



PLAYING THE FIELD
PLAY ON



J. M. SNYDER

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...Sean's forefinger carves a trail in the sweat beading on Cordero's bare stomach, down his abs to his dark navel. The flesh flutters beneath his fingertip, interested, but when he drifts a little lower, Cordero slaps his hand away.

"So now what?" Sean asks. The sun shines like a halo behind Cordero, draping his face in unreadable shadow. When Sean looks up, all he sees are the whites of Cordero's eyes and those impossibly bright teeth. "We just gonna sit here or we gonna do something about it?"

The coach's shout interrupts them. "Jefferies! Get back in play!"

"Guy like you gone get me in trouble," Cordero jokes, nudging Sean's knee with his. "I'll hit you later."

Sean laughs. "For real? Don't be playing me."

Turning his back to the field, Cordero faces Sean and grabs the front of his own shorts. His hand encircles the hard shaft of his cock through the material and gives it a healthy squeeze to make it bulge out. At eye-level, it's all Sean can do not to jump the guy right *here*. "You ain't the only one sprung," Cordero whispers, his voice breathy and hot. "I'm-a get with you when we through. *You* better not be playing *me*."

Unable to tear his gaze from Cordero's sheathed cock, Sean sighs. "I ain't never been more serious in my *life*."

Cordero laughs as he jogs back onto the field. From the bench Sean watches his dark legs pump and imagines the

clench of muscles in Cordero's flat ass hidden beneath his shorts, buttocks tightening with each step. He shifts his weight from one leg to the other, enjoying the sweet press of his thighs against his dick, and wonders how he'll ever make it through the rest of practice without busting a nut...

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BY

J. M. SNYDER

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PLAYING THE FIELD: PLAY ON
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Sean Mason first sees the sexy new guy at practice.

It's mid-September; the team's been on the field for a month already, easing back into the game after summer vacation, but this will be the first time rookies take the field. Tryouts were last weekend—Sean skipped them like he always does. He did that shit his freshman year, kicking soccer balls into goals and showing off his skills in the hopes of being picked for the team. Now he's a junior, and as long as he wants to keep playing, the coach keeps putting him on the roster. He proves he can play every time he gets out on the field.

This year's new players currently jog around the pitch,

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seven guys strung out in a loose line as they circle the field. Sean notices them when he exits the locker room with a few of his other teammates, and someone laughs. “Fresh meat,” Thompson says, nodding at the rookies. Through his buzzed blonde hair, his scalp is sunburned, though his pale face is slathered with sunscreen. He’s got a white smear he didn’t quite rub into his skin completely, just under his jaw, and Sean thinks it looks like cum smudged under his chin. “How many d’ya think will still be here at the end of the season?”

“Once Coach Barrett’s through with them?” Sean turns at the sound of Kidman’s reedy voice and grins at his teammate. Short and squat, Kidman’s built like a linebacker and can’t run two feet without purpling in the face. But he’s a damn good goalkeeper. Pushing his dark, lank hair from his face, he frowns at the rookies and asks, “Hell, which ones are going to be stupid enough to come back after their first day?”

Sean follows his teammates out onto the pitch. “We were.”

“We can’t get away,” Kidman jokes. “The coach sucked us in—”

Sean agrees, “He sucks, alright.”

The three laugh at that—Coach is a hard-ass, able to reduce the cockiest college boy to tears. Sean knows; he’s seen it happen. Once or twice the old man almost got to him, but Sean just ground his teeth and let the harsh words roll off his back. He’s a good player—he knows it, the team knows it, and the coach damn well better know it after two seasons of yelling at him on the field.

They stop at the edge of the pitch while the freshman run

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past. By the loll of their tongues, the whites of their eyes, and the sweaty hair pushed back from their brows, they've been running a while now. Sean tries to remember those days—he'd show up early for practice and be set jogging around the course what, eight laps? Ten? Something like that. The coach is a huge believer in running the body ragged before play even begins. These new kids will learn not to show up so early next time... "Give up now!" Thompson shouts at them. The guy passing before him cringes at the sound of his voice. "Turn around, go home, save yourselves!"

That sets Kidman and Sean snickering again. "Ain't worth it," Kidman tells the rookies. "Do basketball or football instead. The cheerleaders are hotter."

"At least those sports *have* cheerleaders," Thompson adds.

That's when Sean notices the guy bringing up the rear of the pack. Despite his lag time, it's evident he's just pacing himself. His shirt is off, tied around his narrow waist, exposing a smooth chest the delicious color of dark mahogany. Sweat glistens like water on thinly-defined muscles bunched in his abdomen and flexing along his arms and legs. Sean's first thought is *damn...that brother is fine*. Who needs cheerleaders when you have an ass like *that* to check out during the game?

Only once the rookies are past does Sean realize he didn't get a good look at the guy's face. How could he? All that bare skin from neck to waist distracted him. If they were alone on the field, Sean would chase the guy down, knock him to the ground, roll him over and bite at the ruddy nipples that look

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like chocolate kisses set in his chest. Sean wants to lick away the guy's sweat, trail his tongue around muscles that would clench at his touch, rim around the dusky navel before following the faint trail of black curls down to the prize in the rookie's shorts. Without thinking, he throws a look back over his shoulder after the runners as he follows his teammates onto the pitch.

While he's watching, the guy glances over. High cheekbones, strong nose, dark eyes like black jewels set in his face. A razor-thin line of hair traces his jaw and circles his full mouth. He has large lips, the color of garnet, which Sean can almost feel pillowed against his own.

The hint of a smile pulls those lips taut. Sean's just about to smile back—so he's not the only one who likes what he sees—when he walks straight into Kidman. *That's* what the rookie is grinning at, has to be. Just his luck; here he is trying to look fly and he comes off whack. As Sean takes a step back, Kidman elbows him in the stomach. “Get off me.”

Sean pushes back, cheeks heating with embarrassment. “Why'd you stop?”

“Girls.”

Coach Barrett's hard voice silences them. He stands like a monolith before the trio of players, feet planted apart, arms crossed, clipboard in one hand and whistle in the other. The three huddle together, each hoping he isn't singled out. Sean ducks behind Kidman but it doesn't work—he's taller than his friend, so the coach picks on him. “Where's everyone else, Mason?”

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With a wave back at the sports complex on the edge of the field, Sean asks, “Locker room?”

“What’s going on in there?” the coach wants to know. “Circle jerk? You guys come first?”

Beside Sean, Thompson whispers, “Yeah. We finished early.”

Sean knees the back of Thompson’s leg. He wobbles, catches his balance, then turns to punch Sean in the arm. The coach, only seeing the last part of the exchange, slaps Thompson with the clipboard. “Ten laps,” he snaps.

“But he—”

“Twelve.”

Thompson sighs. “Coach—”

“Keeping talking,” the coach warns. “You’re up to fifteen.”

Throwing Sean a hateful look, Thompson jogs to the edge of the pitch. Sean grins but his victory is short-lived. “What are you two waiting for?” the coach asks. “A golden ticket? I want eight from both of you. Now.”

With a sigh, Kidman starts, “Coach, my asthma...”

At the stern look Barrett throws his way, Kidman trails off. Jogging after Thompson, he mutters, “I’m going to die out here.”

“If you’re lucky,” the coach shoots back. “You too, Mason. Start hoofing it.”

Sean glances around, trying to find...*there*. That hot black guy’s just skirted the goal and now follows the rest of the team along the stretch of field heading for the centerline. Sean starts

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to jog, gauging the distance separating them, and picks up speed the last few feet to break through the ranks and fall into step beside the guy. Matching his strides, Sean flashes him a wide smile. “You’re new here. I’m Sean.”

The guy nods. “Cordero.” His hair is braided into tight rows across his scalp, each ending with a small flip at the nape of his neck. This close, his skin has a reddish sheen to it, polished, and Sean stumbles because he can’t stop staring. Perfectly white teeth flash at him in a quick grin. “Careful there, holmes. You’re real slick today.”

“Yeah, well.” Sean can’t think of anything else to say about *that*, so he changes the topic. “You’re a freshman?”

Cordero’s eyes narrow and he makes an irritated noise out of the corner of his mouth. “Psh. I been here three years.”

Sean’s interest piques. Freshmen aren’t usually his style—too damn young and immature. But a junior, now, like himself... “I ain’t see you ’round.”

“Maybe you ain’t been looking,” Cordero offers.

They run behind the next goal, the two of them slowing to distance themselves from the other runners. “Please,” Sean says, throwing a glance around to make sure none of his teammates can overhear. “Why d’you think I went to school in the first place? I’m in the D and A program.”

Cordero grins, like he knows Sean’s joking. “What the hell’s that?”

“Dick and ass.” Sean throws him a wink, heart thudding in his chest. The ball is Cordero’s to play.

Around the opposite end of the goal, into a straight run.

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Cordero shakes his head, his grin widening. “Damn, man. I got to sign up for that one. I’m sure I’ve racked up enough credits already.”

Sean laughs, then jumps when the coach shouts in his ear. The bastard’s so *close*. “Cut the gossip, ladies! If you can chat, you can pick up the pace!”

Tamping down his grin, Cordero speeds ahead and Sean hurries to catch up. When he draws alongside Cordero again, Sean looks back to make sure the coach is out of earshot, then mutters from the corner of his mouth, “Jesus.”

Cordero glances behind them before answering. “He always such a nut buster?”

That earns him another laugh. Sean likes this guy. “Oh, no. He’s just gone easy on you rookies. Most times he’s worse.”

* * *

All throughout practice, Sean can barely concentrate. His mind is on Cordero, his gaze constantly drawn to the new player until he feels like the whole team knows he’s staring. It’s hard to play soccer with a hard-on shoved down the front of his shorts. Thank God for the long jersey he wears, or everyone would know he’s sporting wood. He thinks once practice is over, he’ll skip the communal showers and head back to his dorm, lock the door behind him, and jerk one out. Damn, that bro is *tight*.

Cordero plays midfield, not a stone’s throw from Sean’s winger spot. Whenever Sean tries to follow the ball, his attention is snagged by the new guy—the coach made Cordero

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put back on his shirt before play and the bright white T-shirt seems to glow against his dark skin, more distracting than his bare chest had been. As Sean watches, Cordero pulls up his shirt, exposing that flat stomach of his. He bends down, tugging the shirt to his face to wipe the sweat beading on his forehead.

Sean can't look away.

After a moment Cordero senses he's being watched. As far as Sean's concerned, there's nothing else worth looking at on the field today. Cordero's hands freeze, shirt still pressed to his face, and he glances over at Sean from the corner of his eye.

In that instant, Sean knows they're getting together.

When? He isn't sure. But didn't Cordero pass that "D and A" comment back to him, keeping it in play? There's no denying something arcs between them, a sizzling energy that sparks along the base of Sean's spine to invigorate his cock. A slow grin eases across his face and he calls out, "Hey, rookie."

Cordero snickers into his shirt. His face disappears into the bright white cloth as he rubs away the sweat, then he ducks under the hem and tucks the shirt behind his head, wearing it like a bolero. Sean's gaze drops and, because he knows Cordero's watching, he licks his upper lip.

"You bad," Cordero says with a laugh. Propping his hands on his hips, he shakes his head like he can't believe Sean's audacity. "Better watch out for Barrett."

"Barrett can bite me," Sean replies.

With a smirk, Cordero jokes, "And here I thought you was

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wanting *me*.”

Encouraged, Sean takes a few steps closer—not enough to get out of position, but he doesn’t want to flirt across the length of the pitch if he can help it. Turning his back to the game, he drops a hand to the front of his crotch and makes a show of adjusting the budding erection in his shorts. “Tell me you don’t want a piece of this.”

The message is clear—he’s sprung.

Cordero’s grin turns shy and he ducks his head. “I’m considering it.”

The rest of the field has disappeared for Sean—nothing exists but Cordero and his sexy grin. Taking another step closer so he doesn’t have to shout, Sean asks, “How about after practice? I’ll give you a good look at what I have to offer, help you make up your mind. You fine, bro. I’ll tell you straight.”

“Nothing straight about you,” Cordero says.

Sean laughs and moves closer still. Grabbing his crotch, he admits, “I got one thing, straight and hard, just begging for—”

“Mason!” the coach shouts.

Quickly Sean drops the act. Releasing the front of his shorts, he smooths his hands down his jersey and backpedals to his spot, unwilling to look away from Cordero just yet. “Don’t think I’m through with you.”

Another shout; his name again. “Mason!”

With an exasperated sigh, Sean whirls as he steps back to his spot. Raising his voice, he calls out, “I’m—”

In position, he plans to say. But before he gets the words

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out, something hard and fast strikes the side of his face, just below his temple.

Sean drops to the ground.

At first he's stunned. Then blinding pain erupts behind his eye—the world brightens around him in a flash of white light and his vision sparkles at the edges. He sees the soccer ball bounce away as he writhes in the grass, then it's kicked out of sight as dark legs approach to kneel beside him. Sean feels firm hands on his arm and hip. "Damn," Cordero swears. "That had to hurt. You all right?"

Rolling onto his side, Sean presses both hands to his face as if he can hide the pain. "*Fuck.*" His breath comes quick and fast, in time with the ache throbbing in his skull. Unshed tears and sweat burn his eyes. "God *damn*. What the hell?"

Strong hands grip his arms, hauling him to his feet. The pain washes over him anew when he stands and he has to bend over, head tucked down, to keep from passing out. Nausea bubbles in his stomach, and the back of his throat feels full, as if he's going to be sick.

Cordero leans over him, concerned. "Talk to me, man. Let me see."

Fingers pry at Sean's hands—he lets them pull his palm away and braces himself for the worst.

"Sh'yeah," Cordero says, dismissive. There's a hint of laughter in his boyish voice that sounds barely contained. "Ain't nothing. Get some ice on it, you be fine."

Ice. Sean looks up and sees Cordero's naked chest mere inches from his face. No amount of pain can drive out the

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sudden image of an ice cube melting on dark skin, rivulets of water trickling over relaxed muscles, chased by Sean's white finger along such black flesh.

For a moment he forgets where he is and reaches out. His fingertips brush over Cordero's sweaty abs, the touch electric, leaving behind sweaty prints, stark for a moment, that gradually fade back into Cordero's skin. Sean leans closer, wanting more...

A sharp pain recalls him to the moment as Cordero presses the bump where the soccer ball struck. Quickly Sean pulls back his hand and shoos Cordero away. "*Shit*, man. What are you trying to do, give me a concussion?"

This close, Cordero's grin is blinding. "You a big baby. Guess a guy like you can't handle a little pain."

And they're back to talking about sex again. Or at least Sean's back to thinking of it. "I can take whatever you dish out," he promises. When Cordero reaches for his head, though, Sean holds out an arm to ward him off. "Not right here."

Cordero grabs Sean's wrist, the warmth of his hand like a bracelet of fire searing into Sean's skin. "Let's get you some ice," he says with a grin, shaking his head. "You something else."

Without waiting for a response, he leads Sean off the pitch toward the team's bench, where a large cooler full of bottled water and Gatorade await. Everyone's watching them—Sean keeps one hand to his head and lets Cordero pull him along, enjoying the hot hand holding his arm. At the center line, the coach stands with arms crossed, clipboard held to his chest

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like a schoolgirl's. The glower on his face says he doesn't know why they're out of position but he'll gladly give them a dozen laps around the pitch if it'll get them back in the game.

Sean wants to point out he took a damn ball to the head here. Cut him some slack. But that really *will* land him laps, so he keeps quiet.

Cordero walks Sean to the bench. As Sean sits, the coach blows his whistle, goading the team back into their positions. "You a damn wimp," Cordero murmurs, but there's no malice in his voice, nothing mean about what he says. He's teasing, and this time when he touches the bump on Sean's head, his hands are gentle. Grabbing a nearby hand towel, he opens the nearest cooler and scoops out a handful of ice. He twists the towel shut, then tamps it in his hand to create a makeshift ice pack. "You know most pro players actually go out their way to hit the ball with their head, right?"

"I ain't pro," Sean mutters. "If Beckham took a shot like that, he'd be down same as me."

Cordero points out, "Beckham'd be paying attention during the game, not flexing with a rookie."

Sean leans forward, head tilted so Cordero can hold the ice pack against his temple. Biting his lower lip, he moans softly, gaze lingering on Cordero's bare chest. "Beckham ain't my type. I like my boys a little darker. You hear me."

"Yeah, yeah. You gonna make me hold this?" Cordero jiggles the ice pack until Sean takes it from him. For a brief second, their hands brush together—Sean's surprised the ice doesn't melt at the touch. "You been checking me out all day."

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Sean grins up at Cordero. "I like what I see. You got a problem with that?"

With a laugh, Cordero teases, "If you'd look at my face instead of my ass, you'd know I was scoping you, too."

A thrill runs through Sean at Cordero's brazen reply. Despite the game in progress before him, despite their other teammates and the coach nearby, he reaches out again to touch Cordero. His forefinger carves a trail in the sweat beading on Cordero's bare stomach, down his abs to his dark navel. The flesh flutters beneath his fingertip, interested, but when he drifts a little lower, Cordero slaps his hand away.

"So now what?" Sean asks. The sun shines like a halo behind Cordero, draping his face in unreadable shadow. When Sean looks up, all he sees are the whites of Cordero's eyes and those impossibly bright teeth. "We just gonna sit here or we gonna do something about it?"

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Sean laughs. "For real? Don't be playing me."

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Unable to tear his gaze from Cordero's sheathed cock, Sean sighs. "I ain't never been more serious in my *life*."

Cordero laughs as he jogs back onto the field. From the bench Sean watches his dark legs pump and imagines the clench of muscles in Cordero's flat ass hidden beneath his shorts, buttocks tightening with each step. He shifts his weight from one leg to the other, enjoying the sweet press of his thighs against his dick, and wonders how he'll ever make it through the rest of practice without busting a nut.

* * *

Ten minutes into the practice game, the coach wanders over to the bench where Sean sits staring after Cordero. Propping a foot up beside Sean, Barrett nods out at the field and asks, "What do you make of the new guys?"

I like that hot one in center field, Sean thinks, but he keeps that to himself. Instead he shrugs, like he's not sure one way or another, and mutters, "They alright."

He says it ghetto, *a'ight*. Cordero has him talking whack—Sean finds himself slipping into urban slang whenever he's around black guys, and since he's all about dark meat, he tries to hang with them as much as he can. His parents hate it whenever he comes home on break, as do his professors when he speaks up in class, but the coach is used to players' slang and doesn't tell him to talk proper. "A few of them are pretty good. That Jefferies kid is on the ball. How's your head?"

Sean stifles a grin. *Bobbin' for that bro*, he wants to say, but they'd be talking about two different heads then, wouldn't

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they? And he doesn't even want to *touch* that ball comment. His are hanging low for Cordero. Removing the towel from his temple, he dumps the melted ice onto the grass and shrugs. "Damn cold, is how it is."

"You have two options," the coach tells him. Something in his easy manner makes Sean glance at him, wary. "I can't have anyone warming the bench if they hope to play on my team. So you either finish out practice with laps around the pitch, or you leave the field. Your call."

If he leaves, Sean knows that'll look bad in the coach's eyes. He'll be demoted a bit, he's sure—forced to sit out the first few games of the season, maybe, or moved from winger to a less active position. As much as he hates running laps, he doesn't have much choice if he hopes to stay on Barrett's good side. At least practice is almost over. If he jogs slow enough, he might only make it a mile or so before they head on in.

Mind made up, he stretches as he stands. "There's always a third option," he tries, though he knows full well there isn't. "I could get back in the game."

The coach laughs at that. "Nice try, Mason. I don't think so."

With a sigh, Sean starts jogging away from Barrett, down the length of the field. The chill from the ice wears off as he runs, leaving a dull throb behind in his temple. The hot sun glares down at him, burning away all thought until his mind is a white haze. All he sees is the line to his left marking the perimeter of the pitch; he keeps as close to it as he can without actually running over it, keeps his gaze on the ground, and

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follows that line down the length of the field. At the corner he swings out and turns, glancing at his teammates who scuffle for the ball while he passes behind the goal. He hits the other corner, turns, and starts down the opposite side of the pitch.

Cordero stands at the center line, facing the goal. He flashes Sean a sunny grin. When Sean draws closer, Cordero holds out a hand that Sean slaps with his own. “He got you running, don’t he?” Cordero asks.

“Running me ragged,” Sean mutters, hand stinging pleasantly from the slap. As he passes the rookie, Sean brings his arm down and around Cordero to slap his teammate’s butt. Through Cordero’s shorts, his fingers curve into the groove between Cordero’s cheeks, and Sean gooses him quick before jogging away.

Cordero’s laugh chases after Sean as he continues his lap.

The next time he rounds the field, Cordero has the ball. He’s in the thick of the game, his feet fumbling with Thompson’s as they try to kick the ball out from between them. Sean slows as he approaches, watching the action. Cordero has some slick moves, to be sure—he turns his back to Thompson, working his way between the winger and the ball, and shimmies up against him in an effort to block his view. Thompson lashes out, blind, but his shoe barely glances off the top of the ball. Cordero gets his toe up under the ball, kicks it into the air, then knees it out of Thompson’s reach. Before the other player even knows it’s gone, Cordero’s chasing after it, hoping to corral it before it can roll over the touchline and out of bounds.

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The ball's heading right for Sean. He puts on a quick burst of speed and draws closer, Cordero running to meet him. He meets the ball at the line, and Sean kicks out with the side of his foot, keeping the ball in play as he sends it tumbling back toward Cordero. The rookie flashes him that sexy grin again and stops the ball with his foot. "Thanks, holmes."

From behind him, Thompson roars, "Foul! Coach, no fair! Mason's not in the game! Coach!"

But Barrett was looking at his watch instead of the field and didn't see Sean's interference. When he looks up, Sean's already halfway to the opposite goal, well away from Cordero's dribbling. Thompson looks like a child having a tantrum, standing midfield with his hands on his hips as he glares after Sean while the rest of the team chases Cordero to the goal. Sean holds his breath, waiting to see if Barrett is going to pull out a card, but the coach just shakes his head. "Play on," he hollers.

"But, Coach!" Thompson whines.

"You want to join Mason around the pitch?" Barrett asks. He looks at his watch again and blows his whistle to stop the game. "Quit your bellyaching. Mason, two more laps. Rest of you, head on in."

Cordero ignores him, kicking the ball into the goal. It sails over Kidman's head—the moment the whistle blew, he stopped covering his post. The ball passes him without effort, hits the back of the net, and rolls down to rest on the ground. A perfect shot.

The coach blows his whistle again. "Come on, ladies! My

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granny moves faster than y'all!"

As Sean hurries around the field, he sees the reason for Barrett's sudden dismissal—members of the women's lacrosse team approach from the locker room. They practice from three to five. The moment they arrive, most of the men's soccer team gives up all pretense of play. The guys would rather flirt with the girls than listen to Barrett. "Come on, fellas!" the coach yells again. Already some of the players are dawdling, waiting for the women to approach.

Sean has another lap to go. He circles the field, ignoring the girls. A few of them say hey as he run by them, but he has no interest in anything they might offer. His gaze is drawn to Cordero, who lingers behind on the pitch. As the other players head inside, Cordero retrieves the ball from the goal, then wastes a few minutes wiping his face off on his shirt again. He untucks it from behind his neck, rubs it across the tight black braids on top of his head, then dries the sweat from his chest as he smoothes it down. Sean watches him dawdle. Is he staying behind for a reason? Waiting on Sean, maybe? *Please yes*, Sean prays.

Sean rounds the opposite goal. Cordero glances at him, then drops to one knee to retie his shoelaces. Yeah, he's waiting. Sean grins and resists the urge to pump his fist in the air. *Score!*

Abandoning his lap, he cuts across the field and heads straight for Cordero. As he approaches the rookie, he slows, until he stands doubled over beside Cordero with his hands on his knees, trying to catch his breath. "Yo, bro," he says,

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keeping his voice low so the girls now taking the field won't overhear. "You ready for this?"

Cordero's laugh is heady. "I'm in the apartments," he says.

The student apartments, upperclassmen housing. They're closer to Ferguson Gym than Sean's dormitory, and probably a safer place to hook up than the locker room. Even if they waited for all the guys leave, the coach might stay behind and what would he say if he checked the showers and found the two of them getting off?

When Sean doesn't answer immediately, Cordero tells him, "My roomie's got class until six. I'm just saying..."

"Alright then," Sean agrees. There it is again, *a'ight*. "Let's do it."

Cordero stands and stretches. Sean waits until the rookie heads off the field before he snags the back of Cordero's shorts. His fingers ease under the waistband, pressing hot, damp flesh. Cordero tries to slap him away but Sean holds on tight and lets the rookie pull him along. They'll duck into the locker room, grab their bags, and wait out Coach's post-practice bitch session. Then, Cordero's place.

The rest of the afternoon awaits.

* * *

Luckily the coach doesn't keep them long. The rookies aren't too shabby out on the field, so he blabs on and on about teamwork while the players sit in the bleachers that frame the basketball court, praying he shuts up soon so they can shower. Cordero and Sean are the only two players on the last level up.

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Sean leans back, nonchalant, against the tier behind him and lets his fingers play along the small of Cordero's back. He's worked Cordero's shirt up and his skin strums over the rookie's, a gentle touch to remind them both what's in store. If only Barrett would let them go...

It seems like an eternity, but the old man finally winds down and tells them he thinks this will be one of their best seasons yet. Funny how he plays that card every year. As the team disbands, Cordero claps a hand onto Sean's knee and pushes himself up. "Come on, bro. We outta here."

Sean practically trips to comply.

The student apartments are a short walk around College Circle, the road that separates the Midlothian campus of Patten University from the rest of the city. Sean's dorm is a high-rise on the opposite side of the Circle; if he were heading home he'd just cut across the campus, through the quad and academic buildings, past the library, to trim ten minutes off the walk. But his roommate is a loser who's always in their suite, napping at the most inopportune moments, and Sean would have no privacy if he brought Cordero back *there*. The apartments are close, and if Cordero's roomie is out for a while, they should have the place all to themselves.

Cordero lives on the second floor. Sean troops up the stairs behind him, footfalls echoing off the metal risers. Between the two of them, they sound like Armageddon arriving. At the door to Cordero's apartment, Sean takes a moment to lean against his new friend—there are no other students around, no one to see. He presses his chest against Cordero's back, laying

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his body flush along Cordero's, and the ache at his crotch fits between Cordero's buttocks perfectly. Smoothing his hands down Cordero's sides, Sean leans his head on Cordero's shoulder and sighs. "You one fine mo-fo, you know?"

"Keep talking like that, we ain't gonna get in the door," Cordero chides, but Sean can hear the smile in his voice.

Sean's hand dips lower, grasping at the front of Cordero's shorts. He only manages to cop a quick feel, however, before the door opens and Cordero's leading the way into his place. All the student apartments are the same—kitchen to the left, living room on the right, one bedroom straight ahead and a hallway leading off, probably to the bathroom and another bedroom out of sight. Sean's been to a few parties on this side of campus so he's familiar with the cramped corners, but compared to his dorm room, the apartment is luxurious. Not for the first time, he tells himself he has to sign up to move over here next year.

"Want a drink?" Cordero asks, tossing his key onto the small table in the kitchen that serves as a place to eat.

Closing the door behind him, Sean catches the back of Cordero's shirt in one hand and reels the rookie to him. "Maybe later." His gaze is drawn to Cordero's large pink lips, and Sean licks his own in anticipation. "Come here. I been wanting you all blessed *day*."

Without warning, Cordero pins Sean back against the door. Hands on either side of Sean's head, Cordero holds him in place, thrusting his hips into Sean's until their erections grind together with a sweet ache. "You want this?" Cordero purrs.

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A throaty moan escapes Sean as he nods. The pressure on his cock feels so *right*. “Damn straight.”

“Think you can handle it?” Cordero leans down to touch his mouth to Sean’s neck—his breath is hot along Sean’s skin, and does delicious things to Sean’s libido that make Sean rub against him, wanting more. “Don’t front with me, homeboy.”

“I ain’t fronting,” Sean swears. He leans his head back as Cordero’s nose tickles along his throat. Then Cordero sticks out his tongue, hot and damp, and licks along the curve of Sean’s chin, just under the fine line of stubble that Sean shaves away every morning. Fisting his hands in Cordero’s shirt, Sean gasps. *Yes*. With his tongue, Cordero traces along Sean’s jaw line to breathe in Sean’s ear. Two words, low and sexy. Two words that weaken Sean’s knees. If Cordero wasn’t holding him, he’d melt to the floor.

“Show me.”

The challenge in his voice thrills Sean. Before he can do anything Cordero pulls away, shrugging off his hands to move out of reach. Turning his back to Sean, Cordero shucks off his shirt—Sean watches the firm muscles in his back flex as he pulls the shirt over his head, and notices a black tattoo on his left shoulder, some *kanji* character Sean doesn’t recognize. As Sean looks on, Cordero heads for the hallway, turns the corner, and is gone.

Sean waits, his mind a blur, his whole body humming with desire. Weren’t they just...so where’s he...*what*...?

A black hand curves around the wall, followed by Cordero’s head as he peeks back. “Well?” he asks. “You

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coming?”

Sean grabs his hard dick through his shorts and thrusts into his palm. “You even have to ask?”

Cordero laughs. “Then get your white ass over here already.”

Tugging off his jersey, Sean follows Cordero to the hallway. When he reaches the corner, though, Cordero has disappeared again. Sean stops, hands hooked into the waistband of his shorts, unsure what’s expected of him. There’s a doorway on the left side of the hall through which Sean sees white tile—the bathroom. Another door at the end of the hall is shut—the other bedroom. Did Cordero head in there? Or...

When Sean takes a tentative step down the hall, Cordero’s butt appears in the doorway of the bathroom. He’s standing just out of sight but, as Sean watches, he bends and pulls down his shorts, exposing taut skin the color of whipped chocolate. His buttocks round out into the hall, tantalizing, tempting. Their bare flesh draws Sean like a magnet; by the time he reaches the doorway, his own shorts are gone, dropped down the hall and stepped out of in his haste. His jock gets peeled off and tossed away, and he kicks off his sneakers one at a time as he advances.

Cordero’s laugh entices Sean closer. But when he reaches the bathroom, it’s empty. Toiletries lay scattered across the bathroom counter, towels litter the floor, and the toilet lid is up. Sean catches a glimpse of his naked torso in the large mirror above the sink and frowns. “Cord—”

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The sudden rush of water in the shower cuts him off.

A slow grin crosses Sean's face. Boldly he steps up to the shower stall and yanks back the curtain. Inside, Cordero stands in one corner of the tiny stall, hands lathered with thick, white soap that looks like cum against his dark skin. "'Bout time," he grumbles. "Here I was thinking I'd read you wrong. Thinking you was straight."

"God," Sean says, rolling his eyes. "Don't even."

Without being asked, he slips into the stall beside Cordero. Hot water rains down around them, pelting Sean's bare shoulders and chest. It feels heavenly after the long hours spent in the hot sun, and his muscle begin to relax. He turns, back to Cordero, and lets the spray wash away the sweat and grime.

Slick hands touch his hips. Cordero's hands are slippery, leaving trails of soap in their wake as they rub along Sean's lower belly. They angle for his dick, which stands at half-mast, until Cordero's fingers wrap around the base of his shaft. *Then* it takes notice, standing up as if to make it easier for Cordero to stroke along the length. "Yes," Sean sighs. Hands flat on the wall before him, he leans in, back arched, ass butting up against Cordero's crotch as the rookie's hand rubs his cock. Cordero's other hand smoothes between Sean's cheeks, the soap stinging his hole when Cordero rims around it. Sean can't stop himself from standing on his tiptoes, pressing more of himself into Cordero's hand. "God, man. I love it."

"This?" Cordero asks. One finger breeches Sean, easily

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slipping into him. The burn of entry sears through him like wildfire and he bucks into the fist pumping his cock. Cordero's lips are inches from Sean's ear; each breath warms him up inside, spiraling down his spine. "You like it when I do this?"

"Yes," Sean gasps, and "please" and "God!" He tries to squat, sitting down on Cordero's hand, but finds the plum-shaped tip of Cordero's dick bumping between his buttocks instead. Cordero's hands slip to Sean's hips, holding him still as he's positioned into place. Then Cordero wriggles his way in, spreading Sean's feet with his own to open his legs a bit, guiding himself inside inch by excruciating inch. Sean moans, drops his head against the wall, then presses his cheek to the tile, letting the shower splatter his scalp and back and face. "Fuck me," he growls, his voice guttural. "God, man, fuck me already, will you?"

Cordero complies, easing in until Sean feels his full length inside. They move together in an ancient rhythm of bump and grind, the pleasure of their coupling erasing the sting from the soap. Sean drops one hand to his own cock, pumping into his fist as Cordero brings him to release. "Yes," Sean says, again and again, his voice rising in volume until he's crying out over the sound of the shower and his shouts echo off the tiles around them, reverberating back in a crescendo. "Yes, yes!"

Together they reach the edge of lust. At the last moment Cordero pulls out, shooting his load onto Sean's backside. When the hot cum splatters him, Sean jerks off, his own orgasm ripping through him like a tidal wave. He turns his

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face up into the shower spray as he comes, leaning back against Cordero, his need shuddering through him. Cordero's mouth finds Sean's, finally—he tastes sweet like victory, his tongue and lips enough to stiffen Sean's dick again.

* * *

It becomes routine—after practice, Sean heads over to Cordero's for a little fun. If the roommate is out, as he usually is, they have the whole place to themselves. Why limit their lust to a cramped stall in the bathroom? The couch in the living room is much more comfortable, as Sean discovers when Cordero's insistent kisses press him back to the overstuffed cushions. The ottoman between the sofas is the perfect height to kneel against while Cordero fucks him from behind. And once they even do it on the kitchen table, Sean sitting on the edge while Cordero holds his knees apart to thrust into him. That time sticks in Sean's mind as particularly raunchy—they used margarine for lube, and now Sean can't butter toast in the cafeteria without getting a hard-on.

Unfortunately, the two guys don't meet up outside of soccer. Though Sean looks for the rookie whenever he's hanging around campus, he's never once spotted Cordero among the other students. They have different classes, different friends, moving in different circles that only intersect when it's time to play ball. Sometimes when he's alone, lying in his own bed, Sean wonders what Cordero's schedule is like. Maybe he'll call up the guy in the morning, meet him for lunch, grab a little quick dick before his next class. But when

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morning comes he always forgets, and the piece of paper with Cordero's digits on it gets buried under the school books on his desk.

That's why whenever they're on the field, Sean can't stop staring at Cordero. Thank God there are so many rookies on the team—the coach wants them on the field as much as possible so they practice every Tuesday and Thursday from three to five, and again on Saturday from ten to three. Each time they play a full-length game, and after each, Sean follows Cordero back to his dorm room for a different kind of balling. Knowing he'll have that thick, black dick up his ass makes him flirty and coy out on the field, and more than once it's hurt his game. On Saturday he hurries to practice, rushing through the locker room in his eagerness to take the field, and doesn't even wait for the coach to holler before he's running laps, circling the pitch to catch up with Cordero. Coming up beside the rookie, Sean fakes a dodge into Cordero's path and laughs when Cordero shoves him away. "Miss me?" Sean asks.

From center field, Coach Barrett bellows out, "This isn't study hall, Mason! Cut the chit-chat."

Cordero distracts Sean something horrible. Most of the time when they're on the field, Sean ignores the soccer ball, intent on seducing the rookie. No matter where they are in relation to each other, Sean somehow manages to close the distance between them. He's offside so often, Barrett gets tired of yelling his name. It's no longer laps around the field; it's push-ups, fifty at a time, face down in the short-cropped grass

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while his teammates' feet kick and fumble the ball in the corner of Sean's vision. Even though it's only practice, Barrett insists on regulation rules, and no game is complete without Sean racking up at least one yellow card.

It's Cordero—he's driving Sean crazy, just standing there looking hot in his baggy shorts and oversized jersey. Thinking ahead to a time after the game when they can get together just throws Sean off. He can't pay attention to the damn soccer ball when his own balls ache something *fierce*.

It's only a few weeks into the season when Sean gets his first red card. It's for being offside again, a problem he never had before Cordero joined the team. Sean rests on the bench for a few moments, but when Barrett heads his way, he knows what's coming and stands before the coach can send him on laps. Sean spends the rest of the time circling the field, staring at Cordero as he runs. It isn't until after the whistle blows and everyone's heading into the locker room that Coach Barrett pulls Sean aside. "Give me a minute, Mason."

Sean glances at Cordero, who stops in mid-step to wait. At the coach's frown, though, Cordero shrugs. "I'll catch up with you."

Sean turns back to the coach and flinches at the hard look in those steel-gray eyes. Suddenly defensive, Sean asks, "What?"

"What," Barrett echoes. He shakes his head, as if disappointed. "I'll tell you what. Since that rookie's joined the team, you can't play worth shit."

Sean glares at his sneakers, silent. He isn't the worst player

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on the team, so why does the coach have to call him out? What the hell does he want Sean to say, anyway? *Sorry dude, I'm banging the guy and we only hook up after practice, so thinking about getting with him throws off my whole game.* Wouldn't Barrett have a heart attack if he knew *that*?

When he realizes Sean isn't going to answer, Barrett sighs. "Here's my dilemma, Mason. I've got a really great player who used to be committed to the game, but now seems to have checked out this season. And I've got a talented rookie who could maybe be something hot if he'd just apply himself a little harder, yet all he wants to do is fool around. If you two were at each other's throats, I could work with that. I'd pit you against each other, let your animosity take the field. But you guys are friends, and the laughing and goofing off distracts the whole goddamn team."

Sean frowns, tightening his mouth into a small pout to keep his lips from trembling. Barrett's right—Sean can't argue with him. And if he's seen the play between Sean and Cordero, then the rest of the team must know what's going on as well. Do they laugh behind his back? Mime blow jobs and crack gay jokes when he's not around? Is Barrett telling him this as a warning, or is he kicking Sean off the team?

God, no, don't think it, don't dare...

If Sean *is* getting let go, when will he ever catch up with Cordero again?

Clearing his throat, Sean mumbles an insincere, "Sorry."

"I got to do something, kid." Barrett shakes his head, defeated. "I can't afford to have you both on the field. I spoke

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with Jefferies earlier—”

“When?” Sean asks, his voice sharp. Is Cordero the one being booted? That wouldn’t make things any better for Sean. Sure, he’d still play on the team, but the two would never see each other again. Practice has become the highlight of his week, and he actually looks forward to it now...or rather, the special time he spends alone with Cordero *after*. If that disappears, if Barrett takes it away, Sean doesn’t think he’ll bother finishing out the season. “Are you bouncing him?”

A look of confusion crosses Barrett’s face. “What the hell’s that mean?”

“You know,” Sean tries to explain. “Kicking him off the team.”

Barrett makes a little disgruntled noise in the back of his throat. “I’m not ‘bouncing’ anybody. What I’m trying to do is find a solution that works for us all. You’re a hell of a good wingman when you pay attention. He’s quick on his feet and on top of the action when you’re not distracting him. So tell me how we play this, Mason. Tell me what I’m supposed to do.”

Sean scuffs his sneakers in the grass and stares at the ground, silent. Hell if he knows.

After a long moment, the coach sighs. “Think about it,” he says. Sean nods quickly. He’ll think about it all right. “Our first game’s in two weeks, and I can’t have the same mess out there that I have now when we take the field against Bronwyn. If you guys can’t come up with a solution between yourselves, I’ll have to step in, you hear?”

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Sean nods again. The coach turns away, tapping Sean's arm with his clipboard to signal their little chat has ended. Without further prompting, Sean jogs toward the gym, leaving Barrett to retrieve the practice balls. His throat burns and his eyes sting—the more he thinks about it, the angrier he gets. The *bastard*. What's it to him if Cordero and Sean hook up after practice? Yeah, they fool around on the field, but it's only practice, for God's sake. When it's a real game, they'll buckle down. The way he's talking, you'd think the two were rutting right there on the center line. Jesus.

As he nears the gym complex, he slows because he sees Cordero leaning against the outside wall, using his key to trace the lines of grout in the brick facade. He looks like a dark shadow against the building, a hole torn from the rest of the day, and Sean feels his spirits soar. *I'm hitting that*. He keeps quiet and moves fast, stepping right up to Cordero before the rookie can notice him. He doesn't even get a chance to turn before Sean's up in his space, chest pressed against Cordero's arm, legs framing Cordero's. Right up on him, his mouth inches from Cordero's ear—who cares who sees? Pushing against him, pinning him to the wall, Sean gropes at the front of Cordero's shorts and breathes, "Let's get the fuck out of here."

Cordero elbows him aside with a grin. "Man, you all up on my jock. What's Barrett want?"

With a dismissive wave, Sean growls, "Fuck Barrett."

"He gonna take you up on that if he hears you." Cordero nods past Sean, who leans back against the wall beside his

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friend and turns to see the coach heading their way. In a soft voice, Cordero wants to know, “What’d he say?”

“Same shit he said to you, I guess.” Sean’s arm rests easily in the gap between Cordero’s back and the wall behind them, his hand cupped around Cordero’s ass. As Barrett approaches, Sean rubs his fingers down the crack of Cordero’s butt cheeks, the motion hidden by the press of their bodies together. It thrills him to know he’s copping a feel right here where anyone can see.

When the coach is close enough he nods at the two players. “Boys,” he says, greeting them. His arms are full of muddy soccer balls and that damn clipboard of his. For a moment he stands in front of the door that leads down into the players’ locker room, as if waiting for it to open on its own. When it doesn’t, he stands aside and throws Sean a quick look. “Can you get this for me, Mason?”

He’s too comfortable where he is to comply. But when Cordero moves, Sean pushes him back and lunges for the door. The smile he flashes Barrett as he holds it open feels fake. Heading in, Barrett tells them, “See you two inside.”

Sean’s in no mood for one of Barrett’s feel-good pep talks today. He already knows what the coach will say—it’ll be the same old shit, “You guys look good out there,” followed by his constant admonitions to *stay alert, tighten up, look alive*. He’ll give Sean a knowing look as he says it, like he’s the only one carrying the team. Sean doesn’t want to hear it all over again.

As the door shuts behind Barrett, Sean snags Cordero’s

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arm. "Let's go."

Any other day, Cordero has fallen into step with Sean, just as eager to get back to his place and satisfy his lust. But today, incredibly, Cordero shrugs out of his grip. "Hold up, man. We gotta talk."

Uh-oh.

Dread curls in the pit of Sean's stomach. His veins run cold, as if all his blood has drained away. The three horrid words hang between them like a gun, cocked and loaded. *We gotta talk.*

Sean's pretty sure he knows what Cordero wants to say.

Facing his friend, Sean crosses his arms tight over his chest and glares at Cordero. "So? Talk."

"Man," Cordero drawls, shaking his head. "Don't be like that."

"Like what?" Sean wants to know, voice rising. His previous anger swirls over him again, cloying. He takes a step closer—once again he's in Cordero's face, but his earlier playfulness is gone. The shadow crossing Cordero's features is Sean's own, and his voice sounds impossibly loud in the few inches of space that separates them. "What d'ya gotta say, huh? Talk to me."

Cordero starts to speak, but Sean shakes his head. When frustration flickers through Cordero's eyes, Sean closes his own so he won't see. "I can't hear you. You ain't saying shit."

Strong hands push against Sean's chest, shoving him back. "Get outta my face," Cordero sneers. "I said we need to talk, so shut up and listen."

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“I know what you’re saying.” Each word is clipped, bitter, as if Sean bites it off when it’s spoken aloud. Cordero’s hands are still on his chest but he slaps them away. “I know what this is all about. I thought maybe we had something, but whatever.”

Confusion crosses Cordero’s face and he reaches out, smoothing a hand down Sean’s arm. “Naw, hold up.”

But Sean brushes him off. “Don’t even.”

So much for their afternoon tryst. Sean’s heart constricts, tightening in his chest, making it hard for him to breathe. It’s only been a few weeks, *damn*, and he’s already like this? He doesn’t know what pisses him off more...Cordero breaking things off or his own stupid self being so damn *upset* by it.

“Whatever,” Sean says again, heading for the door and the locker room and the rest of the team inside. He has half a mind to tell Barrett he’s out of here.

“Sean.” Cordero catches the back of his shirt as he passes, but Sean keeps walking and the sweaty fabric slips from Cordero’s grip. “Hey, dickhead. Get back here. I ain’t through with you.”

“Fuck off.” Sean yanks open the door hard enough it swings wide. The adjustable closure at the top of the door catches hard, jerking the door back at him, but Sean ducks inside the cool hall and narrowly avoids getting hit in the backside. Wouldn’t that make a grand exit?

Fuck Cordero. “Sean,” he says again, right on Sean’s heels. His hand on Sean’s shoulder sears through Sean’s shirt, burning Sean’s skin. “Hold up, man. We ain’t—”

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“We ain’t shit,” Sean spits. They aren’t dating, are they? Does Cordero even think of Sean when they aren’t together? They don’t call or send emails back and forth, or even text each other. There’s nothing between them, Sean realizes. Nothing but heated moments and hot sex. And yet...

And yet it hurts, being thrown away so easily. Maybe they *aren’t* like that, but God, *could* they have been?

Does Sean *want* them to be?

With a shrug to throw off Cordero, he says aloud, “No.”

“Sean.” The hand on his shoulder tightens; Sean surges ahead, up the short flight of stairs leading to the locker rooms, trying to shake Cordero loose. It doesn’t happen. The guy sticks to him like Velcro, right up on Sean, invading his space. “Dawg, stop this. Hear me out.”

Ahead the hall divides—women’s lockers on the left, men’s on the right. Between them are two doors, restrooms, separated by a pair of water fountains. Before they reach the turn that will lead him into the locker room, where the rest of the team already gathers, Sean whirls around, anger overpowering him. He knocks Cordero’s hand down and shoves the rookie away, hard. “What the fuck you gotta say?” Sean asks, livid. He doesn’t need to hear an apology, doesn’t want to be fed some half-assed line about how they have to split. He gets it. It’s over. Move on.

On reflex, Cordero pushes him back. “Don’t be like this...”

Too late. Sean gives him another shove that sends him staggering. Cordero grabs at Sean’s shirt to keep his balance

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and pulls Sean close. *Oh, no.* Sean wrestles to free himself, head tucked into his shoulders as he barrels into Cordero's chest. His eyes sting—are those tears? His head throbs with the start of a nasty migraine, his stomach churns anxiously, and his throat tightens around emotions that rage unchecked through his body. His hands clench into fists that pummel Cordero's flat stomach.

Cordero shoves him back. Sean feels strong hands on his chest, his neck, then finds himself pinned against the door to the women's bathroom. One of Cordero's hands catches him around the throat—Sean grapples with that hand, trying to loosen its grip, and can't. He stares, wild-eyed, as Cordero leans down into his face. "Go ahead," he whispers. "Hit me."

Cordero's body sears against Sean's, his weight holding Sean in place. Through their shorts, Sean feels Cordero's erection hard against his thigh, and he's surprised to realize his own libido hasn't waned. The whites of Cordero's eyes mirror the design in the tile behind Sean; his flat nostrils are flared, his jaw bunched in anger, his dark skin shiny with sweat.

"You got what you wanted from me, didn't you?" Sean taunts. "A dumb white ass to fuck. So go ahead. Tell me it's over. Tell me—"

"Will you shut the hell up?" Cordero snaps. "Stop putting words in my mouth! I know what I'm trying to say!"

Sean glares at him. "And what's that, exactly?"

But Cordero answers without words. Holding Sean still, he leans down and presses his mouth to Sean's in a silent kiss. His lips, firm and sure, cover Sean's completely. His tongue

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flicks over Sean's lower lip, then eases inside Sean, demanding, as if claiming him. Sean's hands relax, smoothing down Cordero's arm; he leans back, giving into the moment, the man, the mouth on his. The harsh fingers on Sean's neck release him, but he has no intention of going anywhere. He's caught up in the kiss—here, in the hallway, where anyone can see. He's caught up in the precious ache of Cordero's body once again on his, and the sweet balm Cordero's kisses soothe over his tumultuous feelings.

Cordero's thumb trails down Sean's throat, a ticklish, barely-there touch that sends shivers down his spine. When Cordero ends their kiss, he rubs his nose against Sean's cheek and, with a breathy little laugh, murmurs, "You right, holmes. *I do* like your dumb ass."

Sean grins. His arms ease around Cordero's waist; his legs shift apart to make room for Cordero's as the rookie leans against him. "So what're we fighting about in the first place?"

"You the one fightin' me." Cordero grips Sean's chin and turns it toward him for a quick kiss. "All I'm saying is we gotta chill out on the field. I already tole my momma I made the team, and I ain't 'bout to get bounced 'cause some horny white boy can't keep off my big black dick."

A thin blush heats Sean's cheeks. "*I like* your big dick."

"So why don't you hit me up sometime?" Cordero asks. "Outside the game. You know I'd hollaback."

Sean studies Cordero—is he serious? If Sean called him in the middle of the week, or late one evening...not even to hook up, really, but just to chat. Would that fly? "I thought..."

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“Man,” Cordero says, shaking his head. “You got my digits. You know my crib. You got someone else I don’t know ’bout? Someone dipping into you on the sly?”

“Nah, brah.” Sean laughs at the thought. Since he met Cordero, no one else has caught his eye. As much as he hates to admit it, that was part of the reason he got so upset earlier. How would he ever be able to play soccer on the same team with this sexy brother if he couldn’t get with him after the game? “You it.”

“A’ight, then.” Cordero pulls back, just enough to take the weight of his chest off Sean’s, but his hips are still thrust forward, his cock hard against Sean’s. “Don’ wait ’til you see me to want me. If you need it—”

“I do,” Sean says. Here, now. His hands grasp the front of Cordero’s jersey and he pulls the rookie near, mouth open, eyes closed. Their lips touch; this time Sean’s in charge. As his tongue delves in, hungry, Cordero’s hands fumble at Sean’s waist, his hips, the door behind him. When he leans against it, the door swings back beneath their combined weight.

Sean stumbles into the women’s restroom, Cordero heavy above him.

Cordero backs Sean into the wall, their bodies alive with longing. Lips part, mouths open, tongues swirl together. Saliva and sweat, beaded on upper lips, gets licked away. Hands thrust beneath clothing—Sean’s into the front of Cordero’s shorts, and Cordero’s hands just as eager under Sean’s shirt. Then his fingers brush over Sean’s pert nipples, shattering the

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lust coiled inside Sean. It bursts in him, flooding his cock with a heady rush of desire. *Now*, his mind screams, and every nerve echoes the sentiment. The words stick in his throat, nothing more than guttural moans in heat. *Now, here, please, yes.*

The door swings shut behind Cordero, cutting them off from the rest of the world. The wall Sean leans against blocks out the overhead light illuminating the bathroom so the two guys are draped in shadow. Cordero's hands look like stains on Sean's pale flesh, tattooed patterns branded into his skin. Cordero's hot mouth kisses over Sean's chin, down the curve of his throat, into the hollow at the base of his neck. Farther down, squatting before Sean, Cordero runs a hand over Sean's chest as Sean pulls his shirt up out of the way—Cordero's lips glance over the thin muscles of Sean's abs and he licks out, rimming Sean's navel with his tongue before chasing away his own spit with another kiss.

Sean holds his shirt up with one hand as the other rubs over the straight rows of braids along the top of Cordero's head. "Yes," he sighs when Cordero moves lower, tugging Sean's shorts down around his knees. "God, please."

Cordero's mouth follows the thin trail of coppery hair that leads down from Sean's navel. His thumbs hook through the straps on Sean's jock strap, stretch them a bit, snap them into place again. Sean's cock strains the front of his underwear, an unsightly bulge Cordero opens his mouth wide to take in. For a moment he massages Sean through the fabric, his lips and tongue and teeth teasing as they dampen the material. Arching

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away from the wall, Sean bucks into Cordero as his hands fist in his shirt. His voice rings off the tile around them. “Yes, yes!”

They’ve never done this before. It’s always a quick fuck hidden away in Cordero’s dorm room, some heady kisses, hands kneading hard dicks. Nothing in public, where they might be caught. Nothing this intimate, with Cordero peeling down Sean’s jock strap to blow him. Nothing like *that*.

Curled over his teeth, Cordero’s lips close around the tip of Sean’s dick. *Yes*. He uses them to nip and squeeze the plum-colored knob, then takes Sean in a little farther. *Yes*. His tongue traces the slit on the underside of Sean’s cockhead, lapping up the first drizzle of pre-cum that bubbles from him.

“Yes,” and “Yes,” and “Oh, sweet Jesus God, *YES!*” The last word tears through the bathroom, echoing around them, a million affirmations as Cordero takes Sean’s length in completely.

Releasing his shirt, Sean grasps Cordero’s ears and fucks his mouth. Cordero’s hands are on Sean’s ass now, spreading his cheeks, forefingers angling for his puckered hole. As Cordero fingers him, Sean rocks back, taking Cordero in as the rookie sucks his cock. “Yes!” he cries, every nerve trembling on the brink of release. How could he lose this? How could he honestly let this go?

It’s over in a fast rush that washes through Sean, weakening his knees. He slides down the wall, spent, and finds himself held tight in Cordero’s embrace. He tastes his own juices on Cordero’s lips when they kiss. “Half the team knows

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we on the D.L. now. Why you so damn *loud*?"

"What d'you 'spect?" Sean asks with a laugh. He wipes white flecks of cum off Cordero's top lip, then chases his finger with a kiss. "So now what?"

Cordero hugs him close, nuzzling Sean's neck. "We cool, holmes. We cool."

* * *

It's Wednesday, quarter after two in the afternoon. Sean camps out on one of the comfy armchairs scattered around the study floor in the Student Union—a disposable plate teeters precariously on the arm of the chair, a half-eaten ham sandwich and a handful of chips all that remain from Sean's quick lunch. He has forty-five minutes until his next class and a quiz he hasn't studied for yet, so he sits cross-legged in the chair, his heavy Biology textbook open on his lap. His eyes are beginning to blur from trying to cram for the quiz. *Why can't today be tomorrow?* he wonders. Then he'd have practice to look forward to instead of Bio lecture, and he'd be getting with Cordero shortly thereafter.

Though, Tuesday? They didn't just connect *after* practice, as they usually did. Sean's cell rang an hour before they had to meet on the pitch, and Cordero's warm voice purred through the line. "Let's meet up now," he had said. On the quad where Sean had been walking, he swiveled around in mid-step to head toward the student apartments. "Maybe I won't distract you *too* much if you get a piece of me ahead of time."

Good thinking. Sean was stellar on the field yesterday, top

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of his game, and the coach knew it. He grunted his approval afterward, when Sean and Cordero headed for the locker room. “Welcome back, Mason,” he said, tapping Sean’s shoulder with his clipboard as the guys passed.

Sean thinks there’s nothing wrong with having a go at Cordero twice in one day. But it’s Wednesday, no practice this afternoon, and Thursday seems so damn far away...

At his hip, Sean’s cell buzzes. He slips it out of its holster and glances at it—a new text message. Probably his roommate again; the dumbass can’t seem to remember *not* to lock the door to their dorm room before heading down the hall to the snack machine. Yeah, Sean doesn’t want anyone sneaking all up in his shit, but more than once the bastard has left his keys on his desk, *then* made a soda run. Earlier this week, Sean had to go back between classes and let the fucker in. If he’s locked himself out again, tough. Sean’s too comfortable to move at the moment, and this damn Bio text isn’t going to learn itself.

But the message is from Cordero. Three characters that Sean puzzles over for a moment until he figures out what they mean. ?U@—*where you at?*

A sly grin spreads across Sean’s face as he texts back. *SUB U?*

SUB is student slang for the Student Union Building. It’s a focal point on campus, houses the cafeteria and most of the student organizations, and is a great place to crash between classes. It sits right on the edge of the quad, so wherever Cordero is at the moment, Sean isn’t far away.

Is this a booty call? Sean’s heart stutters in his chest. He

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hopes so.

He sets his cell on his knee and turns his attention to his textbook, but his gaze keeps drifting to the silent phone. How long will it take for Cordero to hit him back? Did he mean to text Sean, or was that message meant for someone else? Maybe he isn't interested in hooking up at all—

When the phone buzzes a second time, Sean jumps and almost knocks it to the floor in his haste to answer it. No text this time—an incoming call. He flips open the phone. “Hello?” His voice sounds a little too loud and he tells himself to calm down.

Cordero's slow drawl drizzles into Sean's ear like warm honey. “Damn, holmes. Bitch didn't even *ring*.”

Sean laughs. “You know we ain't got practice today, right? What you calling for?”

“Man,” Cordero says, “like you gotta ask.”

So now it's like this between them. Sean grins foolishly; Cordero's stepped it up a bit, taken soccer out of the picture. Getting together outside of practice is one thing, but calling on days they don't even play means something else entirely. With a glance at the clock on the wall, he tells himself he really needs to study. But he's not a Bio major, so what's one quiz more or less? His blood surges at the suggestion he hears in Cordero's voice, and he hopes he doesn't sound as goddamn giddy as he feels when he says, “I got class at three.”

“Won't take that long,” Cordero assures him. “My roomie's gone until four. I just got out the shower myself and don't feel like getting dressed just yet. Hell, ain't no way I'ma

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be able to shove *this* into my pants. You know what I mean.”

Sean did. The student apartments were immediately behind the Student Union, and he knew exactly which one was Cordero’s. “Gimme five minutes,” he says as he starts to gather up his books.

“Two,” Cordero tells him. “You left yet?”

Shoving his biology textbook into his backpack, Sean promises, “Coming right now.”

“Psh. You better hold it ’til you get here,” Cordero warns.

Sean laughs and hurriedly zips up his backpack. “I’ll be right there.”

J. M. SNYDER

An author of gay erotic/romantic fiction, J. M. Snyder began self-publishing gay erotic fiction in 2002. Since then, Snyder has released several books in trade paperback format and has begun exploring the world of e-publishing, working with Amber Quill Press and other e-publishers. Snyder's highly erotic short gay fiction has been published online at *Ruthie's Club*, *Tit-Elation*, *Sticky Pen*, and Amazon Shorts, as well as in anthologies by Aspen Mountain Press and Cleis Press. A full bibliography, as well as free fiction, book excerpts, purchasing information, and exclusive contests, can be found at:

<http://jmsnyder.net>

* * *

**Don't miss *Playing The Field: Tee'd Off*,
available at AmberAllure.com!**

Greg Chennault has been a golf fanatic since he was a kid. When he was twelve, he managed to sneak onto a local golf course in search of a job, and there he met Trevor Johns, who taught him the sport. Greg caddied for Mr. Johns all throughout his high school years, and still fondly recalls his time with his former employer. His memories of Mr. Johns'

young son Junior, however, four years younger than Greg, aren't quite as rosy. The boy annoyed Greg, and once he stopped caddying for the father, he promptly forgot about the son.

Ten years later, Greg works at the Hermitage Country Club, which hosts an annual Mid-Atlantic Gold Tournament each Memorial Day weekend. When Greg notices Mr. Johns' name on the roster of registered guests, he thinks it'd be nice to see the old man again. But the young golfer who takes the JOHNS nametag is hot, sexy, and not at all who Greg expects.

Trey Johns was once "Junior," and is now all grown up. His first crush was on Greg, his father's caddy, and when they meet again, he's quick to inform Greg that he's still as smitten as he was before. But Greg has reservations—he finds it difficult to resolve the memory of a gawky teenage Junior with the confident man Trey has become.

Greg's conflicting emotions almost blow the first chance he has with Trey. Will he get another?

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