



# POKER NIGHT



## *Different Suits*

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Different Suits

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**Warning:** This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature readers. This story has been rated *Total-e-burning*.

**Poker Night**

**DIFFERENT SUITS**

**Carol Lynne**

## *Dedication*

For Angelo Ciatello.  
Who knew such a wonderful man and friend could be the  
inspiration for an entire series of books? Love you, Ang!

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## Chapter One

Angelo Pilato yawned as he tossed his briefcase in the backseat of his Mercedes. He started the car and pulled out of his parking space. Maybe he'd just go home and drink enough wine to pass out on the sofa.

Three weeks earlier, he'd pushed Carl Blakely, the religious zealot who'd become the self-proclaimed defender of heterosexuality, down on the courthouse steps. That's what was bothering him, not the fact it had also been the last time he'd seen a certain Neanderthal police detective.

He'd been hearing noises, feeling like he was being followed and getting fucked up phone calls in the middle of the night. See? Nothing to do with the detective. He tried to push thoughts of Moody Torrence from his mind.

The six-foot-six-inch detective wasn't even his type. Sure Moody was sexy as fuck with that shoulder-length black hair and the body of a god covered in tattoos, but his damn feet had to be at least a size thirteen. The idea of those big, black biker boots made him shiver. *Nope, definitely not my type.*

Angelo made his way through the heavy rush hour traffic and pulled onto his quiet street. He waved at the neighbour's kid as he grabbed his briefcase and headed towards the mailbox.

He noticed the flowers around the mailbox needed watering and groaned. He loved his flowers, but the thought of watering the front and back beds left him even more tired. Opening the front lid of the box, Angelo was surprised to see it stuffed full.

Confused, he reached in and pulled out the stack of mail. His breath hitched as he saw what was in his hands. *Pamphlets*. There had to be at least fifty of them, all proclaiming the evils of homosexuality.

Angelo wasn't surprised to see the vile things were the product of Carl Blakely's ministry. *Fucker.*

As he let himself into his house, something dawned on him. If one of Blakely's flunkies had stuffed the pamphlets in his box, then they knew who he was and where he lived. He started to toss the vile literature into the trashcan but dropped them on the counter instead.

He reached for the phone and dialled 9-1-1. Despite what Trey had advised him a few days earlier, Angelo refused to call Moody.

After explaining the situation to the dispatcher, Angelo hung up and removed his tie. He retreated to his bedroom and carefully hung his suit and tie in the closet before placing his dress-shirt in the dry cleaning bag.

The dispatcher told him she'd send a car out, but Angelo knew without it being an emergency, he could be in for a bit of a wait. He quickly showered and dressed in his normal designer jeans and T-shirt.

His friends enjoyed teasing him about his wardrobe, but Angelo didn't care. He'd grown up wearing used clothing purchased for pennies at the second-hand store in his rough Oakland neighbourhood. Now he had a good job, Angelo allowed himself to indulge in the things he'd never had as the kid of a single parent.

Opening his closet once more, Angelo stared at the racks of shoes. It was well-known he had a thing for sneakers, not only on hot men, but buying them for himself as well. He selected a pair of seldom-worn Nikes and slipped them on, tying them tight.

He wandered his way into the kitchen and selected a bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon from the wine rack. After uncorking the expensive bottle, he poured it into the crystal decanter and left it to breathe as he began to prepare a salad.

In the middle of cutting up a tomato, the doorbell sounded. Angelo set down the knife and wiped his hands on a towel before making his way through the living room to the small foyer.

He opened the door expecting to see a uniformed officer and found Detective Torrence instead. It seemed every time he turned around lately, Moody was on his doorstep. The guy seemed to be his constant protector and it was starting to put Angelo on edge. "What're you doing here, Juan?"

Moody gave Angelo a bored look and leaned an arm on the doorjamb. "Did or did you not call into the police station?"

"I called 9-1-1, not you."

"If you mentioned Carl Blakely, you basically did call me. All things pertaining to the investigation into Overton's death go through me, and the name's Moody." Moody leant down until he was nose to nose with Angelo. "Now, you gonna ask me in and tell me about it?"

Knowing he wasn't going to win, Angelo stepped back and gestured Moody inside. "The pamphlets are in the kitchen."

He walked back down his hallway, aware of Moody's big body behind him, the heavy tread of biker boots sounded unusually loud on his pristine hardwood floors. Angelo motioned to the stack of papers as he poured himself a glass of wine without offering Moody any.

Angelo peered over the edge of the glass as he took a much needed sip. Moody didn't even bother reading the pamphlet. The big man tossed them back on the counter with a grunt.

"You gonna share some of that with me?" Moody asked, gesturing to Angelo's glass.

"Aren't you on duty?" Angelo countered, taking another sip.

"Nope. Dispatch called me at home. I just got off an eighteen hour stakeout."

It was then Angelo noticed the dark circles under the detective's big brown eyes. He suddenly felt guilty. Turning towards the cabinet, he withdrew another glass and poured a generous amount of the crimson liquid before handing it to Moody.

"So...who were you staking out?" Angelo asked, trying to make conversation.

"I can't really divulge that information." Moody emptied the glass of expensive wine in three swallows.

Angelo was appalled at the total lack of consideration for such a fine bottle of wine. When Moody held out his glass, Angelo rolled his eyes. "If you'll promise to savour it. This isn't grocery store wine."

Moody grinned and took a sip of his filled glass. "So, you wanna fuck?"

Angelo choked on his sip of wine, turning to finally spit it out in the sink. Not since he'd left Oakland had anyone dared speak to him in such a way. He wiped his mouth and turned back to the Neanderthal. "Is that the only reason you're here? Don't you even care that Blakely knows where I live?"

Moody set his emptied glass on the counter and reached down to rub the bulge pressing against the front of his jeans. "Wouldn't be here if I didn't."

"Sure. And asking me to fuck was a spur of the moment decision," Angelo snorted the reply. He couldn't believe the nerve of the guy.

Moody shrugged and grabbed the pamphlets from the counter. "It's been a while. Thought I'd take a chance. Forget it. I'll file a report about these and set up a patrol to swing by routinely. If you see anything out of the ordinary, give me a call."

Moody picked up a pen from the counter and scribbled a number on one of the pamphlets, handing it to Angelo. "Sure you don't want a cock in your ass instead of that prissy salad I see you're fixin'?"

"Quite sure, thank you," Angelo retorted. He considered telling Moody about the noises he'd been hearing at night, but decided against it. The guy was obviously horny and slightly out of his mind after putting in an eighteen-hour shift.

He walked the detective to the door, but before he left, Moody surprised him once more by reaching out to cup Angelo's cock. He was dismayed to feel a semi-erection pressed against the detective's hand.

"I think you're not as immune to me as you'd like to pretend." Moody gave Angelo's cock a squeeze before turning and walking away without a word.

Red-faced, Angelo slammed the door. "Fuck!"

\* \* \* \*

Chuckling, Moody roared out of Angelo's driveway on his Harley and headed towards his downtown apartment. As the loud motorcycle roared through traffic, he couldn't wipe the smile from his face.

He'd done his research and knew where the man came from. It didn't matter to Moody that Angelo acted all high and mighty, he knew the truth. The guy was from a neighbourhood known for heavy gang activity. Although he was impressed as hell that Angelo managed to break out of the slums, he thought he needed to be taken down a notch or two.

Moody pulled into the secured parking garage and turned off his bike still thinking about the hot little Italian. A good hard fuck by someone Angelo saw as beneath him would most likely do the trick.

By the time he reached his third floor apartment, Moody felt like the walking dead. The two glasses of wine hadn't helped the fatigue that had begun to set in over six hours earlier. He quickly stripped and crawled under the covers.



Carl Blakely was definitely up to something. Although Blakely wasn't even from San Francisco, he was still in town. *Why?*

An informant had told him Blakely and a few of his minions were renting a house on the south end of the city. The news would have been bad enough on its own, but Moody knew the area, and that's what had him troubled.

Since the stabbing death of William Overton while in police custody, something had been bugging him. A year earlier, Moody had been proud that his nephew, Rico, had chosen to follow in his footsteps and become a cop. Hell, Moody even pulled what few strings he could, and helped Rico get a job at the jail.

The realisation Rico lived only two blocks from Carl Blakely's home away from home struck a wrong chord. He'd dropped in to visit his oldest sister and her family shortly after the stabbing. When he'd tried to strike up a conversation with Rico, his nephew had suddenly remembered something else he needed to do.

Moody rubbed his tired eyes. Jake, his partner on the case, had always been a good friend, but spending eighteen hours in a car together had put them both on edge. He'd had to listen to Jake go on and on about his sex life.

Although he was in no way a prude, the last thing he wanted to listen to was how good a pussy felt wrapped around Jake's dick. Moody had been forced on more than one occasion to tell his friend to shut the fuck up.

It wasn't a secret within the department that Moody was gay, and it seemed every detective he got partnered with tried to convert him to the heterosexual way of thinking. He knew it was his own problem that he let the bullshit get to him, but he hadn't expected it from Jake.

*Dammit.* He'd already been put through enough hell from his strong Catholic family, the rough fuckers in his neighbourhood growing up, and his early years in the department. If he wasn't going to suddenly change his sexual appetites after all that, why did Jake think talking for hours upon hours about pussy was going to change him?

The game with Angelo Pilato was more a distraction from his other problems than anything else. He enjoyed pissing off the uppity Italian. The way Angelo's bright blue eyes narrowed behind those designer glasses when he was mad went straight to Moody's cock every time. The guy may look like a pencil pusher, but Moody could tell there was a badass

in there trying like hell to get out. The way Angelo had stood up to him on more than one occasion was proof of that.

Since he was old enough to go to the gym by himself, people hadn't messed with him. He'd spent the entire summer between his junior and senior year of high school at the local Y, pumping iron. It had quickly become an obsession once he saw the results.

Although he'd cooled a bit in the previous few years, Moody still loved the look of fear he received when he entered a room. It was a power issue for someone who'd grown up different in a rough neighbourhood.

He knew the tattoos, the Harley and length of his hair only added to the badass image, and that's the way he liked it. To let people get close was to let your guard down enough to get hurt. He'd learned that lesson from his family and friends when he'd come out of the closet.

Moody fell asleep thinking about his mom. Although they'd gone several years without speaking, they'd finally gotten their shit together in the past fifteen years and had reconnected. They'd both come to a mutual agreement not to discuss that portion of his life.

It didn't really matter to him, it wasn't like he'd ever planned to bring one of his fucks home to meet the family.

\* \* \* \*

After Detective Torrence left, Angelo finished off the bottle of wine and managed to eat the ill-prepared salad. His mood sucked, and he knew just whose fault it was. As the sun started to set, he realised he hadn't yet watered. "Shit."

Angelo eased his way out of the big leather chair and went through the back French doors to the deck. He turned on the water and methodically began spraying down his plant beds.

The nerve of that asshole, treating him like a handy fuck. He may not have had a date recently, but it had absolutely nothing to do with Moody, that was for damn sure. He just hadn't found anyone who flipped his switch. That was all.

Once he'd finished the backyard, he turned off the hose and walked around the side of the house towards the front. *Maybe I'll go out...*

That was as far as he got before noticing the words Die Fag spray painted on the side of his luxury sedan. Angelo's hands fisted at his sides as he looked up and down the quiet residential street. *No fucking way.*

Sometime within the last two hours, someone had been close enough to him to vandalise his pride and joy. The flowers forgotten, he raced inside. What he found in his living room chilled him to the bone. How could I have not locked the front door after Moody left?

*Shit! What if someone's still in the house?*

Angelo grabbed his cell phone and car keys from the coffee table and ran back outside, stopping to lock the front door.

He started the car and pulled out of his driveway, heading south as he punched several numbers on his phone.

"Hello?"

"Trey? You mind if I swing by?" he asked, his heart racing.

"Don't mind at all. Is something wrong?"

Angelo gripped the steering wheel. "Someone fucked up my car and left me a little present in my house while I was there."

"What! Did you call Detective Torrence?" Trey asked.

"No. He was by earlier because of some shit I found in the mailbox and it didn't go well."

Trey sighed. "The two of you can't seem to be in the same room without comparing dick size. Call him."

"I...I can't. And when did you start cussing?" Angelo was, quite frankly, appalled at the idea of the sweet man using such words.

"Sorry. I guess I've been around you guys too long," Trey replied, seeming amused at Angelo's outrage.

"I'm still about fifteen minutes away, but I'm beginning to feel shaky. I think I'll pull over and calm down before trying to fight the traffic on the expressway."

"Good idea. Do you want me to come and get you?" Trey asked.

"Yeah. Maybe that wouldn't be such a bad idea. I've had too much wine to drive anyway, but I had to get away."

"I understand. Find a parking lot."

Angelo pulled in to the nearest shopping plaza and gave Trey the address.

“Lock your doors,” Trey reminded Angelo before he hung up.

Once he put the car in park and turned off the engine, Angelo closed his eyes and leaned his forehead against the steering wheel. “Man up,” he whispered to himself.

All he could think about was someone being in his house. He’d only been in the yard about fifteen minutes before he’d seen his car. How could someone slip into his house so fast unless they were watching him?

He sat up and studied the area around him. Had someone followed him? Angelo turned and picked up his phone from the seat beside him. His thumb hovered over the keys. Why was he even considering calling Moody? He knew he’d need to report the vandalism and breaking and entering, but the strong urge to call Moody had nothing to do with the fact he was a cop.

Angelo dropped the phone back in the seat. Since when did he need a six-foot, six-inch badass to make him feel safe? In his youth, he’d stared down the barrel of more than one gun. He’d been forced to deal with life in his undesirable neighbourhood by learning to talk and talk fast.

But this wasn’t the kind of situation he could talk his way out of. Blakely and his people didn’t give a fuck about what he said, it was what he did in the privacy of his home that they had a problem with.

With his nerves frayed, Angelo leaned his seat back as far as it would go. He refused to acknowledge the fear settling in the pit of his stomach over the idea that someone was watching him.

Before he knew it, there was a knock on his window, making him jump. Angelo turned to find a hulking giant peering in at him. *Shit.*

Angelo turned the key and hit the power button. As the window slid down, he groaned at the thought of getting into another argument with the detective.

“Nice paint job,” Moody growled.

Angelo ground his teeth, promising himself to kill Trey when he saw him. “How’d you get here so fast? Trey have you on speed dial?”

“He’s worried, and I don’t live far from here,” Moody answered.

“Lucky me.”

“Scoot over,” the detective told him, placing his hand on the door handle.

“Go around to the passenger side,” Angelo countered, narrowing his eyes in challenge.

Moody flashed him a sexy grin and slammed his hand on the roof of the car before going around.

Angelo unlocked the door and put his seat back into an upright position. The detective’s large frame barely seemed to fit in the confines of the four-door Mercedes, and Angelo couldn’t help but wonder where the guy had to buy his clothes.

He tilted his neck to the side until he heard a definite crack. “Are you going to yell at me now?”

Moody turned to face him as much as was possible in the small-looking seat and shook his head. “Why is it that the two of us can’t seem to do anything but bitch at each other?”

Angelo shrugged and looked out the windshield.

Moody reached over and grabbed Angelo’s chin, turning it to face him. “The shit that’s going down isn’t child’s play. If we don’t learn how to communicate, someone’s going to end up either in the hospital or the morgue.”

Angelo knew the detective was right. He should have called Torrence as soon as he’d seen the graffiti on the side of the car. It was his own stubbornness that had stopped him.

“Fine, but can we not do this here?” Despite being in Moody’s presence, Angelo still felt overly exposed.

“Can you follow me back to your place?”

“Why can’t you just take me to Trey’s house?” Angelo asked.

“Because I’m dead-assed tired. Have at least a little compassion for me. Besides, the criminal activity at your house will need to be investigated. The sooner we get it done, the faster we catch the bastards.”

“Whatever.”

Moody stared at Angelo for several moments before nodding. “Lead the way.”

## Chapter Two

Moody pulled into the driveway behind Angelo's car and killed the engine. He'd been dead to the world when he'd received the phone call from Trey. He knew he could've passed the call onto Jake, but he needed to see for himself that Angelo was okay.

"Why don't you park in the garage?" he asked, climbing off his bike.

Angelo actually blushed. "Because I have a couple other cars stored in there."

Moody whistled. "They must be beauties if you've decided to leave the Mercedes exposed."

"Not really. They both need some work. I've got the first car I ever bought, a 1980 Chevy Chevette and a 1976 Impala that belonged to my nonna," Angelo mumbled, refusing to make eye contact.

Moody didn't tell Angelo he was actually more impressed by the cars listed than the one sitting in the driveway. The cars secured in the garage held sentimental value instead of monetary. That said a lot for the man Angelo was underneath the expensive business suits.

Thoughts of what else lay under the clothing had Moody's dick filling. He tried to suppress his lust, at least until after investigating the crime scene.

"I think I'll take a quick look around and then I need to call in some of my people. Maybe we'll get lucky and the asshole forgot to wear gloves." He started towards the front door, but Angelo stopped him.

"If you're concerned about preserving fingerprints, it might be better to go in the back."

Moody stopped and grinned. "Good thinking. You watch a lot of television?"

Angelo shrugged, opening the back gate. "Once in a while."

As he followed the gorgeous jean-encased ass in front of him, Moody noticed the landscaping. "Nice," he commented.

Angelo glanced around. "I came out to water the flowers when whoever it was that painted my car entered the house. I was probably only out here for fifteen minutes at the most."

Angelo's statement brought Moody's thoughts back to the real reason he was there. "Stay out here while I check things out inside."

Angelo nodded. The grateful expression on Angelo's face led Moody to believe he was putting up a brave front. No doubt the man was scared. Hell, who wouldn't be given the same situation?

Moody drew the gun from his shoulder holster and carefully opened the door. He scanned the kitchen first, taking note of the emptied decanter of wine, before moving to the living room.

His gaze landed on a box perched on top of the coffee table. He checked the rest of the rooms carefully, before returning to the present the intruder had left. Nestled in white tissue paper, was a large, flesh-coloured dildo. The entire package appeared to be splattered with blood.

Moody's chest tightened as he withdrew his phone and called the crime scene department. Without disturbing anything, Moody made his way back to the deck. He found Angelo pacing back and forth, his glasses tossed onto the small bistro table.

"No wonder you were freaked." He took a chance and stepped into Angelo's path, blocking his way.

Angelo glanced up, and the look in the normally reserved man's eyes brought out every protective instinct Moody had. He pulled Angelo into his arms and kissed the top of his head.

Angelo's body stiffened at the contact before finally accepting the gesture. Although Angelo leant against Moody's chest, his arms remained at his sides. "What happens now?"

"I called the station. They'll send guys out to process the scene."

"Do I need to be here for that?" Angelo asked.

"No, but your car does. You want me to take you somewhere?"

Angelo nodded. "I can't stay here, at least not yet."

Moody knew he really should stay and direct the investigation, but what use was having a partner on a case if they didn't help when needed?

"If you can give me a few minutes, I'll call Jake and have him come down. Then I'll take you anywhere you want to go."

"Jake?"

"Jake Randall. He's my partner on this case."

"Oh."

Moody smiled. He could tell by the way Angelo said it that there was a twinge of jealousy there. Not that Angelo would ever admit it. Moody squeezed Angelo a little tighter and buried his nose in the thick black hair. "He's straight."

"Doesn't matter to me whether he's gay or straight," Angelo grumbled.

Moody bit back a chuckle and placed one more kiss on Angelo's head before pulling back. "Why don't you call Trey and fill him in. Do you need to get a change of clothes?"

Angelo nodded, but stayed where he was. Moody got a strong feeling the man was hesitant about going into the house alone.

"Mind if I tag along?" he asked.

"No. Not at all."

Moody led the way back into the house while calling Jake. His partner didn't seem happy, but he knew it was part of the job. After finishing the call, Moody stretched out on Angelo's bed and sighed. "This is nice. Wake me if I fall asleep."

Angelo chuckled and pulled a garment bag from the top shelf of the closet. "Are these guys that are coming going to make a mess?"

Moody wasn't sure if Angelo's question was his nerves talking or if he really was a neat freak. Moody believed in order in his house, but he certainly wasn't anal about it. "The house'll need to be cleaned afterwards, but they won't trash the place. For the most part, a good dusting should take care of the majority of the mess."

"Good."

Moody watched as Angelo selected an expensive charcoal grey suit along with a white dress shirt, red tie, black socks and shoes. He peered over his shoulder before pulling out a pair of black silky boy shorts, stuffing them into the bottom of the garment bag.

After seeing the underwear, Moody couldn't take his eyes off the man's ass. Was he wearing a similar pair under those designer jeans? He licked his lips as his cock hardened. What would it take to get Angelo to let his guard down enough to give him a chance?

The doorbell rang, bringing Moody out of his lust-filled daydream. "I'll get it."

"Meet you on the deck?" Angelo asked before Moody got out of the room.

"Yep. Give me a few minutes to fill the guys in."

\* \* \* \*



Angelo hadn't considered Moody's mode of transportation until the detective swung his long leg over the motorcycle and sat on the seat. "I...I can't ride on this," Angelo stuttered.

"Why? You got something against a Harley?" Moody asked.

"There's not enough room, for one thing."

Moody glanced over his shoulder at the small strip of seat. "I'm sure you can fit that tight ass of yours on what's left."

"What about my bag?" Angelo held up the garment bag.

"Give it to me." Moody held out his hand.

Resigned to either riding on the back of the bike or looking like an ass, Angelo handed over his clothes. "Be careful, please."

Moody nodded and rolled the bag before sitting it on the tank between his legs, fastening it into place with a bungee cord. "How's that?"

Angelo took a deep breath and climbed onto the back of the Harley. "I'm not sure this is really meant for two people," he commented. He took the helmet Moody had unstrapped from the bike and secured the straps under his chin.

"That's because you're not sitting close enough." Moody reached back and pulled Angelo closer. "Wrap your arms around my waist," he yelled over the loud rumble of the Harley as he started it up.

At first, Angelo rested his hands on Moody's sides until the detective lurched the bike forward, almost spilling him onto the drive.

"Around my waist!" Moody yelled.

Angelo did as he was told. The new position had his front smashed up against Moody's broad back. The moment Moody reached the first stop sign, he reached down and positioned Angelo's hands so they rested on his lower abdomen, just above his jeans.

Never one for public displays of affection, Angelo glanced around nervously. Moody roared off again, and Angelo held on tight. The man was either an incredibly skilled rider or a maniac.

Angelo wasn't sure if it was the bike's vibration, the smell of Moody's citrus cologne or the feel of the tightly muscled torso under his hands, but his cock started to fill. *Shit*. He knew Moody had to feel the steel rod pressing against his lower back.

When the detective missed the ramp that led to the highway, Angelo was confused. He tried to yell his questions in Moody's ears, but the bike and the wind were just too loud. The first stoplight they came to, he finally had a chance.

"You're taking me to Trey's, right?"

Moody turned his head enough for Angelo to see the wide grin on his face. "I told you I would, but I'm not ready to let you off this bike yet. Figured we'd go the back roads." He winked. "Give us more time and a hell of a lot safer at a lower speed."

Before the light turned green, Moody yanked the front of his T-shirt out of the waistband of his jeans. He settled Angelo's hands on his slightly furred bare skin. "Knock yourself out."

Angelo tried to shake off the lust that overwhelmed him at the contact. Moody wasn't his type, so why the hell was the man making him so incredibly horny? He moved his little finger enough to rub against the warm skin. Fuck the man was ripped, he thought as his finger dipped into a ridge between muscles.

Had he ever made love to someone so incredibly strong? Angelo knew the answer was definitely not. He preferred his men lithe, not muscular. *So why the hell is my cock ready to drill a hole through my zipper?*

Despite his strong reservations, Angelo's hands began to move more freely, dancing across the tight washboard abdomen. He gritted his teeth as he tried to keep his touch to Moody's stomach. The desire to travel south was incredibly strong, and Angelo began to wonder what the big man's dick would feel like in his hand.

Self-preservation was the only thing that kept him in check. The last thing either of them needed was to wreck. He tried to concentrate on the skin he felt he could safely touch, allowing one hand to briefly brush across Moody's nipple. He felt, rather than heard, the groan emanating from Moody. Yeah, the man was as turned on as he was.

By the time they pulled into Trey's driveway, Angelo was on the verge of coming. Moody turned off the bike, but neither of them moved for several seconds. Angelo was the first to come to his senses. He withdrew his hands and went to work on the helmet strap.

Without the rumble of the bike, Angelo began to feel embarrassed by his actions. He climbed off the bike as Moody removed his own helmet. "Thanks for the lift."

Moody unstrapped the garment bag and held it out with one hand. Before Angelo could get it, the detective used his other hand to pull him closer.

“Kiss me,” Moody growled.

Angelo nervously glanced around. Trey and Cole lived in a residential neighbourhood, and the last thing they needed was two men making out in their driveway.

Moody’s hand moved to the back of Angelo’s head and pulled him in for a kiss. Despite his reservations, he didn’t pull away. The first swipe of Moody’s tongue sent a jolt of electricity through Angelo’s already excited body.

He moaned as his mouth was thoroughly fucked by the tough-guy’s tongue. *Shit. I can’t do this. There’s no future for me and Moody.* The two of them might have fun in the sack, but Angelo wanted more, and he doubted Moody was the type for lazy days in the garden or cuddling on the couch.

Breaking the kiss, Angelo stepped back, taking his garment bag with him. “Like I said, thanks for the ride.”

Moody eyed Angelo for several seconds before speaking. “I’ll wear you down. Eventually.”

Angelo felt his cheeks heat at the implication. What the hell? He’d never let a man make him feel like this. He found he didn’t like it one bit. No fucking way was he going to give the big lug power over him.

“Keep dreaming,” he quipped as he started towards the house.

“Oh I have been. I’ll call you as soon as we find something.”

Angelo didn’t bother turning around.

“Hey!” Moody yelled.

With a smile on his face, Angelo continued walking up the porch and rang the bell. He heard mumbles behind him, but didn’t pay Moody any mind.

Trey eventually opened the door, a cell phone to his ear. “Okay, I’ll tell him. Thanks for bringing him out.”

Angelo’s eyes narrowed as he glanced over his shoulder at the big, bad detective on his phone. Moody pursed his lips and blew Angelo a kiss. Shaking his head, he pushed by Trey and entered his friend’s house.

Trey hung up and shut the front door just as Angelo heard the deep roar of the Harley starting up.

“Are you okay?” Trey asked, pulling Angelo into a hug.

"I'm fine. The cops are at my place making a mess as we speak." Angelo unrolled his garment bag and draped it over the back of a chair in the living room. "You got a beer?"

Trey grinned. "Yeah, we were just having our nightcap on the patio."

Angelo followed Trey into the kitchen and waited while his friend pulled a beer from the fridge. He was surprised when his friend handed him a Mexican beer. "I thought you hated this stuff?"

Trey chuckled and squeezed Angelo's shoulder. "I do, but I bought some the other day in case you came by. I even have a couple of limes."

Angelo waved away the limes. No sense cutting one up when he was only having the single beer. The fact that Trey had thought enough about him to actually stock a brand of beer he didn't even drink, touched Angelo more than he wanted to acknowledge.

He loved his group of friends, but he usually felt like the odd man out. He'd always tried to let the jokes and innuendos slide off his back, but he knew most of the gang thought he was a little off. Angelo tried to not let it get to him. He was a little off and he knew it, but he also knew he was a good person and that's what mattered to him the most.

With a simple beer, Trey had told Angelo that he was welcome in his home. Before they reached the door leading to the patio, he turned to Trey. "Thanks." He lifted the bottle. "For this...hell...for everything."

Trey smiled and kissed Angelo's cheek. "You were there for me, now it's my turn. Besides, you wouldn't have these problems if it weren't for me."

Angelo had thought about the day on the courthouse steps many times. Trying to help Trey enter the judicial building untouched had been his mission that particular day. Angelo hadn't even realised he'd pushed Carl Blakely to the ground until it was over. He'd heard the hateful words the man spat at his friend and had gone into fighting mode without thinking of the ramifications.

Looking at the innocent face of his friend, Angelo knew in his heart he'd do it again in a second. Despite all the trouble that one shove had caused, he knew he'd stick up for any of his friends if it came down to it. He wondered how many of them felt the same way.

\* \* \* \*

Moody let himself into the apartment just as his phone rang. He glanced at the display before snapping it open. "Did you find anything?"

"They got a few prints, but nothing off the package. I figure the other prints they got must belong to the vic," Jake said.

"Angelo Pilato. He has a name," Moody ground out between clenched teeth.

"Excuse me! Since when do you get snippy about shit like that?"

*Since I discovered I want more than my dick in his ass.* He knew he couldn't tell Jake or they'd probably take him off the case, and there was no way he was trusting one of the other detectives to watch Angelo's back. "Sorry. It's late."

"Tell me about it. I've had just as much sleep as you have."

"I know," he answered, glancing at the clock. "Why don't you head home, and meet me back at the station at ten. I think we've earned a couple extra hours of sleep."

"Deal. See ya then." Jake agreed.

Moody ended the call. After securing the rest of the apartment, he undressed and slipped between the sheets. He groaned at the feel of the soft mattress against his back. *Damn this feels good.* As he closed his eyes, images of Angelo came to mind.

The man's hands were magic and he'd only felt them on his stomach. What would they feel like on his cock, or playing with his ass? Moody groaned again, but this time it was due to his hardening prick.

He reached over the side of the bed and grabbed his discarded T-shirt. Flipping over onto his stomach, Moody shoved the shirt under his erection. With his face buried in the pillow, he imagined Angelo under him and began to grind his hardened length against the wad of fabric.

"That's it, baby, take my cock," he moaned. His rhythm picked up, actively humping the mound of cloth. "Yeah."

Moody's hands fisted the sheets on either side of the pillow as he continued fucking an imaginary Angelo. Pumping his hips, Moody poured all his untapped lust for the man into the action. *Sonofabitch.* He'd never wanted someone so bad in his fucking life.

He felt his balls draw tight and groaned at the exquisite feeling. "Take it, baby," he called out, emptying his balls onto the T-shirt.

He collapsed on the bed with a groan as he tried to regain his breath. He'd heard the petty remarks Angelo's friends made. Moody knew from the word go that he wasn't the type

of man Angelo went for, but he wanted the hot Italian to the point of madness. What would it take to get around Angelo's defences?

Moody had no doubt that's exactly what they were. Angelo chose men who were physically weaker than himself. Why? Was it the need to top? Moody didn't think so. The few times he'd made passes at the man, Angelo seemed to enjoy being mastered.

It had to be something from his past. Had Angelo been picked on growing up? Is that why he went for weaker guys?

Moody rolled to his side and cleaned himself up with the already-soiled shirt, before tossing it to the floor.

If Angelo always felt the need to be in control because of his past, what were the current events really doing to him? Moody had seen glimpses of fear earlier in the evening. How far did that fear go, and could he use that to get closer to Angelo?

He hated the thought of preying upon Angelo's weakness, but the thought of never getting the chance to thoroughly love Angelo was worse. The gorgeous man was unlike anyone Moody had ever been around. Angelo was a puzzle, waiting to be figured out.

If he wasn't genuinely starting to care for the guy, Moody would be ashamed of himself for even contemplating using Angelo's own fears to get close to him. For years Moody had built his muscles and his skill as a detective. It was the perfect time to use his strengths to get what he wanted.

In his heart, he knew the two of them would be good together, and not just for sex. Nope, he was beginning to want Angelo for much more than that. He admitted it scared the shit out of him, but he was thirty-seven-fucking-years-old. It was about time he found someone he could let in.

His thoughts swung towards the events of earlier. He didn't know what kind of game Carl Blakely was playing, but he'd earned himself an opponent he hadn't been counting on. "Bring it on, Blakely."

## Chapter Three

Angelo parked in front of Gregorio's Sandwich Shoppe. The police had released his car a week earlier, but the ugly words were still painted on its side. Trey had helped him mask off the sprayed words of hatred with blue painters tape and a big piece of cardboard.

He checked his hair in the mirror before grabbing his briefcase and walking inside. The Gregorio's had been advertising with the radio stations Angelo represented for years, but the office had received a call earlier in the day, cancelling all further advertising.

As sales manager, it was up to Angelo to figure out what had gone wrong. "Hey, Sal," he waved as he spotted the elderly man behind the counter.

"What're you doing here? I thought I made it clear I no longer wish to do business with you," Sal grumbled, wiping his hands on the towel tucked into the tie of his apron.

Angelo paused. He'd been in less than two weeks earlier for lunch and Sal had refused to allow Angelo to pay. Why the sudden turn?

"Excuse me, Mr. Gregorio, but have I done something to upset you?"

"Upset me? Yeah, you could say that!" Sal reached under the counter and held up a picture. "I found this taped to my front door when I got in this morning."

Angelo grabbed the picture out of Sal's hand. It was a photo of him and Moody kissing outside of Trey's house. *Shit.* "I'm sorry you had to see this, sir. It seems someone's been following me, probably the same someone who broke into my house and spray painted my car."

Mr. Gregorio shook his head and turned away. "Get out, and don't come back."

"Please, sir, if you'll let me have a few more moments of your time..."

"I said get out!" Sal screamed, picking up the phone. The older man held his finger above the number nine button on the keypad. "You want me to call the cops?"

Angelo stared at the man he'd done business with for the past eight years. He realised his homosexuality was a deal breaker for the business owner. Angelo didn't know whether to be pissed or hurt. He turned and walked out of the shop without another word.

Safely in his Mercedes, he gripped the steering wheel. He wondered how many of his clients had received similar pictures. Going into damage control mode, Angelo started

working through his client list one by one, calling each customer as he drove back towards his office.

A quarter of the way through his calls, his phone rang. The display had him groaning. Angelo pulled into a parking spot and answered. "Hi, Mr. Dorchester."

"We've got a problem," the general manager said.

"Yes, sir. I'm calling the advertisers now."

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

"Mr. Dorchester, please don't do this. I can explain..."

"The guard at the front desk has a box with your stuff in it. Pick it up along with your final cheque at your convenience."

"It's not my fault!" Angelo screamed into the phone, losing his cool.

"Look, Pilato, what you do on your own time is your business, but when it starts costing the stations thousands of dollars, it becomes my problem. I'm sorry, kid."

The phone went dead, and so did a piece of Angelo. He'd started at the smallest station the group owned as a disc jockey right after graduation. Working his ass off, he slowly climbed his way up to sales manager. It was a position he'd taken great pride in. Who else from his old neighbourhood could say the same?

He spotted a bar with a rainbow on the sign out of the corner of his eye and opened the car door. Between losing the only job he'd ever loved and trying to deal with Moody's daily phone calls and visits to Trey's house, Angelo felt he was losing his grip on reality. Maybe a good old-fashioned drunk is what he needed.

\* \* \* \*

Moody punched in Angelo's number for the seventh time. He was starting to get seriously worried, and just a tad pissed.

"Hello?" a strange voice answered.

"Who is this?" Moody asked.

"Bill, who's this?"

"Where's Angelo?" Moody rose and began to pace around his apartment.

"Angelo? Is that the guy's name? We've just been calling him honey," the old guy laughed.



Moody could hear the sound of a crowd in the background whooping it up. "Is he at a bar?"

"Where else would he be?"

Moody took a deep breath. He knew if he screamed at the drunk, he'd get nowhere. "What's the name of the club?"

"The Rainbow Connection," the guy said with a chuckle. "We're all here, the lover, the dreamer and me." Bill started laughing so hard at his own joke he began to cough.

Moody rolled his eyes and ended the call. Something was seriously fucked up. He slid his phone into his coat pocket and locked up his apartment. He didn't know everything about Angelo, but he'd definitely got a sense of his drinking habits, and hanging out and getting wasted at The Rainbow Connection just didn't fit.

On his way down to the parking garage, he called information and got an address. Luckily the place was only about six miles away. He climbed onto his bike and tore out in the direction of the club.

When he pulled up, he groaned. In his right mind, there was no way in hell Angelo would be caught in a place like this. As soon as he stepped foot in the place, he heard the roar of the crowd. Moody's attention quickly swung towards the bar, where to his surprise a very sexy man was dancing in nothing but a pair of tight black boy shorts. "Fuck!"

He pushed his way through the room and held his hand out to Angelo. "Come on. Let's get outta here."

Angelo gyrated his hips as he began to giggle. "Why? I'm having a great time with my friends."

Moody glanced around at the leering drunks. "These aren't your friends. Now, where are your clothes?"

Angelo shrugged. "Oh, here, there, everywhere," he sang, waving his hands around.

Moody managed to locate most of Angelo's clothes, but his shirt and tie were nowhere to be found. He swung the clothes over his shoulder and set the expensive leather shoes on the bar as he reached up and put his hands on Angelo's waist. He pulled the drunk man off the bar and into his arms.

Angelo smiled and moulded his predominantly nude body against Moody. "Oh, honey, if you wanted a dance, you should've just asked."

Before Moody could control him, Angelo reached between them and cupped Moody's cock. "Ooh, you're so big."

Moody bit his tongue and tried to get Angelo into his pants. Angelo got the wrong idea and thrust his groin towards Moody's face.

"Are you going to suck my cock?" Angelo asked, slurring his words.

Moody was forced to lean Angelo against the bar as he tried to get the drunk's legs into the expensive dress slacks. As mad as he was, he couldn't resist running his fingers over the ridge of the thick erection trapped behind the skimpy underwear. He finished zipping Angelo's slacks and reached for his shoes and jacket. "Let's get the fuck outta here."

When Angelo tried to walk, his left leg began to crumple. Moody easily scooped the man up and tossed him over his shoulder. He grabbed the shoes and carried Angelo from the bar. Once on the sidewalk, Moody stood Angelo on his feet. "Can you stand?"

Angelo slapped a hand over his mouth and turned to puke in the gutter. Moody sighed and did what he could to hold him up. When the last of Angelo's stomach contents came up, Moody glanced at his Harley and moaned. He knew there was no way Angelo would be able to safely ride on the back.

"Where's your car?"

Scratching his head, Angelo looked up and down the street. "Somewhere up there," he mumbled.

Moody held out his hand. "Keys?"

Angelo fumbled with the pockets of his pants before shaking his head. Remembering the jacket, Moody picked it up from the pavement where he'd dropped it and checked the pockets. Not only did he find the keys, but Angelo's wallet as well. "You're a lucky sonofabitch."

He grabbed the two helmets from the seat of his bike and sighed. "Hang tough, old girl, I'll be back."

In a sour mood, he motioned for Angelo to slip on his shoes and start walking. He didn't know what the hell was going on with the crazy Italian, but once he got Angelo sobered up, he was sure as hell going to find out.

\* \* \* \*

Angelo's head was pounding as he drank his third cup of strong coffee. The instant brew was the nastiest stuff he'd ever had the displeasure of drinking. "Haven't you ever heard of grinding your own beans?"

Moody slapped three pain relievers onto the table. "Shut up and drink it."

"Snippy bastard," Angelo mumbled.

Angelo flinched as Moody pulled out a kitchen chair and straddled it.

"If you're sober enough to make snide remarks about my coffee, you're sober enough to answer a few questions for me," Moody grumbled.

Still resting his head on the palm of his hand, Angelo took another sip of coffee. "I was fired. Someone took pictures of the two of us in front of Trey's house that night you stuck your tongue down my throat and plastered them on the doors of my advertisers."

"What!" Moody yelled, jumping up.

The noise made Angelo wince. "Yeah. So forgive me if getting drunk sounded like a good idea."

"Are you fucking nuts? If someone was close enough to take pictures, that means you have a fucking tail. What would you have done if they'd approached you in the condition I found you in?"

Angelo's hackles rose at the question. He stood and narrowed his eyes. "I'm not a fucking wimp, okay? I can handle myself in a fight."

"Bullshit," Moody yelled back. "You couldn't even walk out of the fucking bar."

"Well excuse me, Mr. Perfect. I bet you've never gotten drunk before."

Moody shook his head and grabbed Angelo's upper arms. "Oh, I've been drunk plenty of times, but I've never in my life felt the need to stand up on a bar and strip out of my clothes!"

*Oh, God, I did that, didn't I?* Angelo closed his eyes. "Neither had I, until now," he confessed, feeling ashamed of his earlier behaviour.

Moody groaned and wrapped his arms around Angelo. "I saw red when I realised all those men were watching you up on that bar."

Angelo felt soft lips kiss his forehead. "I'm sorry."

Moody tilted Angelo's chin up. "I'm sorry about your job. Maybe after the smoke clears, you can get it back."

Angelo yawned. "I'm too tired to think about my life crumbling around me right now."

“Come on, I’ll put you to bed before taking a cab back to the club to get my bike.”

Angelo grinned. “Are you going to join me?” He wanted to take the words back as soon as they were out of his mouth.

Moody chuckled and led Angelo down the hall. “As much as I’d love to, fucking drunks isn’t quite my style. I’ll wait until you’ve got your head on straight.”

“That may be a while.” Angelo couldn’t resist teasing Moody. He reached out and squeezed the big man’s ass.

Moody slapped Angelo’s hand away. “Behave, or I’ll just say to hell with it and fuck you up against the wall.”

Angelo’s cock hardened. *I must be drunk.* “Okay, just point me in the direction of your guest room.”

Moody steered him towards a bedroom and flipped on the bedside lamp.

Angelo glanced around the room. “I thought you weren’t going to sleep with me?”

“I’m not. I’ll be on the couch.” Moody pushed Angelo’s jacket from his shoulders. “Strip. If I can’t be next to that fine ass, at least my sheets are gonna get lucky.”

He unzipped his dress slacks and let them fall to the floor. Stepping out of them, he automatically started to push down his underwear.

Moody groaned and turned away. “I’m gonna go get my bike, man. Don’t freak when you hear noises in an hour or so.”

Nude, Angelo was already nestled beneath the handmade quilt before he heard the apartment door close. A quick glance at the clock made him groan. He needed to be up in less than five hours.

Angelo flipped to his stomach and buried his face in the pillow, realising he had no job to report to. The thought of losing everything he’d worked so hard for was devastating. He was sure his extended family would find it all quite amusing.

He inhaled, trying to calm himself and got a whiff of Moody’s citrus cologne. *Shit.* What could’ve happened at the bar if Moody hadn’t come along? The big detective seemed to be rescuing his ass more and more of late.

With his job a thing of the past, his car and home defiled, Angelo began to wonder if it wasn’t time to make some changes in his life. Moving away from San Francisco was probably the best choice he could make. Perhaps in another city, he could not only find another job in the radio industry, but get away from Carl Blakely.

He turned back over onto his back, his chest feeling tight. He loved his friends, but it was the thought of never seeing the big Neanderthal that bothered him even more. *Dammit!* When had Moody started getting under his skin?

He rubbed his chest, cussing himself and his interest in the man. Unfortunately, Angelo knew it was more than a physical attraction. Sure he was hot, but it was so much more than that. Even though he'd never admit it out loud, Angelo liked having someone take care of him for a change.

Since an early age, he'd managed to take care of himself. He'd fought and talked his way out of a lot of bad situations and had come out a better man. But there was something about the way Moody held him that made him feel truly safe for the first time in his life.

Angelo sighed, and grabbed one of the pillows and put it over his face. He began to scream his frustrations into the feathers, hoping the neighbours didn't hear and call the cops.

What would his friends say if they knew how much he needed to feel safe and taken care of?

\* \* \* \*

Moody woke to the smell of coffee. He sat up and stretched his aching back. After getting back late with his bike, he'd stood in his bedroom for over an hour watching Angelo sleep.

The need to touch the gorgeous man had almost overwhelmed him. Wrapping Angelo in his arms seemed like the natural thing to do, but the last thing he wanted was to take advantage of the skittish man.

Tossing the covers off his lap, Moody reached for his jeans and slid into them. He made his way into the kitchen, trying to tame his wild hair. The sight of Angelo pouring a cup of coffee in nothing but those sexy boy shorts greeted him. "You got one of those for me?"

Angelo glanced over his shoulder. "Hmmm, I'm not sure I made it as thick and muddy as you normally like. But I did manage to find an actual pot and some ground coffee, even though it is an off brand."

The sly grin was a welcome sight. Moody entered the kitchen and closed in on the hot piece of eye candy. He reached around Angelo and grabbed another cup, pressing himself against Angelo's back. "You look good in the morning."

Angelo poured coffee in Moody's cup as he subtly pushed back against him. "Wow. You must've gotten up on the right side of the sofa."

Abandoning his cup, Moody wrapped his arms around Angelo's waist. The smooth skin of Angelo's abdomen was incredibly arousing, causing Moody to groan. "Do you remember why you're here?"

He placed his mouth against the side of Angelo's neck, taking small nibbles in between kisses and licks. Moody half-expected to get shoved away, so it was a fantastic surprise when Angelo reached over his head and back to run his fingers through Moody's hair.

"Am I sober enough for you yet?" Angelo tilted his head to the side, giving Moody more room to taste.

He couldn't resist truly feeling Angelo's body for the first time. He freely ran his hands over the toned chest and stomach before allowing them to travel down. Moody outlined Angelo's erection with his fingers. Through the thin underwear, he could feel every vein and ridge of Angelo's long, thin cock.

"Nice," he whispered as he slipped his hand under the waistband.

Angelo tried to turn around, but Moody stopped him. "Let me touch you," Angelo begged.

"Later. This is all about you." Moody pushed Angelo's underwear down as far as he could without breaking contact. Needing to feel that sweet ass nestled against his cock, Moody unzipped his jeans and fished his cock out of its confines.

He pumped Angelo's dick several times, before moving down to cup the heavy sac. "Fuck, you feel good," he moaned.

Angelo continued to play with Moody's hair with one hand and reached back and ran a hand over Moody's ass with the other. "So do you."

Sinking to his knees, Moody bit first one ass cheek and then the other. He gripped the twin globes in his hands and ran his tongue from Angelo's heavy balls to his tight pucker.

Angelo arched his back, bracing his hands on the edge of the counter. "Feels good."

Moody didn't stop licking and sucking to agree out loud, but damn, the man was right. Angelo tasted better than Moody thought he would. He could definitely spend hours tongue fucking his lover.

The phone rang, interrupting Moody's moment of bliss. *Fuck!* Being a cop, he knew he had to answer it, but he finally had Angelo right where he wanted him. He broke away with a growl. "Don't you dare move."

Moody rushed into the living room and opened his phone. "Torrence."

"It's me," Jake announced. "A call came into 9-1-1 from a concerned citizen. Seems this guy witnessed some illegal activity at the Pilato house."

"Someone saw the guy who spray painted Angelo's Benz?"

"Nope. According to the caller, Angelo Pilato has been running some sort of drug operation out of his house for some time."

"That's bullshit!" Moody screamed.

"Yeah, but it tells us Blakely's stepping up his game."

"Have you questioned the caller?" Moody asked.

"No. Call was made from a payphone about a mile from Pilato's house."

"Shit."

"The captain wants us in his office ASAP," Jake informed Moody.

Moody thought about the naked man in his kitchen and groaned. Would the two of them ever get a chance to fuck? "I'll be there as soon as I can."

He hung up the phone and tossed it back to the coffee table. Before returning to Angelo, he swung by his bedroom and grabbed a rubber and a bottle of lube. As he entered the kitchen, he whistled. Angelo had hoisted one leg onto the counter, fully exposing himself to Moody's gaze.

"Who was on the phone?" Angelo asked, his hand smoothing over one ass cheek.

Moody glanced at the condom in his hand and immediately ripped open the package. As he sheathed his erection, he flipped the top open on the lube. "Work. I need to get to the station."

Before Angelo could ask any more questions, Moody carefully entered his lover's hole with his middle finger.

"Ohhh..." Angelo moaned.

"You want my cock, baby?" He eased another finger into Angelo's heat.

"Mmm hmm."

With the size of his cock, Moody knew he'd need to stretch Angelo's ass as much as possible. Hurting the man he hoped to fuck again and again wasn't a good idea. As he

continued to stretch Angelo's hole, he used his other hand to reach around and torture Angelo's nipples.

"Gonna fill you."

"Uh huh," Angelo agreed. "What about work?"

"Believe me, once I get inside this sweet ass, it won't take long."

Angelo bucked as Moody added a third finger. "Easy, baby."

"Been a while," Angelo mumbled.

Moody sucked Angelo's ear lobe into his mouth, finishing the gesture with a nip. "Don't want to hurt you."

Angelo shook his head. "Just do it. Need it."

After several more seconds, Moody removed his fingers and added more lube to Angelo's hole. He lined up his cock and slowly pushed his crown against the stretched opening.

Moody felt Angelo begin to tense and stopped. He bit his lip until he got the nod from his lover. It took longer than either of them would've like to become fully seated, but, oh fuck, was it worth it.

Angelo's inner walls gripped Moody's cock like nothing he'd ever felt. "Oh, baby, you feel so good."

He knew if his lover hadn't already gotten under his skin, the feel of being inside Angelo would've done it in a heartbeat. Moody silently cursed himself for wanting to claim ownership of the man in his arms.

Moody began a gentle rhythm in and out of the delicious ass. He was so close, when Angelo held up a hand, the universal symbol for a time out. It nearly killed Moody, but he slowed his pace and pulled completely out. "Did I hurt you?"

Angelo took his leg off the counter and turned around. "I need to hold you while you fuck me."

If it had been any other man, Moody would've been pissed, but the emotion evident on Angelo's face was something new to him. Moody nodded and led Angelo to the kitchen table, lifting his lover on top.

Without being asked, Angelo scooted his ass to the edge and spread his legs. "Kiss me."

Moody grabbed the back of Angelo's head with one hand as he guided his throbbing cock back to the sweet hole with the other.



The kiss was passionate beyond anything Moody had experienced. He wanted to crawl inside Angelo and take up residence. As his thrusts increased in speed, he lured Angelo's tongue into his mouth and began to suck on it.

The cheap table began to work its way across the vinyl floor as his lust kicked into overdrive. No doubt his balls were going to be sore from slapping against the edge of the table, but like everything else where Angelo was involved, he knew it was worth it.

Moody released Angelo's tongue as he gasped some much needed oxygen into his lungs. "Touch yourself."

Angelo reached between them and started jacking his cock. "I'm not going to last."

"Good," Moody groaned, feeling his approaching climax. "Come on my chest, baby."

He held back long enough to feel the first splash of heat against his skin. Moody howled as he emptied his seed into the condom. *Fuckity, fuck, fuck, fuck.* He collapsed against Angelo's chest as he tried to regain his breath.

Angelo's legs wrapped around Moody's waist as the two of them held each other.

Moody felt his cock begin to soften and reached between them. Breaking their hold, he carefully held the condom in place and withdrew from Angelo's body. He stared down at Angelo and shook his head. What the hell could he possibly say to the man?

Angelo grinned and nodded, seeming to understand.

Moody knew the clock was ticking. As much as he wanted to carry his hot Italian to bed, he knew he needed to get to the station. "I need to jump into the shower."

Angelo nodded and allowed Moody to pull him into a sitting position. "Can we try it in a bed next time?"

Moody chuckled. "In a bed, against the wall, on the couch, and if you're lucky, on the Harley."

Angelo's eyes rounded. "You can do that?"

Moody nodded. "Not while riding, but yeah."

Leaning forward, Angelo ran his tongue across Moody's pebbled nipple. "I look forward to it."

Moody groaned as his lover's teeth scraped across the sensitive flesh. "Hold that thought. If I don't get to the station, we'll both be fucked by the end of the day."

Angelo pulled back. "Has my house been cleared yet? I need to get some clothes and my laptop."

The earlier message from Jake sent a shiver up Moody's spine. "No. Why don't you wait here, and I'll take you by your place as soon as I can."

Angelo narrowed his eyes and hopped off the table. "What's happened?"

Moody didn't want to shake Angelo up any more than he already was, but he deserved to know the truth. "A call came in about you trafficking drugs out of your house. It's bullshit and we know it, but it tells us Blakely isn't quite through with his games yet."

Angelo picked up the now cold cup of coffee and drank. "He's trying to ruin my entire life, isn't he?"

Moody nodded. "Looks that way."

Angelo emptied the rest of the coffee down the drain before refilling his cup. "You're in my life. Does that mean they'll go after you next?"

Moody hadn't thought of that. It was very much in keeping with Blakely's style to do just that. In order to head off any damage Blakely could do to his career, Moody would have to come clean to the captain about his involvement with Angelo.

"I won't let that happen. We know the game he's playing."

"What about my friends?" Angelo asked.

"Call them. Warn them to keep their eyes open," Moody suggested.

With the clock ticking, Moody knew he didn't have time to shower. He went to the sink and withdrew a dishcloth from the drawer. "I hate leaving you here like this, but it's important that we do some damage control."

Angelo took the wet cloth out of Moody's hand and began to clean his cock. "You go do what needs doing, and I'll try to get a hold of Zac, Trey and the guys."

After dressing in a clean set of clothes, Moody gave Angelo one last kiss before heading towards the door. "Make sure you lock this. I don't get visitors, so don't be fooled into thinking a friend is stopping by."

Angelo smiled. "I'll be fine."

*I hope so.* As Moody closed the door, he realised there were words on the tip of his tongue that he'd not said to any of his lovers in the past. The idea of falling for Angelo was both scary and heart warming.

He had more reason than ever to take down Carl Blakely and his group.

## Chapter Four

After a long, hot shower, Angelo dug in Moody's dresser until he came up with a pair of sweats which were about three sizes too big, and a faded red T-shirt. He looked at himself in the mirror and shook his head.

Never in a million years would he have imagined himself in Moody's clothes. What the hell had happened to him? One fuck and he knew in his heart the man owned him. While he should be elated at what he was feeling, the opposite was the case.

What would happen when Moody tired of him? Hadn't he learned over the years people couldn't take his particular quirks for long? With a hand on the waist of the sweats to keep them up, he made his way into the living room.

He punched in a few numbers and waited for Cole to answer. He knew Trey would be in class, but he could usually get Cole if he needed something.

"Hello?" Trey answered Cole's phone.

"Didn't expect to get you. Where's Cole?"

There was silence on the other end of the phone. "Trey?"

"He's talking to Moody."

"Moody?" Had his lover lied to him about meeting with his captain?

"Someone spray painted the front of our house overnight."

"Shit. I was calling to tell you to be on the lookout." Angelo knew Trey had been through more than his share of grief lately. "I'm so sorry."

"Why're you sorry? You didn't do it."

"Come on, we both know Blakely's after me."

"Yeah, because you stood up for me. Whatever messed up guilt you have going on in your head, quit it. As long as Blakely sticks to this juvenile stuff, I'm not worried," Trey told him.

"I'm getting the eye from Moody. I guess he's figured out who I'm talking to," Trey said, a chuckle in his voice. "Do the two of you have something going on?"

Angelo took a deep breath. He started to deny his budding relationship with the detective, but stopped himself. How would he feel if Moody denied *him*?

"I like him," he finally admitted.

"Good. Right now you need a guy like him around."

He started to rebuke the 'right now' comment, but didn't. It wasn't Trey's fault Angelo had never kept a man around for long. Sure, his friends might think Moody was a temporary diversion, but Angelo was beginning to question that.

"Tell Cole I'm sorry about the house." Angelo wanted to tell Trey to have Moody call him, but he didn't want to sound like a high school girl.

"I will, but he'll say the same thing I did."

"Probably," Angelo agreed.

"I'll have Moody call you when we finish up," Trey offered.

Angelo smiled. "I'd appreciate that."

\* \* \* \*

Moody wrapped things up with Cole and went in search of Trey. He found him in the kitchen, making sack lunches. "Was that Angelo who called earlier?"

Trey finished putting an apple in one of the sacks before answering. "He wanted to warn us to be on the lookout."

"How did he sound? Was he upset when he found out about the graffiti?" Moody asked. He was trying to go for casual. It wasn't up to him to tell Angelo's friends what had gone on between the two of them.

Trey rolled his eyes. "He felt bad. Tried to apologise. I told him it wasn't his fault. That he wouldn't be in this mess in the first place if he hadn't been there for me at the courthouse."

"Or if I'd reached Blakely first," Moody blurted.

One of Trey's eyebrows rose in question. "So you're carrying your own guilt. Figures."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

Trey shrugged. "Just that everyone seems to feel guilty except the people who should."

Moody relaxed a bit. He'd filled Jake in on the ride over about his relationship with Angelo. Jake had accused him of confusing his need to protect with genuine caring. Moody knew that wasn't the case, and he'd set his temporary partner straight before they'd arrived at Cole and Trey's house.

"I know he likes you," Trey said, interrupting Moody's thoughts.

"He's a good guy." Moody wasn't the kind of man to share his feelings. He hoped Trey respected that.

"He is."

It appeared Trey was about to say more, but stopped himself. Moody figured he was going to give him the honourable intentions speech or some other bullshit. "Spit it out."

Trey shrugged. "It's just that I don't think Ang is as unaffected by the harassment as he might seem. The surface image he gives off to keep people at a distance isn't who he really is."

"I know," Moody agreed. He was pleased Trey saw the true man Angelo was.

Trey nodded and turned to pick up the lunch sacks. "If we don't get to school, we'll be eating these here."

Moody nodded, silently thanking Trey for not dragging the conversation out further. "I'll be in touch as soon as we find information."

"I know. And I'll expect to see you Saturday night at the poker game."

"Oh, I won't..."

"Yes you will. Angelo doesn't have big brothers to watch his back, but he has friends. Time to face the firing squad, Detective." Trey started out the door, but stopped and turned back. "That is if you're serious about our boy."

Moody fisted his hands at his sides as he followed Trey out. What was it with these people? Didn't they know how scary he was? He had the majority of the punks on the streets scared shitless, as well as most of the cops he worked with.

He met Jake at the end of the driveway and climbed behind the wheel of the unmarked car. He knew he needed to call Angelo, but it wasn't going to happen with Jake in the car.

"Nice enough guys," Jake commented.

Moody rolled his eyes. "Does that surprise you? Or were you afraid they'd try to pick you up?"

Jake held up his hands. "Chill. I was just making an observation."

Moody gripped the wheel. It hadn't been the first time Jake had made comments like that. As he drove towards the station, he tried to let Jake's remarks go. It wasn't worth getting pissed at the guy. If Moody thought punching the homophobe's lights out would help, he would've done it long ago.

He needed to focus his attention on catching Carl Blakely. "After we meet up with the captain, I'm going to check out a lead."

"Okay. I'll come with you."

"Not this time."

Jake turned in his seat to face Moody. "Are you holding out on me?"

"No. Let's just say the guy I'm gonna talk to, won't, if I bring a white boy with me." Even though Jake being white had nothing to do with it, Moody knew he'd get nothing out of his cousin if he brought another cop along.

Jake turned back around in the seat. He crossed his arms over his chest and stared out the passenger window. "If I said shit like that, you'd be all up in my ass."

Moody sighed. He knew Jake was right. "Look, I'm just trying to do whatever's necessary to get something on this guy."

"I know. I have a feeling Blakely's not going to stick with this petty bullshit for much longer. I still don't know what he has to gain in the first place."

"Me either," Moody acknowledged.

They rode the remainder of the trip in silence, both of them trying to puzzle out the case. As soon as they got to the station, Moody excused himself to the restroom. He went into one of the stalls and called Angelo.

"Hello?"

"Hey, baby. Sorry I couldn't call before now. Jake's been my shadow all morning."

"Was there enough evidence at Trey's house to point to Blakely?"

"No. Although we know who did it, there wasn't shit in the way of evidence."

"Shit."

"Yeah. Listen, I've gotta meet with the captain, but I'll call back as soon as I can. You doing okay?"

"Yeah, except I can't even walk around the house without your sweats I borrowed falling down."

"Mmmm, I'd like to see that."

Angelo laughed. "I'm sure you would."

"Just because I like you so much, I'll let you in on a little secret. If you look in my bottom drawer, you'll find a pair of black sweats that my baby brother left last time he came to town."

"You're a prince," Angelo said.

"More of a king, but you can be my queen if you want."

The noise of disgust Angelo made had Moody's laughter echoing through the empty restroom. "Okay, I get it. You can be my co-ruler. How's that?"

"Better," Angelo said. A cute pout in his voice.

"I promise to make it up to you."

"Are you coming or not?" Jake gruffed, sticking his head into the room.

"Gotta go catch the bad guys, babe."

"You do that. I'm going to look for those sweats."

Moody hung up and stuffed his phone into his pocket. When he opened the door, Jake was leaning against the opposite wall. Moody walked by his partner without saying a word. He refused to apologise for talking to his boyfriend. The guys he worked with called their girlfriends or wives all the damn time.

He knocked on Captain Platt's door. The next twenty minutes were going to be pure hell. Moody could feel it in his bones.

\* \* \* \*

Moody parked the car on the street and got out. He righted his leather jacket and climbed the few front steps of his sister Toni's house and knocked.

The front door opened and Rico stood staring at him. "Mom's not here."

"I know. I came to see you," Moody informed his twenty-three year old nephew.

Rico crossed his arms and leant against the doorframe. "I'm kinda busy."

With a hand to Rico's chest, Moody pushed his nephew into the house and shut the door. "I've got a few questions. Now, we can either discuss them here, or I can take you downtown. Which do you think would be a better move for your career? Hmmm?"

Rico grabbed his open beer from the coffee table and slouched down on the couch. "So talk."

"What do you have to do with Carl Blakely? And don't you fucking dare lie to me!"

Rico took his time answering. Just when Moody was about to put the little fucker into a headlock, his nephew started talking. "Seen him speak a couple times. Liked some of the things he had to say."

The news cut Moody to the bone. He never expected his Catholic family to embrace his lifestyle, but he didn't think they'd side with someone like Blakely, either. Because he'd watched Rico grow up, he knew the punk thought he was tougher than he really was. He wondered if a good scare would do anything to loosen his nephew's tongue.

"You don't want to get mixed up with Blakely. He's losing it, making mistakes. When we finally have enough to convict, we will."

Rico laughed. "Do you know how long the queer groups have been trying to pin something on Reverend Blakely?" Rico waved his hand. "They got nowhere and neither will you."

Moody was across the room before Rico finished his statement. He grabbed his nephew by the front of his shirt and jerked him off the couch. "Listen, you little piece of shit. I don't know how deep you're into the crap that's been going down, but if I find you had anything to do with it, I won't hesitate to bust your ass."

Rico's nostrils flared. Moody's chest tightened at the pure look of hatred in his nephew's big brown eyes.

"What happened to you, Rico? There was a time when you looked up to me. Tell me, who was it that made sure you had shoes to wear to school? Who took you to the ballgame?"

Rico pulled himself out of Moody's grasp. "That was before I knew what you really are. Do you know what it's like to be compared to a fucking faggot every day? I've busted my ass on the job, and all I ever get is comments about the big, bad Moody Torrence. Well, fuck you!"

Moody stepped back, shocked at his nephew's hateful words. "You'd better hope you had nothing to do with William Overton's stabbing. Because as much as I love my sister, I'll take none of it into consideration if it comes down to hauling you in."

Moody turned and walked out of the house, knowing full well it may be for the last time. Toni lived for her kids, and although it hurt, he wouldn't blame her for circling the wagons around her son.

By the time he exchanged the car for his bike and reached his building, Moody's mood was as black as it had ever been. The day had started with a promise of better things, but after the meeting with Rico, he once again questioned emotional involvement.



Instead of immediately going in, he sat on the floor outside of his apartment. Despite his current frame of mind, Moody knew Angelo didn't deserve his wrath. *Fuck!* He pulled out his phone, deciding to test the waters before jumping in.

"Hello?"

"Hey," Moody greeted.

"Something wrong?" Angelo asked, genuine concern lacing the question.

"Bad day."

"Because of me?"

Moody closed his eyes and leant his head against the wall behind him. "Actually, you've been the only good thing about it," he admitted.

"Any idea when you're coming home?"

"Actually, I'm sitting in the hallway." Moody grinned as he heard the locks on the door disengaging. "You feel like putting up with a grumbly bear?"

The door opened and Angelo held out his hand. "Is there a reason you didn't want to come inside?"

Moody grabbed Angelo's hand and got to his feet, snapping his phone shut. "I didn't want to growl at you."

Angelo led Moody into the living room. "Have a seat, and I'll get you a beer."

Before Angelo released his hand, Moody pulled his lover into a hug. He wasn't sure he was ready to talk about his meeting with his captain or his nephew, but he did want to hold the man in his arms.

Angelo nestled against him, giving Moody the silent support he needed. Moody inhaled the clean scent of a man who hadn't been out in the grime of the world. Angelo smelled like home, and the thought of getting attached didn't bother him at that particular moment.

Moody didn't know how long they held each other before he bent and placed a gentle kiss on Angelo's forehead. "A beer sounds good, babe."

Angelo eventually stepped back and cupped Moody's cheek. "I know whatever you went through was because of me. I'm sorry."

Moody reached up and trapped Angelo's hand under his. "No. The worst of it wasn't because of you." *It was because I believed in the love of family.*

Angelo nodded and slipped his hand free. "I'll get us both a beer."

Moody sat on the couch and took off his boots, setting them under the coffee table. "What do you feel like for dinner?"

Angelo came back into the room with two cans of beer. He knew from the teasing he'd overheard Angelo usually only drank expensive beer, so the fact the man was joining him in a cheap domestic was telling.

"I have a buy one, get one free coupon for Manzetti's. Interested?"

Moody popped the top on his beer and took a big swallow. "I can afford two meals."

Angelo's eyes narrowed. "I didn't say you couldn't. But why do you assume you'd be buying my meal in the first place? Just because I got fired doesn't mean I'm destitute."

As sexy as Moody thought that particular expression was, he knew he'd hurt Angelo's feelings. "I didn't mean any offence. If you feel like going to Manzetti's, we'll go."

Angelo sighed and leant against Moody's side. "I guess you haven't heard. I don't go anywhere unless I have a coupon. Why would anyone pay more for something when they can get a perfectly nice meal cheaper?"

"You're right." He never saw Angelo as a man concerned with the cost of a meal, but knowing how he grew up, he didn't blame him.

"We'll need to run by my place so I can change. I doubt Mr. Manzetti will appreciate the sweats and oversized T-shirt."

Moody wrapped his arm around his lover and nodded. "Give me a few to unwind first?"

Angelo's cheek settled against Moody's chest. "Take all the time you need."

The next thing Moody knew, he woke to the sound of his phone ringing. His arm was numb where it was trapped under Angelo, so he fished his phone out with the opposite hand.

"Moody," he answered.

"You have something to tell me?" Toni, Moody's sister asked.

Moody pinched the bridge of his nose. "Hang on a minute, sis."

He extracted his arm from behind a still-sleeping Angelo, and slipped into the bedroom. "Okay, sorry about that."

"Rico said you stopped by. He told me you were going to try and pin that Overton guy's murder on him."

Moody couldn't say he was surprised by the call, but he wasn't prepared to tell his sister his true beliefs of his nephew's involvement. "You know me better than that. I'm afraid he's in with Carl Blakely and his group. I told him if I find out he had anything to do with the harassment to Angelo or the death of Overton, I wouldn't cut him any slack."

"Who's Angelo?"

"A man Carl Blakely doesn't like. He also happens to be special to me." Moody took a deep breath. Although he'd come out to his family years earlier, he'd never introduced them to a lover, but then he'd never had anyone he thought was special. His mind flicked to the man on the sofa. "I'd like to introduce the two of you someday."

"Enough about your boyfriend. Why would you accuse Rico of hanging out with this Blakely guy? I've read about him in the paper, and Rico's not like that."

Moody bit his bottom lip. Rico's hurtful words were still too close to the surface. "I love you, Toni, but I can't discuss this with you right now. If you want to know why I think what I do, ask Rico."

"I guess I always thought family was supposed to stick together."

"Yeah, sis, so did I. I'll talk to you later." Moody hung up. He knew he'd need to go see his mom.

A soft knock sounded and Moody turned towards the door as Angelo stuck his head in the room. "Everything okay?"

Moody grinned. His lover's hair stuck up at odd angles from their impromptu nap on the couch. For some reason, a slightly mussed Angelo was even sexier than the carefully styled businessman he'd met a month earlier. "Yeah."

"I'm making dinner. Nothing fancy, grilled cheese and tomato soup."

Moody stuck the phone into his pocket and wrapped his arms around Angelo. "That's one of my favourite meals."

Angelo kissed him, pushing his tongue deep into Moody's mouth before withdrawing. "It was an easy guess. I opened the cabinet and found about ten cans of tomato soup and four cans of SpaghettiO's."

Moody felt himself blush. He'd loved SpaghettiO's since he was a kid. Back then, getting a can to himself had been unheard of, but now he didn't have to share with anyone. He gazed at the man in his arms. Well, he could probably be talked into sharing them with Angelo.

\* \* \* \*

Although hiding away in Moody's house for the last four days had been good for his romantic life, it wasn't going to get him where he needed to be. Moody had been kind enough to run by Angelo's house to grab him a change of clothes, but that had been days ago. "I'm going home in the morning."

Moody, still breathing heavy from their recent lovemaking, shook his head. "I don't think it's safe."

"Maybe, but so far all Blakely's managed to do is harass me." Angelo turned onto his side and draped an arm over Moody's sweaty chest. "I need to find another job. Who knows how long this is going to go on. I can't put my life on hold just because Carl Blakely might do something else."

Moody wrapped his arms around Angelo, bringing him snug against the big man's body. "I'm sorry I'm not getting anywhere on the investigation. It seems like I spend most of my time putting out fires instead of figuring out why they're being started in the first place."

"It's not your fault. Besides, I'm used to standing on my own two feet. I've stared down scarier men than Carl Blakely before." Angelo playfully bit Moody's nipple before soothing the sting with a swipe of his tongue. "Plus I have a big bad cop a phone call away, right?"

Moody scooted down in bed until they were nose to nose. "I'll sleep on your fucking porch if it helps keep you safe."

Angelo leant in for a kiss, while his hand wandered Moody's incredible body. The thick, flaccid cock he was beginning to crave felt soft, yet powerful, in his palm as he continued the kiss.

For four days he'd thought of moving away. If he wanted to work in radio, it's what had to be done. Things with Moody were fantastic, but too new to use as a basis for staying and working a job he hated. Maybe he'd get lucky and find a job only a few hours away. He could still see Moody and his friends on the weekend.

Moody's cock started to respond to Angelo's touch. Breaking the kiss, Angelo stared into his lover's dark brown eyes. With Moody's hair splayed out on the pillow and his heavily muscled body still glistening with sweat, Angelo wanted him again.

His lover must've felt the same, because without saying anything, Moody reached for another condom. Angelo took the shiny foil packet and ripped it open. "Lube?"

Moody handed Angelo the bottle. "I figured you still had plenty in that pretty hole of yours."

Angelo chuckled. "If you were a normal-sized man, I'd say you were right, but you aren't."

Moody seemed to puff up a bit at the compliment. Angelo was about to straddle Moody's lap, when the big man surprised him and rolled on top. Angelo was amazed at how good it felt being trapped by Moody. Rarely did he allow himself to indulge in the missionary position. It was too intimate for the occasional fuck, and too restricting for his peace of mind.

With Moody, Angelo knew he didn't need to be afraid. There was no power struggle between the two of them. Even though they both knew Moody could easily take him in a fight, in bed, his lover had been nothing but gentle. That wasn't to say they hadn't fucked long and hard over the last few days, but Angelo knew everything Moody did was to bring them both pleasure.

He wrapped his legs around Moody's waist and sighed as his lover pushed in. Angelo still couldn't believe what a bottom boy he was becoming. He knew without asking that Moody would let him top if he asked, but for some odd reason, Angelo didn't feel the need.

As Moody moved in and out of Angelo's body, they maintained eye contact. It was yet another first for Angelo. Had he ever been with a lover who gazed at him the way Moody did? He wondered if the strong feelings he was beginning to develop had anything to do with the situation with Blakely. Would he feel as strongly about Moody if Carl wasn't an issue?

Moody brushed his cheek against Angelo's. They were both men with heavy five-o'clock shadow, and the slight burn seemed to add to the intimacy of the gesture.

"I'm glad I found you," Moody whispered in Angelo's ear.

Every detail about the moment felt surreal to Angelo. Dreams from his past about the perfect man would never have included someone like Juan Torrence, but here they were, and it actually did feel perfect between them. When would the other shoe drop? When would Moody wake up and realise he could have any man he wanted?

Angelo threaded his fingers through Moody's hair, keeping it out of his face. A face that was beautiful without being feminine. Words that he'd never uttered were on the tip of his tongue, but Angelo couldn't bring himself to lay his cards on the table so early in the game.

"Fuck me," he whispered before his facial expression could give away his thoughts.

Moody blinked several times before giving Angelo a brief smile. The pace and intensity of Moody's strokes increased, and Angelo tried to push his sappy thoughts away and feel the moment.

The best thing about their current position was the way Moody's body stroked Angelo's cock on each thrust. Angelo used his hands for better things, like separating Moody's ass cheeks and dipping his finger inside the tight hole of his lover.

Moody grunted. Afraid he'd pushed beyond the boundaries Moody was comfortable with, Angelo withdrew his finger.

"Put it back," Moody panted, slamming the full length of his cock in Angelo's ass.

Angelo lifted his hand to touch Moody's lips and waited. His lover sucked two of Angelo's fingers in and coated them liberally with saliva. Angelo withdrew and once again began to tease Moody's hole.

It didn't take long for his ministrations to push Moody over the edge. Angelo barely got two fingers into the tight back hole before Moody howled with his release.

In the midst of his climax, Moody stared down at Angelo. "Don't come yet."

Angelo nodded in agreement. He tried to think of other things as he continued to stretch Moody's hole.

Once Moody's breathing had started to return to normal, he reached for another condom and quickly sheathed Angelo's cock. "Extra lube," Moody informed Angelo, handing him the bottle.

Angelo bit back the smile as he applied a generous amount of the slick stuff as Moody removed the soiled condom from his own spent cock. He detected a note of fear in Moody's voice and wondered how long it had been since his lover allowed someone to fuck him.

Because his cock was more length than girth, Angelo stopped stretching once his two fingers slid easily in and out of Moody's body. "Ready?"

Moody nodded and sat up, straddling Angelo's hips. "Is this okay?"

Angelo nodded in return, running one hand down Moody's muscled chest as he held the base of his cock with the other.

With a deep breath, Moody rose and reached behind him to help guide Angelo's cock to his hole. "Go slow, okay?"

"It's all you. I won't make a move until you tell me to," Angelo said in agreement.

It took a few moments, but the crown of Angelo's cock eventually pushed past the tight ring of muscles. He held his breath at the expression of pain on Moody's face. "We don't have to do this."

Moody shook his head. "I want to, with you."

The comment surprised him. Could it be possible he was Moody's first? Trying to help in any way he could, Angelo wrapped a hand around Moody's flaccid shaft. Although nothing was said, the action must have helped, because Moody began to take more of Angelo's cock.

The process was slow, but Angelo managed to keep himself from thrusting upwards. If he was right about this being Moody's first time, he wanted to cherish the trust he was being given. Angelo tasted blood and realised he'd bit the inside of his cheek in an effort to be patient with his lover.

"No kissing," he informed Moody.

Moody looked at him with a funny expression. Angelo stuck his tongue out, showing Moody the blood. "Bit my cheek."

Moody's expression softened as he nodded his understanding. Angelo felt Moody's ass settle against him, and knew his lover was fully seated on his cock. "Move when you're comfortable."

Moody leant forward, resting his hands on either side of Angelo's shoulders and lifted his butt a few inches before sinking back down.

"Shit!" Moody exclaimed, before doing it again.

Before Angelo knew it, Moody was riding his cock like he'd been doing it for years. Moody's mouth hung slightly open as his head tossed back and forth.

Angelo was finally able to relax and enjoy himself, no longer afraid of hurting his partner. He began to tentatively thrust upwards, seeking a sign from Moody that it was okay.

"Harder," Moody responded.

Releasing Moody's cock, Angelo placed both his hands on Moody's hips and began to fuck his lover the way he'd wanted. He didn't know if it was because Moody was so tight, or

if it was because it was Moody in the first place, but Angelo had never enjoyed fucking so much in his life.

It suddenly dawned on him. Being with Moody wasn't simply a way of getting his rocks off, it went much deeper. Angelo felt his balls draw up tight at the discovery. "I can't hold off any longer," he warned.

"Give it to me, babe," Moody panted.

His hands shaking, Angelo thrust up once more before unloading his seed into the condom. His body began to quiver at the intensity of his release. He pulled Moody down against his chest and buried his face against the man's neck.

"Thank you," Moody whispered.

*Thank you? Is he kidding? I should be on my knees kissing the ground the man walks on.*

Angelo blinked back the tears that threatened. Leaving San Francisco just got that much tougher.



## Chapter Five

Moody insisted on keeping a watchful eye as Angelo watered his outside flowers. He sat on the front porch step and kept his eyes on the neighbourhood. Angelo continued to tease him about it, but Moody knew Blakely's minions were out there somewhere, and it wouldn't take them long to find out Angelo was back home.

Hose in hand, Angelo started to walk towards the street. Moody jumped up and followed his lover. Angelo spun around and grinned. "Seriously, Detective, I can water these last few by myself."

Moody studied the surroundings before turning back towards the porch. He didn't want to make Angelo paranoid, but he had an uneasy feeling. His phone rang just as he took a seat. "Torrence."

"Hey. Just checking in," Jake said.

"You still following Blakely?"

"Yeah, I tailed him to a big office building downtown."

"What's he doing?"

"Your guess is as good as mine. He knows I'm watching him though. He's actually had the nerve to wave several times," Jake informed him.

A loud screeching of tires caught Moody's attention just as a speeding car rounded the corner and headed straight for Angelo. Moody dropped the phone and sprinted towards his lover. "Angelo!"

Launching himself in the air, Moody caught Angelo around the waist just as the car swerved and continued down the road. The momentum of Moody's manoeuvre had them both landing hard on the ground.

Moody's gaze immediately went to the retreating car and tried to get as much information on the make and model as he could. There was no sense in trying to memorise the licence plate, the car didn't have one.

With the car out of sight, Moody returned his attention to the man sprawled out beside him. "You okay?"

Angelo nodded, reaching down to rub his knee. "I'll be sore, but that's a hell of a lot better than dead."

Moody shook his head. "I don't think that was his intention."

"Coulda fooled me."

Moody pulled out his ponytail holder and scrubbed his fingers through his hair before putting it back again. "They're playing cat and mouse with us. I just need to figure out why."

He stood and helped Angelo to his feet. "Done with the watering?"

"Yeah. Let me wind up the hose, and I'll go inside like a good stalker victim."

Moody walked back to the dropped phone. "You still there?"

"What the hell happened?" Jake asked.

"Just a friendly drive-by. A white, 1980's Monte Carlo, left quarter panel nearly rusted through, no licence plate." Moody wiped the sweat from his forehead. "I think Blakely just stepped up his game. Let me get Angelo to a safer location, and I'll meet you at Blakely's."

"You're not going to do anything stupid are you?"

"Me? Of course not, but I'm through being Mr. Nice Guy."

Jake snorted. "Yeah, that'll be the day."

Moody had no sooner hung up, when his phone rang again. He didn't recognise the number on the display.

"All done," Angelo said, walking towards him.

Moody held up a finger. "Give me a sec."

Returning his attention to the phone, he pressed the talk button. "Detective Torrence."

A synthesised voice sounded in his ear. "It won't stop until someone dies."

The caller hung up, and Moody was left shaken. Once again his eyes went to the street, sweeping the area.

"Who was it?" Angelo asked.

Moody shook his head and pulled Angelo into his arms. "I don't know, but I'm sure as hell gonna find out. I need you to call your friend Bobby and see if you can stay at his place while I'm gone."

"Why Bobby's place?"

"Because it's a lot more secure than my place or yours."

"Moody? What did the caller say?"

Moody hugged Angelo closer and kissed his temple. He didn't want to scare Angelo, but his lover needed to know he was in real danger. "That this wouldn't stop until someone was dead."

He felt Angelo stiffen. "Someone. That could mean me or you, right?"

"Yeah. Although I think we can both agree you seem to be their primary target." He turned and ushered Angelo up the porch steps. "Why don't you go pack a bag just in case?"

Angelo slowly walked into the house. Moody couldn't tell where his lover's head was, but he knew the wheels in Angelo's mind were spinning. With any luck, Moody would get to the bottom of Blakely's plans before anything serious happened. The drive-by had slapped some sense into him. As much as he wanted to protect Angelo, he couldn't watch over his lover every moment. The only way to end the harassment was to put Blakely behind bars.

\* \* \* \*

With Bobby and Jules both at work, Angelo was left to wander around the big empty house. The incident earlier with the car still had him shaken, but the phone call Moody had received had left him pissed.

What if something happened to Moody because he was with him? Angelo knew it was a very real possibility. Bullets didn't always hit their mark.

Once again, the thought of leaving town was forefront in his mind. He'd been thinking a lot about moving to get another job anyway. With Moody's safety now an issue, Angelo knew he couldn't put it off any longer.

Settling in one of the deck chairs, he pulled out his Blackberry and scrolled through his list of contacts. He had a colleague he'd worked with for years who had moved to LA to take a promotion at one of the top radio stations in the entire country. They still kept in touch a couple of times a year. Although he hated calling in favours from his friends, he wasn't sure what else to do.

He dialled the number and waited for Steve to answer.

"Steve Parsons' office," a woman answered.

"Hi, this is Angelo Pilato. I was wondering if I could speak to Steve? We're old friends from his days in San Francisco."

"One moment, Mr. Pilato. I'll see if Mr. Parsons is available."

Within moments, his old friend's voice came over the phone. "Angelo! How the hell have you been?"

Angelo thought of all the things going wrong in his life, but he also thought of his newfound relationship with Moody. "You know, good and bad."

Angelo went on to tell Steve about his run-in with Carl Blakely on the courthouse steps and the subsequent harassment. He hated to sabotage his chance at getting a job, but he knew Steve would find out anyway.

"...so anyway, I was hoping you've heard of a sales opening down there?" Angelo finished, holding his breath.

"I might. There's a guy here who's been slacking lately. I've given him numerous warnings, but he still hasn't picked up the pace as much as I'd like. I won't know for sure whether or not he's going to work out until the end of the month when I get his final sales figures, but if I let him go, you'll be the first man I call."

"I'd appreciate that, Steve." The end of the month was only eleven days away. He could wait that long before looking further down the coast. The closer he kept to his friends and Moody, the better.

He thanked his friend and hung up. Angelo went back into the house and fired up his laptop, typing in the URL for the homepage of the Los Angeles Times. Although it had been nice owning a house, he didn't want to be tied to lawn maintenance if he was planning to make the trek north several times a month. He entered his address on a few different sites asking for more information on a couple of condominium complexes that looked nice.

Just about to power down, Angelo was surprised when an IM box popped up. The name and message made him gasp.

*CB: Are you there?*

Angelo swallowed around the lump in his throat. His first instinct was to slam the laptop shut and call Moody. With his hand resting on the top of the screen, he stopped himself. If the messenger was really Carl Blakely, Angelo knew he had the chance at his first real conversation with the man. Maybe he'd get lucky and could get something out of Blakely that Moody could use in the investigation.

*AP: I'm here.*

*CB: Where's here?*

*AP: Wouldn't you like to know. Why are you doing this to me?*

*CB: God wants you to know your lifestyle is an abomination. I'm simply the messenger.*

Angelo tried to tamp down his anger. *Think.* What would Moody need?

*AP: Did God tell you to try and run me over with a car?*

*CB: God tells me many things.*

*Shit.* Carl Blakely was good at this game.

*AP: When will you stop harassing me?*

*CB: I haven't even seen you since the day you humiliated me in front of my flock.*

*AP: That doesn't mean anything and you know it. I know you have people watching me. You need to understand that Detective Torrence is after you. He won't let you continue to get away with this.*

*CB: That's what I'm counting on.*

Blakely signed off and Angelo was left looking at the screen.

"What the hell does that mean?" he asked himself. He took a snapshot of the screen and emailed it to Moody. Picking up his phone, he called the detective to let him know it was coming.

"Hey, babe," Moody answered.

"I just had a nice instant message conversation with Carl Blakely," Angelo informed Moody.

"What! He had the nerve to contact you?"

"Yeah. I tried to get him to admit to something, but I'm afraid he knew what I was up to. Anyway, I took a snapshot of the screen and emailed it to you. I thought maybe you could do something with it."

Moody was silent for several heartbeats. "Don't play games with Blakely. Just let me do my job."

Angelo took off his glasses and dropped them onto the coffee table. "Excuse me for trying to help you catch the bastard. I saw a chance and took it."

Moody sighed. "I don't know what he's up to, but he had his own motives for getting into that conversation with you. I'm following up on a lead so I won't have a chance to look at my email until later. In the meantime, it might be better for you to stay off the computer."

Angelo ground his teeth together. He knew Moody was just doing his job, but Angelo hated to be told what to do. "I still have a few more things I need to look up, but I'll log off once I finish."

"Angelo," Moody growled, a warning tone in his voice.

"Don't Angelo me. I'm a grown man. If Blakely pops up again, I'll simply exit out of the screen."

"I'll call you later," Moody said and hung up.

"Fuck!" Angelo tossed the phone down. Despite what he'd told Moody, he shut the laptop and lay back on the couch.

He must have fallen asleep, because the next thing he knew, he was startled awake by the sound of the front door opening. "Who's there?"

"Just me," Bobby called. His friend rounded the corner. "My charter didn't show up, so I thought I'd come home and keep you company."

"Did Moody call you?" Angelo knew it wasn't like Bobby to come home in the middle of the afternoon.

"No. Why?"

Angelo waved his hand. "Nothing."

"I thought maybe we'd grill out later. You and your new boyfriend care to stay for dinner?"

Angelo narrowed his eyes. "Let me guess. Trey's been spreading the word like the freaking town crier?"

Bobby laughed and joined Angelo on the couch. "Maybe." Bobby reached over and squeezed Angelo's shoulder. "I'm happy for you. Torrence seems like a nice guy."

Angelo almost swallowed his tongue. "Don't let him hear you say that. He prides himself on his scary factor."

Angelo leaned back on the couch. He'd never been one to spill his guts to his friends, but he really needed to talk to someone. "What would you do if you had someone like Blakely on your case?"

Bobby shrugged. "Probably the same thing you're doing. I'd let the police take care of it."

Angelo nodded. "What if you knew someone you cared about was in danger just by being around you?"

"What's this danger bullshit? Last I heard, Blakely was being more a pain in the ass than anything."

Angelo sat forward and opened his laptop. The page with the IM with Blakely was still front and centre. "Here's a little chat I had earlier with my friend Carl. Of course this was right after one of his men tried to run me over in my front yard."

Bobby grunted and turned the laptop to face him. Angelo could see the anger bubbling up in his friend. Bobby didn't get mad often, but when he did, watch out.

The laptop slammed shut and Bobby jumped up. He paced the room several times before disappearing into the kitchen. Angelo was about to go after him, when Bobby came back into the room, two beers in hand.

He held a Corona out to Angelo before taking a sip of his own. "Did you tell Torrence about this?"

Angelo nodded. "I took a snapshot of the screen and emailed it to him."

"What did he say?"

"Nothing. He probably hasn't read it yet. He was out on a lead when I called to tell him I'd sent it. Don't worry, though, he growled plenty about me having the conversation with Blakely in the first place."

"As well he should."

Angelo noticed Bobby didn't sit down. Instead of watching his friend pace around the room again, Angelo stood and gestured towards the deck. "Care to watch the ocean with me?"

Bobby eventually nodded and headed out to the deck, Angelo right behind him. They settled on the two lounge chairs, and Angelo continued to sip at his beer. After several minutes of peacefully watching the waves roll in and out, Angelo cleared his throat. "So you never answered my question."

Bobby opened his eyes and turned to regard Angelo. "What question?"

"What would you do if you knew the people you cared about were in danger just by being around you?"

"I don't know what you've got in that squirrely head of yours, but stop it. We'll get through this together." Bobby scrubbed a hand over his face. "We seem to be doing a lot of that lately."

Angelo warmed. He'd always known his friends loved him despite the snide comments, but Bobby's conviction drove the feelings deep into his heart. "Yeah, we're a fucked up group of friends, aren't we?"

"Ain't that the truth." Bobby took another swallow of beer. "Now that we're getting you married off, it'll soon be time to go to work on Mario and Kent."

Angelo snorted. "I'm not getting married off to anyone."

Bobby turned to face Angelo. "I thought you liked him?"

"I do. I like him a lot. But he's not my type. I guess I just don't see it lasting." There, he'd said it.

"You're right about one thing. Torrence definitely isn't the type of guy we've seen you with in the past. But did you ever stop and try to figure out why those old boyfriends didn't last?"

Only about a million times. "I figured it was because I'm weird."

Bobby leaned across the distance and punched Angelo in the arm. "Ow!" Angelo howled.

"You're not weird." Bobby grinned. "Okay, so maybe you do have a few oddities, but they make you who you are."

"Yeah? Then why do you guys constantly give me such a hard time?" Angelo asked, rubbing his arm.

"We have to point out your faults. Otherwise you'd seem too damned perfect to hang out with us. Besides, that little nostril flare thing you do when you get mad is cuter than hell."

Angelo reached up and touched his nose. "I don't do that."

Bobby laughed. "You most certainly do. Ask Jules or Torrence."

Angelo finished off his beer and stood. "Do you mind if I get another one?"

"Nope, but only if you'll grab me one," Bobby answered, handing Angelo his empty.

Angelo walked back into the house feeling lighter than he had all afternoon. What his friend said hadn't changed Angelo's mind about relocating, but at least he knew he had people who loved him to come back home to on the weekends.

\* \* \* \*

By the time Moody returned to the station his disposition was less than friendly. Hell, they didn't call him Moody for nothing. He gave the desk sergeant a grunt as he passed and continued on to his desk.



"What'd you find?" Jake asked.

Moody dropped into the chair and threw his keys on the desk. From what he'd heard from his informant, Rico was deeper into this mess than he'd first feared. For twenty bucks and a pack of smokes, Billy James had offered up some frightening information.

Moody's chest felt like it had been crushed like a tin can. "I've got a witness who saw Rico pass the keys to Overton's holding cell to a man in a suit hours before the murder."

"Rico? As in your nephew?"

"Yeah." Moody rubbed his eyes. "Do me a favour, Jake, and take the lead on that tip, would ya?"

Jake nodded. "Sorry, buddy."

Moody shrugged, unwilling to talk more about it. He powered up his computer, knowing what he had to look forward to. He knew the email from Angelo would be the cherry on top of a craptastic day.

He thrummed his fingers on the desk until the machine finally came to life. Moody entered his password and pulled up his email account. He read the instant message conversation between the two men and sighed.

"Jake, take a look at this and tell me what you think."

Jake stood and walked over. He leant against the back of Moody's chair as he read over his shoulder. "Who's CB, or do I need to ask?"

"You don't. That would be the infamous Carl Blakely."

"And AP is Angelo?"

"Yep."

As Jake read the messages, the picture in the background caught Moody's attention. Because Angelo had sent him a snapshot of his screen, it also captured a partial image of a condominium broker in...Los Angeles.

"I gotta go," Moody said, pushing Jake out of his way. "Give me a call if you have any thoughts on the messages."

Moody snatched his keys off the desk and headed towards the door. "Close out of that when you're done, will ya?"

"Should I call you now or wait until you get on your bike?" Jake asked.

"Well, smartass, guess you'd better call me now." Moody pulled his phone out of his pocket and waited for it to ring.

“What’re you thinking?” Moody answered, on his way to the parking lot.

“That you’d better watch your back. And that you need to show this to the captain.”

“Yeah, I got that much. You don’t think it’s enough to incriminate Blakely though, do ya?” Moody had hoped all afternoon that Blakely would’ve screwed up and told Angelo something they could use against him.

“No. A good lawyer could get him out of anything on here. It wouldn’t even get as far as the prosecutor’s office.”

“Yeah, that’s what I figured. Did you find anything out about who Blakely was visiting in the office building?”

“Not yet. I never realised how many individual offices were housed in that building, everything from lawyers, to insurance agents, brokers and a handful of doctors.”

“And of course none of them want to talk about who might have come to see them?” Moody guessed.

“Yep.”

Moody reached his bike and unstrapped his helmet. “Okay. Call me if you find out anything. I’m headed to pick up Angelo.”

“I’d feel better if you took the sedan.”

Moody grinned. “Aw, you do care.”

“Fuck off. I just don’t want to break anyone new in on the case.”

Grinning, Moody ended the call and stuck the phone in his pocket. He slid his helmet on and climbed onto the Harley. As he pulled out of the lot, Angelo’s email came back to him, fuelling his anger once more.

\* \* \* \*

“Hi,” Angelo greeted Moody.

“I need to see your laptop.” Moody stuck his hands in his pockets to keep from either pulling Angelo into his arms or throttling him, he still hadn’t decided which.

Angelo’s smile faltered. “Is there something wrong?”

“The laptop?” Moody reminded him.

Angelo turned without another word and led Moody into the living room. He pointed towards the coffee table. “You want a beer or something?”

“No, thanks.” Moody sat on the couch and opened the laptop. As soon as the image appeared on the screen, he minimised the IM conversation and pointed towards the condominium advertisement. He continued to look in the history file and brought up each site Angelo had visited earlier in the day.

By the time Angelo came back into the room, sipping his beer, Moody felt like throwing the machine across the room. “Care to explain this?”

Angelo glanced at the screen and dropped to the couch beside Moody. “I called an old colleague about a job. I was just checking out possible housing options.”

“In LA?”

Angelo nodded. “It’s not like I’ll be able to find another sales job here. What else am I supposed to do?”

“We’ll get this all cleared up and you can go back to your old job,” Moody replied, grasping at straws.

Angelo put a hand on Moody’s thigh. “I’m always going to be gay. It’s not something you can clear up.”

“Isn’t there something else you can do?” A lump was quickly forming in Moody’s throat at the thought of losing what he’d spent a lifetime looking for.

Angelo pushed Moody back into the sofa and kissed him. “What would you do if you couldn’t be a cop in San Francisco? Would you settle for working as a security guard or would you go to another city if it meant doing what you love?”

Although he understood what Angelo meant, it still hurt. He couldn’t blame his lover for thinking more of a job than him. Hell, they’d only been intimate for a matter of days. But Moody knew their relationship began the first day Angelo walked into the station. He’d been impressed by the way the smaller man stood up to him. Moody knew bigger men who didn’t dare do that.

He cupped the back of Angelo’s head and kissed him again, pushing his tongue deep. With everything else going on, Moody knew it wasn’t the time for life altering decisions, but eventually they would have to be made. A long-distance relationship was something he’d always told himself he’d never do. Was what he’d started with Angelo worth it?

Angelo broke away, staring into Moody’s eyes. “I’d stay if I could. You know that, right?”

Despite being a couple years shy of forty, Moody reacted like a hurt little boy. "I guess it depends on what's most important to you."

Angelo pulled back and stood. "That's not fair." He picked up his beer and started towards the deck before turning back. "I didn't ask to be targeted. I didn't ask to have my entire career ruined in one night."

Moody started to comment, but Angelo cut him off.

"I like you." Angelo shook his head. "No. It's more than that. I'm falling in love with you, but it's not enough to rearrange my entire life, at least not yet. I've worked my fucking ass off to get where I am. Do you know how much it means to me to have a house without cockroaches scurrying for cover every time you turn on a light? That's huge."

"Don't start with the poor boy routine. I grew up in the same kind of neighbourhood as you," Moody growled. "And one thing I learned that you haven't seemed to get through your thick head is that money doesn't mean shit if you don't have people you care about."

With his hands fisted at his sides, Moody watched as the colour seemed to drain from Angelo's face. "Yeah, well, you earn money and at least you have something real at the end of the day. You invest, you save and if you treat it right, your money doesn't desert you."

Angelo calmly set his beer bottle down and walked out the front door. Moody growled his frustration to an empty room. At least he thought it was empty.

"We're the only family he has, ya know?"

Moody spun around to face Bobby. "I've read his file. I'm aware he didn't know his father and his mother died when he was barely out of high school."

Bobby nodded slowly. "So, because you read words on a computer screen, you think you have him all figured out?"

"I didn't say that." Moody went to the window and separated the curtains. He could see Angelo in the distance, pacing around the cul-de-sac.

"I'm not disagreeing with some of the things you said to him, but you're not taking into account who Angelo really is."

Moody crossed his arms and stared at Bobby. "So enlighten me."

Bobby held up his hands, gesturing with the bottle towards the window. "That's just it, I can't. I don't think any of us can. We've known Angelo for years, but no one really knows who he is. He doesn't let people in. The fact that you've gotten as far as you have in such a

short amount of time says a lot. Don't discount what he said about falling in love with you. As far as I know, he's never felt that for anyone."

"So what? I'm supposed to just let him move to Los Angeles?"

Bobby tipped the bottle to his mouth and finished it off. "I don't know, man. Maybe it's the sense of security that money gives him. Who knows, maybe if he felt secure in something else it wouldn't seem as important."

"We haven't been together long. I doubt either of us is secure in our relationship." Moody knew his feelings for Angelo were real, but he'd never had a serious boyfriend. What if he convinced Angelo to stay and things didn't work out?

Bobby started to turn towards the kitchen. "Sounds like you need to take things one day at a time until you know whether or not he's the one."

As Bobby left the room, Moody turned back to the window. His lover was still pacing the street, arms flailing in the air. What was he doing?

Moody's hand was on the doorknob when Bobby sauntered back into the room. "Give him some time. Why don't you come help me with dinner?"

Moody rested his forehead against the closed door. A large part of him wanted to run out into the street and wrap Angelo in his arms, but he knew that wouldn't solve their problems, only postpone them.

"Okay, I have to be honest, though. I don't know shit about grilling."

## Chapter Six

Angelo was still arguing with himself when he felt a tap on his shoulder. He spun around, expecting to defend himself and came face to face with Jules. Angelo dropped his hands. "Oh, hey."

With his eyebrows drawn together, Jules' head tilted to the side. "What're you doing?"

It took Angelo several moments before finally admitting how juvenile he was being. "Arguing with myself."

Jules nodded. "And who's winning?"

Angelo realised the absurdity of the exercise. "I'm torn between staying here with the people I care about and working at some fast food restaurant, or moving to LA to get another job in radio."

Jules pulled at his earlobe, evidently considering Angelo's statement. "It looked like you were arguing about more than that."

Angelo shook his head. "Naw. I'm Italian. We always argue with our hands as much as our mouths."

Jules laughed and started walking to the house. He stopped and glanced over his shoulder. "You coming?"

"In a minute." Despite the friendly disruption, Angelo's disposition was far from calm. How dare Moody make him feel guilty! As mad as he was at his lover, he was just as pissed at himself. He knew he'd sounded like a superficial son-of-a-bitch earlier, but everything he owned, he'd worked his ass off for. No one had given him a damn thing in his life.

Angelo kicked at a tuft of ornamental grass. He knew if he went back into the house, he'd take one look into Moody's deep brown eyes and forgive him. What was the point of falling in love if it cost you everything else?

"Angelo?" Moody called from the front yard of Bobby's house. "Dinner's ready."

Angelo waved that he'd heard him. He really wasn't ready to go back inside. Maybe he could catch a cab and go back to his place.

"We okay?" Moody asked, walking towards Angelo.

Angelo shrugged. What could he say? He was more confused than ever. Moody reached him and pulled him into an embrace. "If I get the job, I was planning to come back here on the weekends," he mumbled against Moody's neck.

Moody sighed and kissed the top of Angelo's head. "Maybe I'm just being a selfish prick, but I kinda like coming home to you at the end of a shitty day."

"Yeah, I've enjoyed it too," Angelo conceded.

"Listen. I know I'm asking more than you're willing to give, but I've never met anyone like you, and I've never known a long-distance relationship to work out."

Angelo knew exactly what Moody was saying. It was the same thing he'd been standing out in the street arguing with himself over. Basically, he knew it came down to working a job he loved or taking a chance on the real thing. With a job he depended on himself, with love he was dependant on someone else, in this case, Moody.

"Let's not argue about LA anymore until I get the call back on the job. There's no sense playing 'what-if' unless I get the damn thing in the first place." He felt Moody's arms tighten. Angelo ran his fingers over his lover's heavy five o'clock shadow. "I don't suppose you own any sneakers, do you?"

\* \* \* \*

Throughout dinner, Moody couldn't take his eyes off Angelo. Every smile, every gesture the hot Italian made seemed to fuel Moody's lust for the man. By the time Angelo snuggled against him on the back of the Harley, Moody's dick was about to break through his jeans.

He remembered what they'd talked about the first night they'd rode together. The image of Angelo bent over his Harley nearly sent Moody over the edge. He thought about his favourite, isolated, make-out spots growing up.

"Care if we make a stop on the way to my place?" Moody asked over the rumble of the engine.

Angelo leaned further against him and spoke in his ear. "It feels like forever since I've been out. Take me where ever you want."

A few blocks from Bobby's place, Moody pulled into an all-night drugstore. Before Angelo could question him, Moody tapped his lover on the nose. "Supplies."

A wide grin broke out on Angelo's gorgeous face. "Ooh, it's going to be that kind of stop."

Moody nodded and glanced down at his hard cock. "Thought I'd show you life on the wild side."

Angelo chuckled and rubbed his hands together. "Go get the stuff, Big Daddy."

Moody laughed as he walked into the store. Never would he expect Angelo to call him by such a name. He grabbed a box of condoms and studied the lube selection. *Warming? Hmmm, that could be interesting.*

He checked out and tossed the paper sack to a still grinning Angelo. "Got a surprise for ya in there."

One of Angelo's black eyebrows rose in curiosity. "Really?" Angelo peeked into the bag. "Oh, I've seen this stuff on TV. Do you think it works?"

Moody fastened his helmet strap and climbed onto the bike. "There's only one way to find out."

As the Harley roared out of the parking lot, Moody was so focused on the hard ridge pressing against his back, he didn't notice the car following until it was right behind them. He yelled back to Angelo as loud as he could. "Hold on tight. We've got a tail."

Moody turned a corner at the last moment in hopes of throwing the white Monte Carlo off. "Get my phone out of my pocket and call 9-1-1. Tell them we're heading towards the station," he yelled again.

He felt Angelo's hand reach into the tight pocket of his jeans and dig for the phone. In any other circumstance it would've been fun, but Moody knew he needed to drive carefully. With Angelo only using one hand to hang on to him, the danger had escalated.

Angelo's voice was barely audible over the thrum of the Harley, but Moody was pleased to hear his lover give details of their position. The car began to inch closer, honking as it neared. What the hell was Blakely trying to prove?

Within minutes, Moody heard the familiar sound of a police siren headed their way. The jackass following them must've heard it too, because the car quickly slowed and turned a corner.

As much as Moody wanted to turn around and pursue the bastard, he knew he couldn't. He slowed the motorcycle to a stop and turned to make sure Angelo was still on the phone. "Did you tell the operator they turned?"



Angelo nodded. "The cops are in pursuit."

Moody held out his hand and Angelo passed him the phone. "This is Detective Moody Torrence. Could you give me a call back on this number when you catch the asshole? I need to question him about a case I'm working."

Moody hung up the phone and slipped it back into his pocket before climbing off the bike. He took off his helmet and pulled Angelo into his arms. He knew it wasn't the place for public displays of affection, but he was so grateful to make it out of the situation, he didn't give a shit who saw him kiss his lover.

As he sealed his lips against Angelo's he went to work removing his lover's helmet. "Are you okay?"

Angelo nodded and held up his hand. "Still shaking, but I'll be fine. Do you think they'll catch him?"

"I hope so. I'd love to get my hands on him." He hooked Angelo's helmet over the handle bar and threaded his fingers through the smaller man's thick black hair. God, they'd been lucky. One wrong move and they both could've been killed. He couldn't stop touching his lover, moving his hands from Angelo's hair to his back and finally the tight ass Moody loved so much.

In the middle of making out like a couple of teenagers, Moody's phone rang. He broke away from Angelo's lips with a groan. "Don't move."

"Torrence," he answered.

"They apprehended him, Detective. He's cuffed and loaded in the squad car."

"Thanks." Moody hung up and called Jake.

"Hello?"

"It's Moody. Our guy in the white Monte Carlo just tried to run me and Angelo over. The patrol guys caught him and are taking him in. I thought you might want to be there when I interrogate his ass."

"I'll be there as soon as I take my date home. You owe me, Torrence. I was gonna get some juicy pussy tonight."

Moody rolled his eyes at his partner's description. "You're a fucking pig, Jake."

"Oink, oink."

"I'm gonna take Angelo back to his friends. I'll be there as soon as I can." Moody hung up and handed Angelo his helmet. "Do you think it'd be okay if you went back to Bobby's? At least until I'm done at the station?"

Angelo shook his head. "Just drop me off at your place. I don't want to bother Bobby again."

"My place isn't as safe as Bobby's."

"You see, that's just it. I don't feel like I'm in danger. Blakely is starting to remind me of some of the assholes from my old neighbourhood, all talk and no show. He's yet to try anything physical. Scare tactics is all he's got, and I'm tired of being scared."

Moody slipped his own helmet on, thinking about what Angelo had said. "You're right." *Shit*. What did it mean? Before climbing back on the Harley, he gave Angelo another deep kiss. "You've just given me a new way of looking at this case."

\* \* \* \*

Jake met Moody at his desk. "Unless you can come up with a reason, we don't have enough evidence to arrest him."

Moody nodded. "I expected that to be the case. I really just want to question him."

Jake gestured towards a small room. "I've got him in there. I gotta tell you, he's not too happy to still be here."

"I understand." Jake was telling him they were on thin ice. "You pull up anything on him in the system?"

"Nope. He's a mechanic. One ticket for speeding three years ago. That's about it."

"Is he a member of Blakely's church?" Moody questioned further.

"We both know he is. It's not in his file, though, and he's not talking."

Moody read the name on the sheet of paper Jake handed him. "Kyle Rousello. Hmmm, well, let's go see what Mr. Rousello has to say."

Jake followed him into the interrogation room. Moody shut the door and turned to face the man who'd tried to scare the shit out of them twice that day. "Before I begin asking questions, let me just give you a little heads-up. You're evidently not one of Reverend Blakely's favourites. Because if you were, Carl would've informed you not to take the same car for both your little adventures."

"You don't know anything," Kyle mumbled.

Moody leaned over the table, his fists propped on the scarred wood in front of Kyle. He started to talk, but stopped himself and glanced over his shoulder. "Jake? You want to go get our friend a glass of water or something?"

He winked at his partner, letting Jake know it was all part of the good cop, bad cop they'd played for years. Jake nodded and left the room. Moody returned his attention to the bug-eyed man in front of him. "Now. How 'bout we get down to it? What's Blakely trying to do with all these stunts?"

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Hmmm, maybe you'd better think harder." Moody leant down until he was nose to nose with Kyle. "Because if I don't get some answers, I'll be so far up your ass, you'll have to call me sweetheart."

Kyle's face screwed up in disgust. "Stay the hell away from me, fag!"

Moody shrugged. "Sorry, choir boy, can't do that. What I can do is visit you at Ernie's Garage everyday at lunchtime. I'll also make sure I send all my 'fag' friends by to flirt with you as well, but you'll be my special honey bear. How do you think that'll go over with the guys you work with? I might even be persuaded to send you flowers if you perform nicely during our little afternoon trysts."

Enraged, Kyle pushed himself away from the table. "Get me out of here!" he screamed.

Moody quickly moved to block Kyle's exit. He knew a minion like Kyle wouldn't be privy to Blakely's master plan, but there was no way in hell he was letting the guy out the door without giving him something. "How would you like to spend a night in jail? I bet there are all kinds of guys like me. You'd be a tasty little morsel for them."

"You've got nothing on me."

"You're wrong. I'm a cop. I can get all kinds of things on you. Now, I wanna know why Blakely sent you out, twice, to kill Angelo Pilato?"

Kyle shook his head back and forth. "N-No. I wasn't trying to kill anyone."

"Really? You drive a car straight for a man watering his lawn and you weren't trying to hurt him?"

Kyle continued to shake his head. "I was just supposed to scare him. All Reverend Blakely said was to make sure you were there when I did it."

"Why?" Moody demanded to know.

"I-I don't know."

Moody could see by the fear on Kyle's face he wasn't going to give him any more information. Moody stepped to the side and gestured towards the door. "Do yourself a favour, and stay the hell away from Blakely. What you choose to believe is your business, but when you try to push your beliefs onto others through scare tactics, well, honey bear, then it becomes my business."

Kyle scurried around Moody like a rat trying to escape from a trap. He flew out the door and ran into Jake. Moody's partner steadied the guy before letting him go.

After Kyle left, Jake stepped into the interrogation room. "Find out anything?"

Moody nodded. "I think so. Angelo said something earlier that has me thinking. We've got the pamphlets, the graffiti, the bloody dildo, and then the two little stunts Kyle pulled. None of them were meant to hurt Angelo. I think Blakely's trying to piss us off. Kyle said Blakely told him to make sure I was around when he put the scare into Angelo today."

"What good would that do?"

Moody lifted his hair and rubbed the back of his neck. "What if Blakely's hoping I go after him? You know, the whole protective boyfriend bit? It would be quite a news story. Fag attacks church official."

"But why would Blakely suffer an attack just for a two minute blurb on the evening news?"

"That's what we need to figure out. Find out what he was doing in that office building. It has to be connected somehow." That was the million dollar question. Moody thought back to Angelo's run-in with Carl Blakely on the steps of the courthouse. Blakely was almost three hundred pounds. Despite the fact Angelo was close to six foot, he shouldn't have been able to push Blakely to the ground as easily as he did.

Moody realised Jake was the only one of them who'd seen Blakely in weeks. "How'd he look, by the way?"

"Who? Blakely?"

Moody nodded.

Jake scratched his jaw. "I don't know, thinner, I guess. I figured getting out of farm country had done his diet a world of good. Why? You think it's related?"

"Zero in on the doctors in the building. If I'm right, Blakely's a patient of one of them. You may not be able to get confirmation that he's a patient, but I'd like to know the

specialities of the physicians. I don't think he stayed in San Francisco to watch over Angelo, I think maybe he's here for medical treatment, and fucking with Angelo's just a side benefit."

\* \* \* \*

A cold body pressing against him woke Angelo. He snuggled into Moody and sighed. "Another late night for you. Sorry I didn't wait up."

"No need for you to." Moody kissed Angelo's neck as his cold hands began to wander Angelo's chest.

"Did you get anything from the guy?" Angelo gasped when Moody's hand moved down to cup his balls.

"Can we talk about this later? I'd much rather get my dick warmed up with some of that new lube I bought."

Angelo grinned and reached under his pillow. He held up a condom and the new bottle of lube. "I'm one step ahead of you."

Moody growled playfully and nipped Angelo's neck as he took the supplies. Knowing how worked up Moody had been earlier in the evening, Angelo rolled to his stomach. He braced his knees on the mattress and thrust his ass into the air. "How's this?"

A loud groan filled the small bedroom, as Moody's hands began rubbing Angelo's ass.

"You look good enough to eat," Moody commented, a second before a warm tongue ran across Angelo's hole.

Angelo's back automatically arched at the touch. *Fuck*. Moody did know how to make him feel good. With his head still on his pillow, Angelo buried his face and howled as two fingers shoved their way into his ass. Evidently his lover was more impatient than usual.

The bite of pain only lasted a moment before bliss reigned supreme. "I can feel it."

"Hell, I'd hope so," Moody said, a chuckle in his voice.

"Not your fingers, dumbass, the warming gel."

Moody continued to prepare Angelo's hole while he licked and scraped the tender skin of Angelo's ass with his teeth. "I've never wanted to bareback an ass more than I want to at this moment."

Angelo glanced over his shoulder. It didn't matter that he was clean or that Moody was most likely disease and virus free. It was the one promise he'd made his mom when he'd come out of the closet shortly before her death. "Don't even think about it."

A heavy hand landed on Angelo's butt cheek. "I'm not stupid, but maybe we should think about getting tested."

Angelo swallowed. Although he'd made his feelings known earlier in the day, this was the closest Moody had come to opening up about his own. "If you think you can be faithful, then yeah."

Moody's fingers pulled out of Angelo's ass. Angelo squeezed his eyes shut. *Shit*. He knew he shouldn't have said it as soon as it came out of his mouth. "I'm sorry."

When Moody didn't reply, Angelo opened his eyes and manoeuvred to his back. Moody was just sitting there, staring down at Angelo.

"I didn't mean to piss you off," Angelo whispered.

"You didn't," Moody answered. "I guess everything just hit me. Even though it's very likely you'll be moving to LA, I wouldn't hesitate to give you the promise of fidelity."

"Is that a bad thing?"

"No. Just a new thing." Moody ran his hands up and down Angelo's inner thighs. He shook his head and sighed. "I love you. I don't want you to go, but I'll love you whether you do or not."

Angelo wasn't sure what he was supposed to say to that. Why did the job in LA suddenly feel like a curse instead of a blessing? He sat up and crawled onto Moody's lap. Wrapping his arms around the man he loved, Angelo placed a chaste kiss on Moody's lips. "I love you, too."

He wished he could promise Moody he would stay, but Angelo knew he couldn't do that just yet. All he could promise at the moment was his heart. He reached down and picked up the forgotten condom. It would be easy to get all sappy and beg Moody to make love to him, but he knew his lover needed something a little more permanent. "Make me yours. Fuck me so hard I'll never want to leave."

Moody's dark eyes stared into Angelo's for a moment before he finally grinned. "Turn over and let me brand this ass."

Angelo slid off Moody's lap and positioned himself on his hands and knees. He heard the crinkle of the condom packet and the click of the lube cap as he braced himself for the fucking of his life.

After quickly lubing Angelo's hole once again, Moody got to his knees and positioned the crown of his cock at Angelo's stretched opening. Without waiting, Angelo pushed back, impaling himself. He didn't stop until he'd worked his way down Moody's entire length.

A sharp slap landed on his butt cheek as Moody groaned. Moody rubbed the sore skin with the palm of his hand as he pulled out and thrust back inside. "Gonna tattoo my name on this ass."

Angelo shook his head. "No tattoos."

*Thwack!* Angelo flinched, but Moody didn't even break stride. "You'll love it. Once you get one, you'll be begging to get more."

Angelo thought of the sexy tattoos decorating Moody's skin. He knew he definitely wasn't the kind of guy who could pull off ink, but the thought of him getting one, really seemed to be turning Moody on.

As Moody's thrusts increased in speed and pressure, the large hand continued to slap at Angelo's ass. "God, that's pretty," Moody grunted.

The sting and constant rubbing had his ass tingling. Angelo couldn't decide if he liked it or not. What he did enjoy was what it apparently was doing to Moody. Who knew he'd fallen for such a kinky bastard.

Angelo reached under him and wrapped his fingers around his cock. Moody's next thrust nearly sent him into the headboard. He dropped his head down and used his free hand to put a pillow between himself and the oak slats without Moody ever missing a beat.

The new position shot Moody's cock into his ass at a different angle, pulling a moan from Angelo's lips. "Feels good," he panted.

One of Moody's feet moved to rest beside him as his lover tilted his body to the side, providing yet another angle.

"Gonna come!" Angelo warned.

Despite the pillow, the next thrust jammed Angelo's head against the headboard, hard. "Fuck!"

Moody's hand immediately came up to rub the top of Angelo's head. "Sorry, baby."

The simple gesture pushed Angelo over the edge. His body tightened as the first string of seed burst from his cock, landing on his chest. Thank God Moody took over holding him up because Angelo felt like a jelly fish after the intense climax.

He was aware of Moody's groans as his lover's body jerked behind him moments before a heavy weight landed on his back. Angelo grunted and Moody eventually pulled out and rolled to the side.

It was several moments before Angelo could breathe well enough to speak. "Consider me properly branded."

Moody started to laugh, but ended up coughing instead. Angelo rolled to his side and draped an arm over his lover's chest. "Aw, did my little ol' ass wear you out?"

Moody didn't even open his eyes. He gave Angelo a grunt and reached down for the soiled condom.

Taking pity on the big detective, Angelo reached down and took over the job of disposing of the rubber. He crawled out of bed and headed towards the small bathroom. "I'm going to be walking funny for a week," he grouched as he wet a washcloth.

After cleaning himself, he carried the cloth back into the bedroom and wiped down his lover. His ass still stung. He could just imagine how red it was. He hadn't dared look at it in the mirror. "So am I going to have to get used to this spanking thing?"

One of Moody's dark brown eyes opened. "I was just following orders. You're the one who told me to mark you."

"Yeah, well do me a favour and don't take me so literally next time."

Moody reached down and rubbed the sore skin of Angelo's butt cheek. "But my handprint looks so pretty on your ass."

Angelo leaned in and bit Moody's chest, his teeth sinking into the skin around his lover's nipple. "And my teeth marks look sexy on your chest."

Moody shrugged. "I'll get them tattooed there if you'll get my handprint tattooed on your ass."

"Not fair. My teeth are a hell of a lot smaller than your hand." Even though he'd said it, Angelo could easily picture Moody's chest sporting permanent teeth marks. He knew it was playful talk, but he wondered if someday they'd be ready to make good on it.

Once again the move to LA came to mind. He laid his head on Moody's chest and hugged him.



“Hey, what’s wrong?” Moody asked, threading his fingers through Angelo’s hair.

“Everything but this,” he mumbled. He realised how true the statement was. For the first time in his adult life, something had topped his list of priorities besides work.

## Chapter Seven

Moody woke to the buzzing of his cell phone. He reached blindly towards the bedside table and grabbed the instrument before it woke Angelo. "Torrence," he growled.

"Turn on the news."

"Rico?" Moody asked, opening his eyes.

"Yes, now turn on the news."

Moody fumbled on the nightstand and found the remote. He turned on the television and flipped to one of the local news stations. There on the screen was a handcuffed Paul Overton, William Overton's father, being led into a police station. "What the fuck is going on, Rico?"

"We arrested Paul for conspiracy to commit murder. He paid off one of the guards to let Billy James Maxwell into William's cell to do the deed."

Billy James was the informant who had fingered Rico for passing off the key to Overton's cell. Moody suddenly remembered something Rico had said. "We? You said we arrested."

"I've been working with the California Bureau of Investigation trying to figure out who paid off the guard and Billy."

"What?" Moody felt Angelo stir beside him, and reached out to run a hand across his lover's hip.

Rico sighed. "I'm not as inept as you seem to believe."

"I never said..."

"Whatever," Rico interrupted him. "I just wanted you to know."

"And Carl Blakely?" Moody questioned his nephew.

"The CBI thought it would be a good idea for me to infiltrate Blakely's group. We had no idea who'd paid to have William murdered. Turns out it was the guy's own father."

Relief washed over Moody. "So you don't agree with Blakely's teachings? And the stuff you said to me?"

There was a moment of silence before Rico spoke. "I don't believe anything that asshole spouts, but I guess some of what I said to you was the truth."

Moody rubbed his chest as the words sank in. "What parts?"

"I'll never be the cop you are, and I know it. I'm done being compared to you. I've accepted a job with the CBI. I'll be transferring to the San Diego office as soon as Paul Overton's trial is over."

He felt Angelo's hand land on his back and glanced over his shoulder with a smile. It was obvious his nephew harboured a great deal of resentment towards him, but he still didn't know whether it was because he was a damn good cop or gay. Moody would have to accept the fact he may never know the real truth.

"Congratulations, Rico. You should be proud of yourself."

"I am. I've got a ton of reports to fill out, so I'd better get to it."

"Wait! Can I ask you a question about Blakely?"

"You can ask, but I really wasn't able to get close enough to the arrogant sonofabitch to find out anything."

"Did you notice any signs of weakness? Like has he been sick or anything lately?"

"I only saw him once the entire time I hung around over there. He stayed in his room for the most part, but I did see him open the door and call for Travis, his right-hand man. Why?"

"Jake said it looked like Blakely had lost weight since William Overton's trial."

"Yeah. I can see that. I didn't give it much thought at the time, but now that you mention it, he did seem thinner."

"Okay. That's all I needed to know. Will I see you before you leave town?" Moody asked.

"Probably."

Rico hung up and Moody tossed his phone onto the table.

"Something wrong?" Angelo asked.

Moody laid back down and pulled his lover into his arms. "The CBI just arrested the people involved in William Overton's death, including Paul Overton. Evidently he wanted his fag son silenced before he could do the family any more damage."

Angelo leaned up on one elbow. "So that's good, right?"

"Yeah." Moody sought Angelo's mouth in a deep kiss. He wasn't sure if he'd ever get over the guilt of believing his nephew was capable of having something to do with the murder.

Angelo broke the kiss and narrowed his eyes. "What aren't you telling me? Is it about Blakely?"

Moody knew the guilt over Rico was something he needed to work out internally, telling Angelo what an ass he'd made of himself wouldn't serve any purpose. He decided to divulge his theory about Carl Blakely instead. "I think he's sick."

"Well we already knew that."

"No. I mean medically sick," Moody clarified.

Angelo rested his head on the pillow beside Moody's. "What does that have to do with going after me?"

Moody shook his head. "I'm still working on that. Jake said something that's got me thinking. He wondered why Blakely would suffer my wrath for a few minutes of news coverage."

"And?" Angelo asked, kissing his way down Moody's chest.

"And, I don't know. I need to go into the station though. There are a couple things I want to check out."

Angelo insinuated himself between Moody's thighs. "What about the poker game later? You told Bobby you'd be there."

Moody threaded his fingers through Angelo's hair as his lover engulfed his cock. "I'll be there."

\* \* \* \*

After several hours on the computer, Moody struck gold. "Jake, look at this."

His partner walked up behind Moody and peered over his shoulder. "Okay, I'll bite. What am I looking at?"

Moody pointed halfway down the column of names. "Carl Blakely's sued an oncologist in his hometown. Looks like the case was settled out of court for an undisclosed amount."

Jake whistled. "Sounds like you were right on the money about him seeking medical treatment here."

Moody nodded. "If he's dying, maybe his goal wasn't to provoke an attack, but a murder." He brought up the snapshot of the IM conversation between Angelo and Carl. "See, right here."

*AP: That doesn't mean anything and you know it. I know you have people watching me. You need to understand that Detective Torrence is after you. He won't let you continue to get away with this.*

*CB: That's what I'm counting on.*

"I think Blakely was hoping he'd push hard enough for me to kill him."

"What would he gain if he was dead?"

"If he's dying already, maybe he's trying to make a martyr out of himself. Can you imagine the headlines his death would receive? Especially if it was at the hands of a queer."

"You're a cop. He can't honestly be that stupid."

Moody leaned his head back to stare up at his partner. "You're kidding me, right? This is Carl Blakely we're talking about. He thinks all fags are immoral anyway. I bet he thinks we're one hissy fit away from murder."

Jake walked back to his desk, still shaking his head. "If you're right, what're you going to do about it? We're still a long way from having enough hard evidence to have him arrested."

Moody leant back in his chair and propped his feet up on his desk. "Carl Blakely wants to be in the headlines, so maybe we give him what he wants, only not for the reason he wants."

"Is this a riddle me this, Batman, question?" Jake asked.

Moody grinned. A plan was forming in his mind, but he'd need a lot of help from his friends to pull it off. "Okay, here's what I need you to do..."

\* \* \* \*

Angelo glanced up at Moody. "Are you sure he's not going to shoot us or something?"

Moody rested a hand on the small of Angelo's back. "With the television cameras around? Not a chance."

Angelo leaned against Moody's side. He was having a hard time putting everything Moody had told him into perspective. On one hand, he understood that even if the police were able to get enough evidence that Blakely was behind the harassment, the likelihood the man would spend time behind bars was slim. So he'd gone along with Moody's plan to teach Blakely a lesson through kindness instead of retribution.

“Oh, there are the news crews. I’ll be right back,” Moody said, kissing Angelo before he ran off.

Angelo studied the gathering crowd. After placing a call to his closest friends, they’d all agreed to start a GLBT phone tree of sorts. They’d each called everyone they knew in the vast San Francisco GLBT community, to ask their help in serving Carl Blakely a slice of humble pie.

Of course the majority of the people they’d contacted jumped at the chance to put Blakely in his place. How dare the man try to spread his vile gospel in one of the largest GLBT areas of the country?

He waved above the crowd when he spotted Zac, Eric, Trey and Cole. Zac waved back as they headed towards Angelo.

“Great turnout,” Trey commented, glancing around.

“Julian’s swinging by the marina to pick up Bobby, and Kent will be here. Unfortunately, Marco won’t be able to make it, but he said to give you his love,” Eric told Angelo.

“We’re ready,” Moody called, jogging over.

Angelo opened the back passenger door of his car and pulled out the large sheet cake. Now that the time to present his gift to Blakely was at hand, Angelo started to feel silly.

Moody must’ve picked up on Angelo’s thoughts, because his lover bent down and whispered. “Just remember what this man cost you. Your job, your peace of mind. He had one of his goons paint your car, your friends’ home...”

“Yeah, I remember.” Angelo didn’t need Moody to go over everything Blakely had ordered done to him. He just wanted his life back. “I hope this gets him off my ass.”

“He isn’t stupid enough to continue the harassment once the media puts a spotlight on the two of you.”

Angelo squared his shoulders and tilted his chin up for a kiss. Moody didn’t disappoint and laid a good one on him. It wasn’t until Moody extracted his tongue from Angelo’s mouth that he noticed the cameras.

Shit. Well, there goes getting a job in this town. He nodded at Moody and started to walk towards Blakely’s rented house. The closer he got, the more he began to feel like the gay pied piper.

A quick glance to his left and right made him feel better. His friends were all there with him, save one, but he knew Marco was there in spirit. With a deep breath, he stood on the small concrete front step of Blakely's and waited for Moody to ring the doorbell.

The three news stations that had shown up positioned themselves to get a good shot of the 'goodwill gesture'. The door opened and someone Angelo had never seen before stared out at the gathered crowd.

Moody nudged Angelo. "Is Reverend Blakely here?" Angelo asked.

"Who're you? What's going on here?"

Angelo held out the cake. "We heard the Reverend was ill and wanted to offer him our well wishes."

The guy narrowed his eyes. "You're that fag aren't you?"

"Yes, I am a homosexual." Good Lord, nothing like coming out to an entire city. Not that he'd been in the closet, but he'd never openly advertised his sexuality.

"No. I mean you're the guy who..." The man at the door snapped his mouth shut. "Carl's not up to visitors."

"What the hell are all those people doing in the yard?"

Angelo grinned as Carl Blakely's voice yelled the question loud enough for the news reporters to catch on their microphones.

The door shut and he could hear voices being raised. After a few seconds, the door swung open and a gaunt-looking Carl Blakely stood in front of Angelo. "What's the meaning of this?"

Once again Angelo held out the 'Get Well Soon' cake. "Despite our differences, we heard you weren't well. We came together today to bring you this."

As Angelo held his breath, Blakely's face began to turn red. Angelo counted the reverend's heartbeats in the throbbing vein on the man's forehead. Carl's eyes flashed from the cake, to Angelo and then to the cameras.

Angelo gave the bigoted son-of-a-bitch the biggest smile he had in his arsenal. "I hope we can put all our issues behind us."

He knew he was laying it on thick, but he was starting to enjoy himself. The asshole in front of him had done his best to make Angelo's life hell. He deserved to be humiliated by the 'Goodwill Queers'.

"Thank you, but I don't eat cake. If you'll excuse me," Blakely ground out between clenched teeth before closing the door in Angelo's face.

He turned towards the cameras, still holding the cake. "Well, we tried. I only hope Reverend Blakely will see the gesture in the spirit it was meant."

Moody cleared his throat and Angelo gave the cameras his most innocent grin.

\* \* \* \*

Sitting in the passenger seat, Moody couldn't contain his laughter. "I need a trip to the dentist. I think you gave me a cavity with all the syrupy sweetness you were pouring out back there."

Angelo chuckled along as he pulled into Bobby's driveway behind Kent's big pickup. Before getting out of the car, he leaned over the console and gave Moody a kiss. "I figure after that, Blakely will either kill me, or run for the hills."

Moody kissed Angelo again, thrusting his tongue deep in Angelo's mouth. He broke away and stared into Angelo's eyes. "Don't even joke about that."

Angelo pursed his lips. "Love you."

Moody rolled his eyes. "You're already learning how to work me, aren't you?"

Angelo grinned and opened his car door. "Would you be the big strong hero and grab the cake out of the back while I get the beer?"

Moody got out of the car and flexed his muscles, much to Angelo's delight. He heard a groan come from behind him and turned to see Marco with his mouth hanging open.

"Close your mouth, you'll draw bugs," Angelo teased.

Marco laughed and continued towards them. "Sorry I couldn't make it earlier. I had something I couldn't get out of."

Angelo studied Marco as he neared. He'd seen a number of different expressions on his friend's face, but he didn't know that he'd ever seen Marco look so...happy. "What's different about you?"

Marco's smile widened. "Can you keep a secret?"

Angelo wondered if the man was in love. Marco seemed to be absolutely glowing. "Sure, but who am I keeping the secret from?"

Marco gestured to the house. "I'm just not ready to share it."



Angelo glanced at Moody. "Would you mind taking the cake inside for me?"

Moody nodded and headed to the front door. Angelo turned back towards Marco. "Okay, spill."

With his hands in his pockets, Marco looked down at his feet. "I lied on my job application."

Confused, Angelo scratched the top of his head. "Huh? What job application?"

"The one I filled out when I started working for Ken," Marco mumbled.

Angelo hated to see Marco's high spirits plummet. He put a hand on his friend's shoulder and squeezed. "What did you lie about?"

"He said he wouldn't hire me unless I had a high school diploma. The truth is, I was only sixteen at the time. My dad was a mean drunk who couldn't keep a job. He ran my mom off two years after she had my baby sister, Maria. With no money, I had no choice but to quit school and try to take care of my brothers and sister."

"I think that's commendable. You've worked for Kent for a while though. I can't believe he hasn't discovered your true age."

Marco shook his head. "Kent doesn't know anything about me. He's never bothered to get to know the real me."

"So what's changed?"

"The baby, Maria, is ten now. I've spent eight years helping raise them, now they're at the age when I can leave Maria with Bruno or Nicky." Marco reached into his back pocket and withdrew a sheet of paper. "I've been going to night school. I took my GED test, and I passed. We had our ceremony earlier. I know it probably sounds corny, but I wanted to walk across the stage in front of my brothers and sister and show them that you're never too old to get an education."

By the time Marco finished, the happy man of a few minutes earlier had tears in his eyes. Angelo pulled his friend into his arms and thumped him on the back. "I bet they were so proud of you."

Marco nodded.

"So we should celebrate." Angelo gestured to the house. "We've even got cake."

"No! I don't want to make a big deal out of it. Please?"

"But it is a big deal. We love you, you big dork."

Marco didn't say anything. Angelo knew his friend was thinking of Kent. Even though he'd basically raised three kids, and gone back to school, Marco still felt he wasn't good enough for the business owner. As much as Angelo wanted to shake Marco and make him see the truth, he knew from his own experience that Marco would have to discover he was worth it on his own.

"I won't say anything, but when you're ready, I'm coming back here and throwing you the biggest party you've ever had."

"What do you mean you're coming back here? What're you talking about?"

*Shit.* He hadn't meant to say that. "I don't know for sure, but I might need to move out of the area to find another job in radio."

"That's bullshit. You're gonna leave that fine looking man you've got wrapped around your finger for a fucking job? What the hell's wrong with you?"

Leave it to Marco to put things in perspective. "Okay, first of all, Moody is in no way wrapped around my finger."

"Really? Am I mistaken or did he not just carry a fucking cake into a house of virtual strangers for you."

"They're not strangers. He's been around the guys before."

Marco nodded. "Is he here for you?"

"Yeah."

"Then maybe you should think about being here for him."

Angelo started to open his mouth, but Marco held up a hand. "I'm not going to say anything else."

Angelo nodded and grabbed the twelve pack out of the backseat. "Did you bring beer?"

Marco shook his head and walked towards the house beside Angelo. "No. I've got to work in the morning. I was supposed to finish a job, but I left early to do the ceremony thing, and I promised Kent." Marco stopped and waved his hands. "It's a mess. Don't pay any attention to me."

Angelo bumped his hip against Marco's. "I'll always pay you attention."

Marco smiled and opened the front door. "Thanks."

He spotted Moody in the dining room trying to do what he could to help set up for poker. Angelo's stomach did a flip flop. He carried the feeling of being in love along with his beer into the kitchen.

Strong arms wrapped around him from behind and a warm pair of lips kissed his neck. "Get things worked out?"

Angelo set the beer on the counter and leaned back against his lover. "Yes. Hopefully someday Marco will let me tell you, but for now, I promised to zip my lips."

Moody spun Angelo around and stared down at him. "I hope that doesn't include opening them for my kiss."

"Never." Angelo opened willingly for Moody's probing tongue.

"Good God, there's way too much making out going on at these poker games lately," Kent said, walking into the room.

Angelo broke away and shook his finger at the burly construction boss. "You just wait. Your time's coming."

Kent shook his head. "You'll never see me bringing a date to poker night."

Releasing his hold on Moody, Angelo reached for his bag of limes. "Do you want a beer?" he asked Moody.

Moody shook his head. "I've got one open in the other room. I just saw you come in and thought I'd come and say hi."

Angelo grinned and glanced over his shoulder. "Hi."

"Hey, it's on!" Zac yelled from the media room.

Angelo grabbed his beer, stuck a wedge of lime in the neck of the bottle, and led Moody to the television. His friends had already gathered on the large sectional sofa. Angelo stood with Moody behind him, watching himself on the screen. "Do I look fat?"

Everyone in the room laughed and shook their heads.

"You look gorgeous," Moody whispered in his ear. "I'm gonna have to keep a close eye on you or some rich playboy will try and take you away from me."

Even though he'd said it in a teasing way, Angelo could hear the underlying worry in Moody's voice. The television forgotten, he turned and kissed his lover. "You don't need to worry. I have everything I need right here."

As the news segment ended and his friends stopped by to congratulate him on their way to the dining room, Angelo let his own words sink in. *Yeah. Maybe I do have everything I need right here.*

\* \* \* \*

"We're going to have to get you a bigger chair," Bobby remarked, looking at Moody.

Moody shrugged off the comment. "I'm used to it."

They were taking a bathroom break between games, and Angelo had disappeared into the kitchen with Kent to refill the snack bowls. Moody noticed Marco kept eyeing him. He didn't know the guy very well and hated to sound rude, but the stares were starting to get on his nerves. "Have you got something you want to say to me?"

Marco studied him for several seconds before opening his mouth. "Are you just gonna let him leave?"

Moody took a long swallow of his beer before answering. The question pissed him off, but he knew where Angelo's friend was coming from. "He needs a job. Believe me, I don't want him to go, and I've told him that, but I think we both know Angelo doesn't do well with taking orders."

"You're damn right," Angelo agreed as he took his seat next to Moody.

Moody leaned over and gave his lover a kiss. They kept it chaste, but Moody touched the tip of his tongue to Angelo's lips in a promise of things to come. He took the beer Angelo held out and set it to the side.

"So were you talking about me?" Angelo whispered in Moody's ear.

"Marco seems a little upset that I'm letting you move."

Angelo glanced at Marco. "I still don't know why you're so upset about it. Basically the only time I see you anyway, is during poker night. If I end up going, I still plan to come back a couple weekends a month."

"So you're thinking about staying?" Bobby asked.

Moody held his breath. He'd love nothing more than to have Angelo with him on a daily basis. He watched as Angelo flushed. God that was cute.

"I'm still thinking through a couple of things. I just don't know what I'd do for a living if I stayed."

"Have you ever thought of starting your own sales agency?" Jules asked.

"What would I sell?"

Jules shook his head. "Don't give me that look. You're a hell of a lot more than just a salesman. I can think of several advertising ideas you've come up with for clients. I'm sure there are a number of GLBT owned businesses in the area that could use help getting the word out about their companies."

"Sounds to me like something you should consider," Moody piped up. He wasn't above grasping at straws if it meant being with the man he'd fallen in love with.

Angelo shrugged. He seemed to be studying the small pile of multi-coloured chips in front of him. "I'll think about it, but it would probably cost a lot to start up a business like that."

"You could use the spare bedroom in your house for an office until you start bringing in clients. You have a laptop, connections in the community, what else is there to think about? Please, at least give it a try," Marco pleaded.

Moody received a jab in the ribs from Kent. "You'd better watch it, buddy, I think Marco's after your man."

Not knowing either of the men well, Moody's gaze swung towards the good-looking man across from him. He was pleased to see Marco roll his eyes and flip Kent the bird.

"I'm not after Angelo." Marco pointed at Moody. "He's finally found a nice guy. I just think he should stay and give it a chance."

Kent crossed his arms. Moody could see a lifetime of doing construction work in the bulging biceps on display. "Then Angelo's the only man you're not after."

Moody knew there must be some underlying tension between the two friends. He felt Angelo's hand squeeze his thigh. He glanced over and could tell his lover was biting his tongue about something.

"Why do you say stuff like that?" Marco asked. "You know nothing about my dating habits. I know you think you do, but you don't."

"I know you come into work half asleep most days. And for your information, I know for a fact you didn't finish that job you promised me you would."

"You're right. I plan to go back first thing in the morning and get it done. It should take me three hours tops, and I wasn't even going to write it on my timecard."

"So, that still doesn't explain why you had to leave early? What the hell was so important you had to drop everything, huh?"

Despite his size and his job, Moody wasn't big on confrontation. He put his hand over the top of Angelo's, ready to get out of there.

"Enough!" Angelo exploded, surprising everyone in the room. "Get off his ass, Kent. What does it matter what he had to do? He said he was going back on his own time to finish,

so leave it alone. Geez. Why can't we play a friendly game of poker anymore without you insulting Marco every fucking minute?"

Moody could see the anger in Kent's facial expression. One of the skills he'd picked up on the job was the ability to read people, and Kent's body language was definitely telling a story.

"Can we please just play cards?" Marco asked. "I don't want to do this anymore, Kent."

Kent scooted his chair back and stood. "Go ahead and deal me in if you want, but I need to use the bathroom."

As soon as Kent left the room, Angelo leant across the table to address Marco. "You okay?"

Marco nodded. "I hate that he hates me."

The rest of the men started to chuckle. Angelo reached out and squeezed Marco's hand. "Silly goof, he doesn't hate you, he's sweet on you."

"Bullshit." Marco stood. "I'm going to get another Coke. Anyone want anything?"

"Would you mind throwing this in the recycle bin for me?" Moody held out his empty bottle. When Marco reached for it, Moody smiled. "They're right, ya know? There's something there. I don't think he's admitted it to himself, but he does feel something for you. Otherwise he wouldn't get so upset."

Marco gave Moody a half-smile and disappeared into the kitchen. Moody reached for his cards and caught all of the men staring at him. "What?"

Zac chuckled. "You're going to fit in just fine."

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With no chips, Angelo sat out the last couple rounds of cards. Although losing sucked, it gave him a chance to think. As he watched his friends laugh and interact with each other, he realised he didn't want to go anywhere.

He thought about the business idea Jules had brought up earlier. It would be hard, and he wasn't sure it was something he even wanted to do, but it had him thinking. Sure he'd loved his job at the radio station, but he'd never really tried to do anything else. Maybe there was something else out there that he would be good at.

Moody tossed his cards on the table. "I'm out."

Angelo looked across the table to see the large pile of chips stacked in front of Marco. Although he was the only one at the table who knew his friend's circumstances, Angelo couldn't have wished for a better winner.

He caught Marco's attention and winked. Marco grinned and laid down yet another winning hand. A soft kiss landed on his temple, and he turned to find Moody staring at him. "You ready to go?"

Moody nodded. "You?"

Angelo smiled, thinking about what he had waiting for him when he got back to Moody's. Hopefully things with Blakely would die down and he could once again return to the comfort of his home. Only instead of his home as it used to be, he now pictured Moody in it as well. He wondered if his beloved would consider giving up his apartment.

Angelo stood and carried his dirty dishes into the kitchen with Moody hot on his heels. After throwing away his paper plate and tossing the bottles into the recycle bin, he turned and wrapped his arms around his lover.

He'd planned to tell Moody his decision once they got home, but he couldn't hold off another minute. "If Steve calls about that job in LA, I'm going to turn it down."

"Huh?"

Angelo nodded. "Surely there's something I can find to do in San Francisco."

Moody hugged him tighter and bent down for a kiss. Angelo opened immediately, feeling the sweep of his lover's tongue.

"You're sure this time, right?" Moody asked after they broke the kiss.

"Positive. I have a question for you though."

"Okay."

"Please tell me you own a pair of sneakers?"

## About the Author

An avid reader for years, one day Carol Lynne decided to write her own brand of erotic romance. Carol juggles between being a full-time mother and a full-time writer. These days, you can usually find Carol either cleaning jelly out of the carpet or nestled in her favourite chair writing steamy love scenes.

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