulsing, needing to come again. Baxter pushed Rory until he fell on his back, then he climbed on top of him, his own cock facing Rory, his head between Rory's legs. He played, he fondled, felt Rory's hands on his cock, felt his tongue lick his bum crack, his balls. It didn't take long for him to grow hard again. He took Rory's length into his mouth and started to suck and move the skin back and forth and felt Rory do the same to him. He pushed down into Rory's mouth, deep into his throat and began to thrust while Rory sucked and held him tight between his lips.

They came at the same time. Baxter felt Rory's cum jet into his throat, tasted the slightly salty, musky cum, and savored it. They lay like that for a little while, each satisfied, each breathing heavy.

Baxter crawled off Rory and lay next to him. Rory put his arms around Baxter. "Bax, this is almost like our wedding night."

"I guess it was and is. I'm so happy, my love. So very happy." Behind Rory's head, Baxter held up his hand and admired his ring again.

"I can't believe that two people can be so much in love after being together for more than a year.

Can you?"

"It was meant to be, my blue-eyed angel. We were made for each other. But there is one thing missing."

Rory sat up. "What? Name it and I'll provide it."

"Sweetheart, you can't give me this, and I can't give it to you."

"What are you talking about?"

"A baby. A child of our own. That would make our union perfect."

"Oh... You scared me there for a minute. Mm, we could adopt I guess. We'll do it! We'll be a real family!"

"Really? After we're married of course. It is legal here, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is, hon. It'll be a quiet wedding. Neither of us have family, and no friends yet."

"That's not important. Hey, it's midnight," Baxter noted, looking at his watch.

Rory kissed Baxter, a long, loving kiss. "Merry Christmas, my love," he whispered against Bax's lips.

"Merry Christmas, my angel."

## *About the Author*

B. J. Powers lives in Seattle Washington with his two cats. He is single and looking for the perfect partner. B. J. is an accountant, and spends his spare time cooking up new stories, fishing, hiking, climbing, biking and swimming. He is also a gourmet chef and is always experimenting with new dishes. He's very excited his first novella was accepted by eXtasy Books and hopes to have more releases in the future.