

A Sip...



A Torquere Dress Short

Hero in Me

JB McDonald

Zach wasn't sure when the young man had caught his eye, or even why. He'd been watching for twenty minutes now. Watching the hawks circle and the prey get entirely too drunk over a single pint of beer, while around them the pulsing, driving beat of techno music drowned out any possibility of talk. The people here didn't come for talk, though. They came for movement, for alcohol, for sex.

The sandy-haired prey was getting steadily more unsure on his stool. Zach tried to tell himself that he'd just not noticed how much the attractive man had been drinking. Zach also tried not to notice when the prey staggered away from the bar with an overly bright smile and wove his way through dancing, pushing bodies toward the bathroom. He ricocheted off a pair of women, stumbled into a table, and only barely managed to right himself against the wall.

Should anyone be that uncoordinated after one beer? Zach didn't think so, and despite what he'd been trying to tell himself, he was certain the man hadn't had more than that.

The song changed to yet another techno, the lights going from blue to yellow and hard white, spearing through the darkness. The prey still hadn't come out of the bathroom. Two more men had gone in, though.

Zach glanced around for a bouncer. They were out of sight -- just one at the door, and he wouldn't be moved for anything.

Zach was probably overreacting. He tried to focus on his drink, but found his gaze straying to the bathroom over and over again. The prey still hadn't come out. No sign of hair two shades too dark to be gold topping a lean, toned body. How long had it been? Two minutes? Seven?

Another patron walked up to the bathroom door, paused to look around, and ducked inside when someone else exited.

It seemed suspicious. Zach signaled the bartender, getting back the credit card they'd held for him and signing the short receipt. He stood, trying to stay calm, meandering his way through the crowd. Music blared and strobe lights flashed, casting shadows and light so quickly his eyes struggled to adjust. Stepping into the bathroom, with its fluorescent glare and plain white tile, was almost a relief.

Only one stall was open. Zach glanced in it automatically; the toilet seat was broken. He walked past, ducking to count feet under the doors.

Two, two, two, two--

And in the handicapped stall, six. Not that they were being particularly subtle. He could hear quick, quiet whispers, the rustling of clothes, fast breathing. It wasn't uncommon in this place. People weren't looking for a connection, just fast, messy release.

For that reason alone, he paused short of trying to kick the door down. For all he knew, everyone in there was enjoying themselves. He wasn't a bouncer; he wasn't even security. He sure as hell wasn't a cop anymore.

In his moment of hesitation, words slithered under the door. "--bend him over--"

Zach reacted without thinking. He took one step back, then slammed his booted foot right where the lock would be. The door crashed open, bouncing back against the

wall. The men within bellowed and cursed, scattering as best they could while he shoved inside.

The prey who'd attracted his attention in the first place had sagged to the floor between the john and the wall, looking dazed. The other two were scrambling to button their pants over hard-ons.

"Who the fuck are--"

Zach didn't let him finish, but spun the kid around so his chest was pressed into the wall. "Names."

"You can't--"

"Names." He didn't have a badge anymore, but he knew the right tone of voice. Without cuffs, a car, or backup, tone of voice was all he had.

"Vic--"

"Don't say a god-damned thing, Victor!" the other man yelled, reaching across the toilet and yanking their victim up. The victim staggered, arms flailing as he tried to keep his balance.

How Zach had ever thought the kid was just drunk, he didn't know. He let go of his perp when the other guy shoved the victim at him, catching the slim figure as best he could. Both of the would-be rapists fled.

Zach twisted, torn between hanging onto the kid and giving chase. Soft words stopped him.

"Don't-- don't--" Hands brushed at his chest and shoulder, fingers twining into cloth and holding on with surprising strength.

The other two were already gone, swallowed into the throng outside the bathroom.

"It's okay," Zach muttered, trying to keep his frustration out of his voice. "You're okay."

"Don't--"

He glanced down, searching for any sign that they'd gone too far. He should have followed his instincts. Gotten in here as soon as he'd seen the kid staggering toward the bathroom. But the other two hadn't come in until later. He remembered their faces, and could spot them in a line-up. Not that it was likely they'd ever be caught.

At least the kid looked unhurt. His pants were undone, but hadn't been pulled down. He wasn't really a kid, either. There was a ring of light blue around his blown pupils, matching fair skin and sandy colored hair. Thick locks fell in a narrow face, hard planes keeping his features from being too soft. High cheekbones, a lean jaw. When he stood upright Zach guessed they'd be nearly the same height, with his bundle

perhaps a shade shorter than Zach's six foot. The body under the soft button-up shirt was hard and lean.

His hair smelled good.

Zach pulled his mind away from that with a scowl, disgusted that he'd even had the thought. This wasn't the time to notice whether or not someone was attractive.

"Hey." He shook the man slightly, trying to get his attention. "You with me? Stay with me, buddy."

The victim's head rolled on the thin stalk of his neck, resting on Zach's shoulder. "M with you. Don't feel so good."

"No, I bet not. What's your name? Did they hurt you?" It was too many questions to ask someone who'd been drugged. He always asked too many questions. Wincing, Zach repeated, "What's your name?"

"Will. Will Rawn."

"Okay, Will Rawn. Did they hurt you? Will, stay with me." He shook Will again, watching bleary eyes focus on him with difficulty.

Brows drew in over the blade of a slim nose. "M with you."

"Good. Did they hurt you?"

Will shook his head slowly. "Jus' my head..."

Zach put careful fingers on Will's jaw, turning his head to see. A bruise was forming; likely, Zach thought, from the fall to the floor. "I think you'll live. I want you to stay right here, okay? I'm going to call the police, and then--"

"No!" Hands tightened on his shirt, eyes flying wide. "No police. None."

He should have agreed and gotten them anyway. But somehow, looking into eyes that, for the first time, were showing more fear than confusion, he couldn't bring himself to do it. "We should get you to the hospital, then. Make sure they didn't--" He couldn't say it. That they hadn't sodomized him was reasonably certain by the state of his clothes, but they didn't have to pull down his pants to force his mouth open. There wasn't any sign of semen, but condoms would assure that. There wasn't any redness or bruising, and their pants had still been up, too, but just in case...

Will's head drooped, hair hiding his expression. "No. No hospitals. Jus' wanna go home."

Zach frowned. "We should really--"

"Jus' wanna go home, 'kay? Please. Wanna go home. Didn't hurt me. Wanna go home." The words were soft, pleading, drifting slowly into a murmur.

Zach should insist. He knew he should insist. Carefully, he cupped the man's face and tipped it up again, studying it for bruising, redness, even the faintest bit of pinkened skin, indicating something had happened. Blue eyes regarded him just as steadily, silently pleading.

"Is everything all right in here?"

Zach jumped and looked up, saw two men -- one of them a bouncer -- standing at the door. A small crowd was starting to take notice, cramming in behind them.

He hesitated, trying to decide how far the almost-rapists had run. It had been too long. The bouncers wouldn't catch them now.

"He's been drugged." Zach gave the bouncer a hard glare. It was security's job to notice things like this. "He had two attackers. They were drinking here earlier, at the end of the bar. Ran out pretty quick, so they probably left credit cards behind. One of them might be Victor something. You should start pulling receipts. You'll be hearing from the cops in the morning."

If they actually wanted to catch the guys, now would be a better time. But that panicked voice kept ringing in his ears: no police.

Zach shifted his grip, pulling one of Will's arms over his shoulders and wrapping his other arm around Will's waist. He paused at the stall door, lifting one eyebrow when no one moved out of his way. "I'm taking him home."

They should have told him no. They had no way of knowing if he was the perp.

Nobody told him no. They shuffled out of the way, watching with sickening fascination as he pulled the kid out of the bar, steering him toward the door. The strobe lights were almost nauseating, the dark seeming to slip and slide around the room. People and tables materialized out of the gloom, only to vanish again a moment later.

Being outside was a relief. Staggering down the sidewalk under the weight of a drugged man, they looked just like any other pair of drunken bar-goers headed home, if heading home early. Zach's car wasn't far, parked on the street. He was grateful the passenger door was toward the curb; maneuvering Will into the car with traffic coming would have been excitement he didn't need.

A dash around the hood and a quick slide into his seat had them both safely in the vehicle, while cars continued to race by outside the thin steel doors.

"Okay," Zach breathed. "Where's home?"

Will frowned. "I'm-- I'm not--"

"Don't tell me you don't know. Please don't tell me you don't know."

"Jus' moved..."

He should drop Will off at the hospital. Let him sleep off the drugs there, where they could double-check for any STDs or injuries. A glance sidelong decided Zach against it. Whatever the reason Will wanted to avoid the hospital -- and the cops -- Zach would honor the request. "Did you update your driver's license?"

Will shook his head. He looked lost, confused. Hair shadowed the sharp angles of his face.

With a muttered curse, Zach put his car in gear. There was one place they could go where Will would be safe until the drugs wore off. It wasn't like Zach hadn't brought home strange men before.

Will woke up slowly, his heartbeat playing against his skull like a rocker with a vendetta. The night before was a blur, no more than vague memories that led fuzzily to a blackout.

He'd never had a blackout before.

He pushed himself up, frowning at the dark green couch, unable to remember what he was doing there. On second thought, he wasn't sure he cared. It was easier to grip his skull in both hands and not moan. Those kinds of vibrations were sure to make something behind his eyes melt.

But the dark green couch was still a little disturbing. He didn't own a dark green couch.

Frowning, Will braved looking at the world around him. It wasn't anything familiar. Beige carpeting and a mish-mash of furniture, a battered old coffee table, and a really great TV. The kitchen was behind him. He stood quietly, glancing down the hall to see if anyone was stirring, and ducked past the counter.

His head felt like it was going to explode. Luckily, no explosions happened.

There was a bowl sitting on the counter with a rotten apple and several envelopes. He grabbed one up, staring at the name on the front in the hopes it would jog his memory.

Zachary Lyons.

It rang no bells.

Quickly, Will patted down his pockets for his cell phone, remembered he'd left it in the car, and looked around. There was a cell phone sitting beside the stove. He grabbed it, dialing his roommate as fast as he could.

"Lo?"

“Alan, I just woke up in some guy’s house with no memory of last night. What the hell?” He kept his tone down to a fast and furious whisper.

“You had way too many.”

Will snorted. “Yeah, I guess. I’m in--” he grabbed the envelope again, “--Monrovia. Where the fuck is Monrovia?”

Alan started to laugh. “Sounds like you had a really good time last night.”

“I woke up fully dressed, on the couch.” Will peered down the hall again, not at all sure what he was going to do if the occupant woke up.

“So you passed out. In which case, you probably still owe him a blow job. It is a him, right?”

Oh, God. What if he’d gone home with a woman? No, wait -- “Yeah, Zachary.” He shuffled through more bills, hoping for another glimmer of information. There was none. “What the hell is the morning after protocol when you don’t remember what the hell happened?” It was there, just there, a fuzzy memory of... of drinking. He didn’t even recall dancing. Or meeting up with the group he was supposed to be meeting up with. And Alan was still laughing.

“You’re an asshole,” Will muttered, and hung up the phone. Movement out of the corner of his eye yanked his head up.

A man stood in the hall, wearing nothing but a pair of flannel pants. Will’s mouth went dry. He was gorgeous. Black hair, eyes so dark brown they might as well have been black, too. Broad cheekbones, every inch of him lean and fit. Going home with a perfect stranger wasn’t his usual MO, but no wonder he’d broken. “Hi,” Will managed at last. “Zachary. Hi, Zachary.” He smiled.

“You remember that?” Zachary’s black eyebrows winged upward in surprise.

How drunk had he been? “Of course!” Will lied. “It’s a nice name. Zachary.” Oh, God, he was beautiful. Whether or not they’d had sex last night, maybe he’d be up for a do-over this morning. Will smiled slowly. “I--”

“Wait.” Zachary’s eyes had flicked around the kitchen, landing on the stack of misplaced mail. “Ah. Will, you should sit down.”

Will’s smile faded. This was getting weird. Granted, it hadn’t started out normal, but... “I don’t normally drink like that.”

The statement seemed to cause Zachary more pain than relief. “Will, sit down.” Zachary followed his own advice, walking into the small family room and settling on the edge of the armchair. He started talking before Will even moved. “What’s the last thing you remember?”

Will edged around, perching on the couch. "This isn't funny, Zachary. Did the guys put you up to this?"

"Zach, and no. Were you meeting your friends last night? What do they look like?"

Will tried to smile again, to go along with the joke, but there was no humor in Zach's face. "Peter has red hair and -- what?" That had definitely been relief on Zach's expression.

"Neither of them had red hair."

Will stared for a long moment. Memory tried to surface -- staggering into the bathroom, bouncing off a stall -- and sank again. He pushed himself upward slowly, keeping a wary eye on Zach. "Okay. Look, fun as this has been, I'd better be getting home. No, don't get up! It's fine. I can show myself out--"

"Will, I think you were drugged last night."

He froze at the door. "By you?" It came out higher than he'd expected. He turned to stare, preparing to fight if he had to.

"No, not by me. I don't think anything happened, but we should probably take you to the hospital. Just in case."

Will felt the blood drain from his face. Odd experience, that. "You're mistaken. I couldn't have been drugged. I was meeting my friends--"

Zach nodded, holding up both hands placatingly. "I know. I'm sorry. Do you remember anything after the beer at the bar?"

He didn't. That's what had been bothering him, after all. How could he be missing so much?

"Why don't you sit down."

Slowly, Will made his way back over to the couch. "Was I--" He didn't want to know. "What happened?"

Zach's details were stark, straightforward. As he spoke, flashes came back. Bits and pieces here and there. Sounds, impressions. Nothing certain. Just enough to make Will believe that he was telling the truth.

"But I wasn't--" He stopped, once more unable to complete the sentence. If he'd been raped, he'd feel it, right?

"No. I don't think so. You looked all right -- not that I undressed you, but as I said, they didn't get your clothes off. You should still go to the hospital."

Will rubbed his arms, shaking his head slowly. "I can't." At Zach's frown, he shrugged. "There's this cop. I -- I slept with him once. He's completely obsessed.

Hospitals report stuff like this, don't they? I don't want it to get back to him--" He rubbed his face, running his fingers back through his hair.

When Zach spoke, his voice was quiet. "I'm a cop. Or -- I was. I'm betting you didn't file a complaint with the department?"

Will shook his head wordlessly.

"All right. Let's go to the hospital. Then we'll go to the department. We'll see it doesn't get buried, all right? No boy's club shit. We'll get you a restraining order and--"

Will laughed humorlessly. "A restraining order the cops enforce?"

Zach took a long, deep breath. Will couldn't help but notice that it did fabulous things to his chest. "Trust me, all right? I know what I'm doing."

Will chewed on his lip for a long moment. Then, finally, he nodded once.

They went straight to the hospital, where a full rape kit was done on Will. Zach waited outside, watching as the cops who came to take the report were allowed entrance.

He should have dropped Will off and bailed, but couldn't bring himself to do it. He told himself it was because he'd said he'd help with Will's cop problem, but that wasn't really it, either.

He didn't want to think about what was really it.

Eventually, the two police officers came out, followed a moment later by the doctor. It was another minute before Will exited, buttoning up his shirt over a white T-shirt.

"Good news is, they don't think I was raped. In any form." He smiled, but it was wobbly.

"Bad news?"

"They're running blood tests to be sure I didn't catch anything, but the doctor thinks it's unlikely. Which is good news. Bad news is, I don't think I've ever been so embarrassed."

Zach gave him a sympathetic smile. "Well, it's over now." He watched Will, searching for any sign of an incipient breakdown. He seemed stressed, but he was handling it well. "You know, most people would be freaking out right about now."

"Yeah, well..." Will smiled weakly and shrugged. "I have too much to do. Hey, do you mind if we go by my place before we go to the station? I'd like to shower."

Zach nodded quickly. “After everything you’ve been through? I’d want to shower, too.”

Will introduced Zach to Alan, grabbed some clothes, and fled into the bathroom.

It hadn’t seemed real until the doctor had wanted to check out his ass. Until they’d done a swab inside his mouth. Until then, it had seemed like some poor joke. Like at any moment he’d wake up and realize it was all a bad dream.

But he hadn’t been raped. They were certain of that. No bruising, no abrasions in his mouth, no swelling or tenderness anywhere. Zach had gotten there in time, even if Will couldn’t remember what had happened.

The automatic act of washing calmed him further. Zach had said he wasn’t freaking out, but that wasn’t completely true; he just hid it well. By the time he stepped out of the shower, though, he was relaxed again. Whatever had almost happened hadn’t, and Zach was going to take care of his cop problem, too. He pulled on a pair of jeans and a form-fitting T-shirt, and dried his hair at least partway to make sure it’d fall in the correct lines. He stood for a moment, eyeing his reflection critically. Stubble was growing in along his jaw, shadowing the line of muscle. He’d seen Zach shirtless; there was little hair on that broad chest, and not much of a shadow on his jaw, either. Not like Will, who had a five o’ clock shadow by noon.

He shaved quickly, aware of the silence in the other room. Silence could be good or bad. It could mean talking softly enough not to be heard, or uncomfortable quiet. It shouldn’t matter to him which it was, but somehow, Will found himself wanting Zach to feel at ease.

He left the bathroom finally, ducking down the hall to the living room. Zach was sitting on the couch while Alan played video games, dressed only in his grubby boxers and a T-shirt.

“You planning on getting dressed today?” Will asked dryly.

“Not if I can help it. Dude -- I unlocked the next level.”

Will chuckled and sat down to pull his shoes on. He could practically feel Zach next to him, his presence large and warm. Will’s breath sped up. Now wasn’t the time. Zach was just helping him out with some stuff -- no big deal.

“All set?”

Will nodded, standing up and following Zach toward the door. “Later, Alan.”

Alan was too involved in the game to give more than an, “Uh huh.”

Will slid into the passenger seat of Zach’s car, running his fingers over the dash. “Weird. You’d think I’d remember sitting here last night...”

Zach glanced at him. "You okay?"

"Yeah. Yeah, of course. It's just..." He shrugged, uncertain how to explain it.

"Must be pretty scary, not remembering." Zach still hadn't put the car in gear. Hadn't even turned it on.

Will shrugged again. "More scary to think about what would've happened if you hadn't caught it." He turned, smiling. "Thanks."

For a moment, Will thought Zach looked embarrassed. Broad shoulders lifted and fell, and he turned the key in the ignition.

Will eyed him. Amusement swiftly buried his discomfort -- something he was grateful for -- and gave him a new focus. "Thanks for helping me with this cop thing, too."

There -- another embarrassed shrug.

"And sticking around at the hospital."

"Yeah, well..."

Will laughed. "Don't get thanked very often, huh?"

Zach looked like he was going to focus on driving if it killed him. "I was a cop. It's my job. Most of the time, you're too late and getting cursed."

Will winced, sorry now that he'd teased. He watched where they were going, trying to think about how to make it better. How to ease the tension in Zach's hands.

Other than the obvious way, of course.

"Were a cop?"

"Hm?"

"You said you were a cop."

Zach glanced at him sidelong, then nodded once. "'Fraid I made some bad judgment calls. I'm not what you'd refer to as clear-headed when people are getting hurt."

Will winced. "What, did you shoot someone?" It was meant to be a joke -- if a poor one -- but Zach didn't smile.

When he spoke his words were clipped. "It was the right man, if that makes it any better."

Will thought about that for a long moment. Thought about the men who'd nearly hurt him last night, and smiled briefly. "Yeah. It does."

That surprised a laugh out of Zach. “Well, my superiors didn’t agree. And they shouldn’t have. I walked before they could fire me.”

Will didn’t know what to say to that.

As it turned out, he didn’t need to say anything; Zach smiled at him, lips tilting crookedly. “And here you are, consoling me. I think there’s something wrong.”

Will chuckled and slouched more comfortably in his seat, watching Zach’s profile rather than the world going by outside. “I wasn’t hurt. Well -- no more than mildly disturbed and highly embarrassed. The police seem to think that, if the bar really did pull receipts last night, there’s a good chance my assailants will be caught. I have you to thank for all those points.” He paused, frowning. “Not the embarrassment...”

Zach laughed. “I hope not. I try not to embarrass attractive men.”

Will’s eyebrows shot up, and he eyed Zach consideringly. Memories of that morning came flooding back -- thinking he’d done something fairly stupid, followed by seeing Zach for the first time and deciding he wouldn’t mind being stupid again. “Attractive men, huh?”

“Uh...” Zach’s eyes shifted nervously from Will back to the road. “Look,” he practically yelped. “The station.” They swerved into a parking space, and he leaped out of the car before the seatbelt had completely retracted.

Will laughed.

It wasn’t a good idea to get involved with victims -- especially when they saw you as the hero. They just got weird and clingy... Not that Will seemed the clingy type, but you never knew.

Actually, Will seemed like the bouncing-back type. Or the backbone type. Granted, he’d been the type who didn’t know what to do about a cop problem, but once given the solution, he jumped for it.

Which didn’t change the fact that it was a bad idea to hook up with victims. Victims had issues. Zach had made some bad choices, but even he didn’t make choices that bad.

And damn Will anyway for coping with everything so well. If he’d been a bundle of anxiety and stammering nerves, Zach wouldn’t have been so interested. He kept watching, hoping Will would betray some sort of panic. Of shady judgment. But Will dealt with the cops, their chief, and the judge who handled the restraining order surprisingly well.

If Zach had ever had a stable relationship, this was the kind of partner he would have wanted. The concept snuck in without his consent, whispering in the back of his mind

as he watched Will talk with the judge, discussing aspects of the order and what Will's recourses would be if it were breached.

When all was said and done, they headed back to the car.

"Man," Will breathed, footsteps echoing down the long, plain corridor. "I could use a drink."

Zach laughed disbelievingly. "After last night? Have you lost your mind?"

"What? I have you with me to make sure I don't get roofied again, right?" His grin was entirely too enamoring. "And I didn't say I wanted to go out. I could go to your place. Or you could come to mine."

It was tempting. So tempting to say yes, take him home, and spend the night getting to know the man he'd come to respect. But -- victims. "I'm not your hero, Will. I--"

"Are you seeing someone?"

Zach shook his head. "But that's not the point. I'm not willing to take advantage--"

"I'm pretty sure the drugs wore off hours ago." For the first time, Will's voice was sharp. "I'm not your damsel in distress."

Zach thought of the night before and slanted a pointed look over.

Will rolled his eyes. "Okay, I was your -- not damsel. Stud." He flashed that grin again, cocky and self-assured. "Stud in distress last night. But I'm not now."

It was tempting. It was so tempting. But if there was one thing Zach was good at, it was following through when he'd decided on something. "I'll take you to your car and drop you there. If you need anything..."

Will shoved through the double doors ahead of him, into the fading afternoon. "Yeah, I get it. All you're willing to be is the hero."

Will stormed into the apartment, flinging himself down on the couch. He'd been so sure of Zach. Met at a gay bar -- even if he didn't remember it -- check. Mutual once-overs throughout the day: check. Laughter: check.

And the man had the greatest ass...

"I unlocked the next level."

He didn't look at Alan. "You said that this morning."

"I mean the next next level."

Without moving his head, Will looked upward. "That's great, Alan." His tone said otherwise.

Alan slumped down into the recliner, legs spread. "What's your problem?"

"You know that guy you met this morning?"

Alan nodded.

"He gave me the brush off. Said he wasn't going to be my hero. Like I'm some fucking princess. All I wanted to was screw him. Not even asking to wear his freakin' letterman's jacket. He probably has one, too. Bastard."

Alan snickered and rose, wandering toward the kitchen. He was still in his T-shirt and boxers, the latter so worn they were almost transparent. Will tried not to notice. He didn't want to be blinded.

"Don't you know where he lives?"

"Yeah."

Carbonation hissed as Alan opened a Coke. "So go get him. I mean -- he likes you?"

"I think so."

Alan shrugged. "Dunno what you're sitting around here for."

The television played on, running computer animation as the game system waited to be taken off pause. Will eyed his roommate. "You know, you're right. Screw this. What's the worst that could happen? He refuses to open the door. In which case I'll still be single and horny, and nothing will have changed. No chances, no change." He pushed to his feet, heading straight for the door.

"You need a condom?"

"Got one!" Then he was outside and thumping down the steps, racing back to his car. Should he bring a change of clothes?

Nah. He wouldn't jinx it.

"Don't always have to be the fucking hero," Zach muttered, prying open the beer bottle with more force than was necessary. "I just don't want to get into a situation we'll regret, is all."

Imaginary Will didn't respond.

"Just because I saved you once doesn't mean I'm going to coddle you."

Imaginary Will looked disapproving -- at the idea that Zach would try to coddle him, Zach was sure.

Zach scowled. "Trust me, this is better. You can go home and sulk and find some other prince. I don't wanna be that guy."

Imaginary Will glowered.

"You've got stupid hair. All -- flopping in your face like that." He'd kept wanting to brush it aside throughout the day. Reach over and skim his fingertips across Will's forehead, slide sandy blond hair out of those gorgeous baby blues.

See if he tasted as good as he looked. Damn.

A knock dispersed Imaginary Will before Zach could think of another comment. Still frowning, Zach walked over and opened the door.

Real Will looked a damn sight better than Imaginary Will.

Unfortunately, Zach had never been much good at admitting defeat. "What are you doing here?"

"I'm here to rescue you from your idiocy."

Zach looked at him blankly.

"Help pull your head out of your ass." Will pushed forward, stepping inside and closing the door behind him. "Since you don't want to be the hero, I guess that leaves me."

The surprise finally melted away, replaced by thwarted desire. Will looked even better than he remembered. This was a bad idea, damn it. "You were almost raped last night," Zach snapped.

"Almost being the key word. If you'd stop freaking out about whether or not I'm freaking out-- You know what? Never mind."

It shouldn't have taken him by surprise when Will stepped forward again, closing the gap between them. He'd been a cop, he'd spent years reading body language. It surprised him anyway, but not half as much as the mouth that landed on his. Will's tongue slid across his lips, and he opened without thinking, pressing back.

Then Will pulled away. "See, first impressions are really important. I think you got the wrong first impression of me."

"Oh?" There were hands at his shirt, tugging it out from his waistband. His own hands hovered, unsure what they should be doing. Parts of his brain told him firmly to push Will away, take him back to the door, and set him outside. The rest of his brain was saying, Woo hoo!

It was a quandary.

“You got the impression I’m a victim. But I’m not.”

“No?” Zach said faintly. Will hadn’t bothered to unbutton Zach’s shirt. He’d just slid his hands up, stroking the sides of Zach’s ribs. Any minute now, Zach would push him away. Things hadn’t changed. Will was still a victim, and -- except he said he wasn’t a victim. He sure wasn’t acting like a victim.

He was still talking. “No. I’m more like a slut. Well--” Will paused, tipping his head as if he were admitting to a lie. “Not with total strangers. But with people I know.” He leaned in, licking the tendon on Zack’s throat. “People I like.”

Zach’s head thumped back against the wall. This certainly wasn’t the kind of behavior he expected from someone he’d rescued. They tended to want protection -- this was out and out aggression.

He liked aggression.

“I’m so glad we got that sorted out,” he said, and -- breaking away to put his beer on the floor -- settled his hands on Will’s shoulders, sliding them down broad ribs to his lean waist.

Will murmured assent against Zach’s throat, lips and teeth tasting and nibbling.

Zach found the hem of Will’s shirt, pulling it up until Will broke off. They tossed it to the floor, and Will leaned in again to continue his slow devouring of Zach’s neck. Zach groaned, hands rubbing up Will’s back, over his shoulders and down to hard, flat nipples on a toned chest. Will made a noise in approval, his amazing tongue flicking at Zach’s ear before sucking. His hands were busily unbuttoning Zach’s shirt, tugging it off impatiently.

Laughing, Zach pulled it the rest of the way off while Will worked on his fly. This was definitely not the frightened little victim Zach had been afraid of.

“That’s good,” he murmured when Will licked the inside of his ear, drawing shivers down his spine. He brought his hands up, catching Will’s face and pulling him around. He wanted to taste back, to make Will twist and pant with bottled up desire. He caught Will’s mouth in a bruising kiss, demanding entrance for his tongue, thrusting in and claiming it when Will opened.

Zach pushed, and Will gave way. Zach was horny as hell, but he wasn’t about to blow all over the entrance way -- not when there was a perfectly acceptable bed in the room nearby. He steered Will there, laughing when he realized Will hadn’t ever stopped fumbling with his fly, and shoved hard when they hit the bed.

Will fell back, knees caught on the edge, surprise written across his face. Zach grinned and crawled over the top of him, batting away eager hands to get to the man’s jeans. They hugged his hips, relaxed around his legs, giving the shape of his body, but hiding what, exactly, was underneath them. Zach was relieved to get them off, to

finally take a good look at the hard muscles that had been playing peek-a-boo beneath denim all day.

Will's erection strained against boxer-briefs, a spot of cloth already damp from pre-come. Zach licked it, stomach clenching at the moan he drew from Will. Then he hooked his fingers under the waistband and pulled down carefully, freeing the heavy shaft. He licked that, too, starting at the base and sucking carefully on Will's balls. He'd have kept going if Will hadn't moved, scooting up higher onto the bed, out of range.

Zach hesitated, rocking back onto his heels and looking up.

Will grinned and beckoned. "Without the pants, please."

Laughing, Zach stood, ditched the rest of his clothing, and crawled onto the bed. He wasn't entirely surprised when Will leaned in to kiss him, fingers threading back through his hair, cupping the base of his skull to hold him there. He was beginning to think his damsel in distress was anything but. When Will broke the kiss and the hand at the back of Zach's neck pressed him downward, he decided this damsel most definitely wasn't a princess.

He licked a path down Will's chest, breathing in the scent of musk and salt, tasting something almost like vanilla. Hairs curled here and there, softening into a line of down that drew a trail to Will's pelvis. The pressure of Will's hand on the back of his neck eased off.

"Condoms. In my pants," Will said, his breath coming heavily.

Zach hurried to retrieve them, and was glad to find two. He wasn't sure if he could have corralled his thoughts together long enough to find his rubbers. He ripped the first one open and placed it on the engorged head of Will's cock, rolling it slowly downward. It was almost as bad as teasing himself. His heartbeat throbbed in his erection and under his skin. He didn't wait long before replacing his hand with his mouth, flicking his tongue over the flare of the head, sliding it down the underside.

Will's hand settled on the back of his skull again, pushing firmly. Zach obeyed the wordless demand, sliding down onto the thick cock, taking it into his mouth until it bumped the back of his throat. He sucked gently, trying to take it that much deeper. The hand in his hair clenched and tugged, and he came off without protest.

Will sat up, pupils so dilated there was only a thin ring of blue around the outside. His heartbeat was visible in his throat, his hair already disheveled, his skin flushed. Zach crawled up and nipped at Will's throat, heat coiling so hot and tight in his stomach he thought it might burn him alive.

He moved when Will pushed, rolling them both over so Zach was on his back and Will above, straddling him. Will smoothed his hands down Zach's chest, reaching to pluck up the unused condom and turning as he did so. When he finally came to rest, it was with his cock hanging over Zach's mouth, his head above Zach's cock.

While Will unwrapped the condom Zach grabbed a pillow, putting it under his head. He wanted to be able to reach easier, to suck on that gorgeous erection for as long as he could. He shifted his legs apart, flicking his tongue out to dance over the head. Will murmured soft praise, sliding the condom on over Zach's prick at the same time. Zach sighed in pleasure as Will's mouth followed his hand, hips lowering. He could feel it when Will paused, twisting to look down at what he was doing.

"Open your mouth."

Zach did so, taking the head in, groaning when Will thrust slowly downward. His mouth was filled, flesh thrusting as deep as it could go before Will pulled out and did it again, just as slowly. On the third thrust, Will matched his own mouth to his motions, engulfing Zach in one long swallow.

He couldn't reach Will's head to keep it there, and hands on his hips kept him from thrusting upward. It was delicious torture, his mouth being filled by a heavy erection while his own was pumped and sucked on, taken deep into Will's throat.

He tipped his head back so he could better take the cock being thrust into him, and he sucked as Will sped up, fucking his mouth rapidly and matching it. Zach's toes curled as he hung onto the last shreds of self-control, groaning around Will as a hand fondled his balls. The groan seemed to tip the scales; Will's thrusts grew erratic, jerky, and a moment later he went still. Zach sucked, milking every last ounce of pleasure out of it. His own prick was buried deeply in Will's mouth. He could feel the shudders in Will's muscles, fluttering tight around his head. And Will wasn't silent; a long, heartfelt groan rumbled in Will's chest, throat tightening and sending vibrations all along Zach's sensitive flesh.

Zach dropped his head back to breathe, turning his face into Will's thigh and gasping as muscles trembled around his cock. He thrust, once, and came so hard there were stars behind his eyes. Will sucked him through the whole thing, moaning as if it were the best part.

Then, finally, they broke apart. Will fell sideways and Zach just lay there, sweaty and spent.

Will's hand flopped up on his thigh. "You might be the best damsel I ever rescued from their own stupidity."

Zach laughed weakly. "My hero." He reached out, taking comfort in the warm, damp body stretched out beside him. "What would I do without you?"

"You'd be lost. Lost."

Zach's smile didn't fade. He stretched luxuriously, then relaxed again. "How can I repay you?"

"Hm. If the restraining warrant doesn't work on that cop, you can shoot him for me."

"Don't have a gun anymore."

“That’s a pity. We’ll get you a Nerf gun.”

Zach snickered. “That’ll do.”

For a long while, they lay there, listening to evening traffic and the ticking of a clock. Then Will rolled up onto his side, one arm propping his head up, his other hand tracing idle patterns on the inside of Zach’s knee. “You wanna go get a beer?”

Zach shuffled up onto his elbows, still flat on his back. “I have beer here.”

“But if we go out--”

“If we stay in,” he interrupted, “I can think of some fun things we can do.”

“Ah. You’re thinking we could--” Will wagged his eyebrows. “--Level up?”

Chuckling, Zach fell back to the bed and threw both arms over his face, blocking out the light. “Yeah. Something like that.”

“Okay. But I get to play the hero.”

Zach grinned. “Deal. Unless you get drunk.”

Will laughed. “Right. Then it’s definitely your job!”

Hero in Me

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