

A Sip...



A Torquere Press Short

A Glimpse Inside
By A.R. Moler

If Brian Townsend heard the station play “Jingle Bell Rock” one more time, he was going to be sorely tempted to punch the car radio. It was the first of December and all the tacky Christmas decorations around the city had already been up for a couple of weeks in most places. The light dusting of snow that had fallen last night had already melted into a gray,

icky, puddle-ridden mess and Brian wondered if he should have grabbed his duck shoes on the way out the door this morning.

Glancing at his watch, he calculated that he had roughly twenty minutes to make it to the parking deck, actually find a spot, and then get to the restaurant to meet Tristan for lunch. If he ended up being a few minutes late, he figured the detective would probably understand, although Brian was still trying to puzzle out exactly where he stood with the man.

The sex was great, bordering on amazing, but attempts to pry details of Tristan's private life out of him were seriously less than successful. Then again, they had only seen each other a couple of times. The last time, Brian had eventually found out, Tristan had been preoccupied by the death of a child in a homicide case he'd been working. Brian's job as an architect might have involved unreasonable deadlines and pissy clients, but there was never anything that dark in his work week.

Brian skidded through the door of the restaurant, literally. Wet floor, leather shoes, not a good combination. Could've been worse. The lady in the four inch heels in front of him would have wiped out, if not for a precipitous clutch at her date's arm. Tristan was at a table near the front window and raised a couple of fingers in Brian's direction.

Winding his way through the relatively crowded restaurant, Brian dropped into the chair on the opposite side of the table from Tristan. Tristan was wearing a well-tailored dark suit, a white shirt and sedate tie.

"Aren't you the conservative one today," said Brian. Tristan gave him a slight grin.

"Yeah, well, it doesn't pay to be anything less when you have to testify in court," replied Tristan. "However I draw the line at paying more than five hundred dollars for a suit."

"I'd rather see you without the suit," said Brian.

Tristan smirked a little. "Uh-huh." A short, brunette waitress arrived bearing a cup of coffee and set it in front of Tristan.

"And what can I get you, sir?" she asked Brian. Brian ordered a cup of coffee also. The raw damp of the day made him want something hot to drink. Then two of them ordered lunch. They talked about hockey for a while until the food arrived.

"I guess I really need to apologize for bailing on you," said Tristan, staring down at his plate. "I... uh... the case I was on that day..." Brian reached out and laid a hand on Tristan's arm.

"I read about it in the paper. I don't know how you begin to deal with something like that. That part you don't have to explain. I just wish you'd told me a little something to clue me in that you'd had a really rough day," Brian said.

"I should have. I just... Parts of my job can get incredible nasty. Most people don't want to hear which people slaughtered each other this week and how many dead bodies I've seen."

“I can’t promise not be a little squicked out about some things, but I’d rather have you tell me about your job and what you think about it,” Brian reassured him. Tristan met his eyes and gave him a grateful look.

In the spirit of trying to be more forthcoming, Brian supposed, Tristan gave sparse details about his morning in court. It revolved around an arrest made seven weeks ago, and a drug buy that had resulted in murder.

As they were finishing lunch, Tristan glanced at his watch. “I have two and half hours ‘til I have to be back at the precinct, to meet up with a buddy who’s going to go try and serve a warrant. I’m guessing you have to be back to work soon?”

“Not necessarily. Most of my lunch hours involve sitting at my desk poking my friends on Facebook in between hacking away at whatever building blueprints I’m supposed to be rendering. And I’m on salary. Why?”

“Can I beg a favor so I don’t have to grab a cab? My car’s still parked at the precinct because I caught a ride with another detective this morning so we could talk about the case. Could I get you to drop me off at my place?” Tristan sounded a little uncertain.

“No problem.”

“You live here?” said Brian, incredulous. They had pulled up in front of a brownstone in one of the most expensive sections of the city.

“Um, yeah,” replied Tristan.

“On a cop’s salary? Okay, not that I really know how much you make, but I do have a clue on what scale the city pays.”

“I don’t have a mortgage. It’s mine.”

“As in you own it?” Brian was stunned.

“Inherited it. You can come in, if you like. I need to check and make sure the melting snow isn’t leaking where the window’s broken. And I need to change out of my suit; serving warrants can get nasty sometimes.”

They got out and went up the steps to the front door. Tristan punched in a code on an alarm system keypad and then unlocked the door. Inside, Brian just stared. He judged the house to be 1910, maybe 1915 vintage. The molding and staircase leading up from the front foyer were phenomenal, but there was very little furniture in sight; most of what he saw looked like IKEA and pressboard stuff.

Tristan led the way through into the front room. The front wall was a gentle curve, the lowest floor of a tower that made up the left hand side of the house. Garbage bags and a liberal amount of duct tape sealed off one of the windows.

“Some kids knocked a street hockey ball through my window. It’s got that weird curved glass in it, so I can’t just call somebody normal to fix it. And then the rain a couple nights ago leaked in and messed up the wooden stuff underneath. It’s a wreck and I haven’t had time to call around and see if I can find anyone to look at it,” Tristan said in an exasperated tone. He was feeling along the tape and making sure everything was reasonably secure.

“I think I have a number for a company that slumps glass,” said Brian. He was walking around the room, head tipped back, staring up at the plaster medallion on the ceiling.

“Does what?”

“Slumps glass. Makes curved glass for fixing breaks and doing restorations like you need.”

“Oh, that’d be cool if you could get me a number or an email for them.”

“Yeah, I will. It’s at work I think. This place is amazing. You said you inherited it?”

“From my grandfather. The furniture and everything got divvied up by my money-crazy family. They were mightily pissed that he left the house to me. He was hard-headed old coot, but we were close.”

“Does that imply your family is well-off?” asked Brian.

“That’s kind of an understatement. Stockwell, Blake, and Finiers, the stock broker firm... The Blake is my father.”

“Wow.” Brian was just absolutely floored. That firm was Fortune 500 class. “And why exactly are you a cop?”

“That’s a complicated question. Can we skip that for now?”

“Oh... sure.” Brian shut his mouth and swallowed hard. There was obviously a sharp limit as to how much information Tristan was going to volunteer about his private life in one go.

“Can I... see the upstairs? I’m sorry if I’m leaving a drool trail, but this place is fabulous.”

Tristan gave him a quirky grin. “I know this is probably the wrong theory, but I guess I thought architects were all about glass and steel and open air atriums. Seems to me that’s what you were talking about last week.”

“I was working on a office building, but I also do remodels for classic houses. I really actually prefer that. It’s more of a challenge.” He followed Tristan up the curve of the staircase, almost falling on his face because he was looking up at the banisters outlining the landings on the second and third floors, rather than where he was putting his feet.

“Careful! I don’t want to have to call the paramedics just because I took you on a tour.”

They spent a few minutes walking the rest of the way up to the third floor, which was a mix of empty rooms and stacked boxes before going back down to the second floor.

“Another bedroom, bathroom, closet, and my bedroom,” Tristan rattled off. Brian could see the bathroom through an open door, all nickel fixtures and gleaming white tile. The second floor of the tower was apparently the master bedroom. Same bland cheap furniture, clothes tossed on the floor -- obviously a much lived in room. The one stunning feature that actually fit the period of the house was an enormous, dark wood sleigh bed.

Tristan shrugged out of his suit jacket and retrieved a hanger from a closet. Brian noticed the gun at Tristan’s beltline. It had been covered by the coat and somehow Brian hadn’t equated the suit and going to court with wearing a gun. He must have been staring because he felt a fingertip brush along his jaw.

“When the bad guys have them, we have to have them, too,” said Tristan. Brian met his gaze. Tristan unbuckled his belt and slid the gun and holster off, laying them on the dresser. It wasn’t huge, Brian decided, but it was black metal and blocky and somehow insidiously nasty.

“I know. It just... makes me think. ...Have you ever shot anyone?” Brian winced a little even as he asked the question.

“Shot someone? Yes. Killed someone? No.” Tristan hung up his jacket and was unbuttoning his shirt. An even more disturbing thought occurred to Brian. He grabbed Tristan’s wrist. “Have you ever been shot?”

“Yes,” replied Tristan. Brian couldn’t help the sudden hitch in his breathing. His eyes skimmed down the length of Tristan’s body. He didn’t remember any obvious scars that looked like gun shot wounds, but then again, he hadn’t really been looking either. “I was wearing my vest. I broke a couple ribs.” Tristan jerked a thumb in the direction of the bulletproof vest that was tossed on a chair.

“Jesus...” Brian whispered. He was still holding Tristan’s wrist and could feel the soft beat of Tristan’s pulse. He reached up and curled a hand around the back of Tristan’s neck, pulling him into a kiss. Soft lips parted against his and, in another moment, the two of them were stumbling backwards toward the bed. Brian’s fingers worked at the remaining few buttons still fastened on Tristan’s shirt. In a minute, it was open and off, dropping to the floor. Tristan was pushing him down onto the mattress, straddling him, undoing Brian’s belt.

“Is this the part where you offer to show me your etchings?” Brian teased, staring up at the gorgeous period light fixture hanging from the ceiling over the bed.

“Huh? ...Oh, I get it. I’d rather show you my wood.”

“I’m good with wood.”

“Yours isn’t too bad either,” said Tristan with a grin as he cupped his hand inside the front of Brian’s slacks. Brian let out a low groan at the friction of Tristan’s palm against his rapidly filling cock. Strong fingers curled carefully around his balls, massaging. Brian could feel a fingertip sliding inside the leg opening of his briefs, stroking that spot an inch or so forward from his hole. He grabbed the fabric of Tristan’s T-shirt and dragged him down into a hard, open-mouthed kiss.

“Seems to me you were pretty good at the drilling thing, too,” quipped Brian. He nipped at Tristan’s lower lip and kneaded his fingers into the muscles of his partner’s behind. Tristan just groaned and Brian laughed, since he wasn’t sure if the groan was for the bad line or the physical action.

“I am so going make you pay.”

“And nail me good?” Brian couldn’t resist.

Tristan began to tickle him, which made getting his clothes off that much more difficult. Squealing with laughter, Brian made a half-hearted attempt to dive off the edge of the bed and escape. Tristan hooked an arm around Brian’s waist and flipped him onto his stomach, expertly twisting Brian’s arm up behind his back and preventing him from getting away. Tristan stuck a finger in the waistband of Brian’s underwear and dragged them down around his thighs. Then Brian felt teeth close on the curve of his butt. Not quite hard enough to really hurt. Biting, sucking at the skin, there was undoubtedly going to be a mark. He stopped struggling, settling for a panting moan at the sensation. A warm wet swipe of a tongue at the base of his spine made him squirm against the bedspread.

“I surrender,” he huffed.

“I win,” said Tristan. “Do I get a prize?”

“Oh, yeah, me in your bed, anyway you want me.”

“Naked.” It took another minute or so to ditch the remaining clothing, most of which got flung over the foot of the bed.

Brian lay across the bed, wearing his watch and nothing else, as Tristan laid a trail of kisses and nibbles up the side of his hip, across his stomach and along his chest. As Tristan licked across a nipple, Brian bucked against Tristan’s thigh, where it was wedged between his own. Jesus, this was sweet torture. In another minute, slick fingers were pushing into his ass, preparing him.

“On your knees,” whispered Tristan. Brian rolled over and gulped in a breath as his lover pushed into him just a little. He rocked back, trying to increase the sensation, but Tristan’s hands on his hips slowed the motion. The rhythm was almost excruciatingly slow in the beginning, and Brian growled in frustration. He reached to grab his own cock and Tristan’s hand got there first. “You said any way I want you... I want you... slow.”

“Jesus... Tris’, harder, faster, something!” Brian begged. His lover relented a little and began to stroke him. He could feel the beginning of the build toward climax, and his body shuddered a little, pulse accelerating. His hand closed around Tristan’s, urging him faster. He guessed that his partner was closer to coming undone, too, by the uneven thrusts and the panting breath against his back. God, this was just so amazing.

Brian’s free hand clenched in the sheets as his orgasm tore through him. His body pumped spurts of warmth over his belly and his and Tristan’s entwined fingers. There was a deep groan from Tristan, and the pulsing of the cock buried balls-deep in Brian was a heady finish. They both sank limply to the mattress, gasping and sweaty. Tristan’s breath blew along the

side of Brian's neck. It was followed by the caress of his tongue. Face turned sideways on the edge of the pillow, Brian's eyes fell on his watch.

"Since it's one thirty, I'm wondering if this still qualifies as a nooner."

Tristan snickered against Brian's shoulder. "Maybe I should start tickling you again. You are just bad."

"Are you going to arrest me?"

"Mmm, and what should I charge you with?"

"Being easy? Solicitation? Wasting police time?" Brian teased.

"Time with you... is not a waste," replied Tristan, his tone more serious than Brian was expecting. "But speaking of time, I think a shower might be in order before I head back to work."

They were mostly dressed when Brian noticed Tristan pulling on the bulletproof vest over a long-sleeved T-shirt. Brian walked over to him and threaded a couple of fingers through the shoulder strap.

"So this will keep you safe?" Brian asked.

"That's the theory. It's worked so far."

"You obviously weren't wearing it this morning. The warrant thing you said you're going to go do... it's dangerous?"

"Maybe. It's not like I can give you a good answer to that. It could be a matter of breaking down a few doors and turns out nobody's home. It could involve lots of shouting and handcuffing and a couple of wrestling matches."

"Or?"

"There's always a chance there might be gunfire," Tristan admitted. Brian couldn't help the way his fingers tightened on the strap. The thought that someone he knew, someone he was growing attached to, could get shot in the line of duty was a sobering thought. Tristan picked up his holstered gun and began to feed his belt through the slot.

Slowly, Brian let his hand fall and began to tuck his own shirt in. His eyes fell on a small photo parked on the dresser. It showed a gray haired man and much younger version of Tristan, perhaps in his mid-teens. It was the only photo Brian had noticed in his brief tour of the house.

"Is that your grandfather?" Brian guessed.

"Yeah."

“How long’s he been gone?”

“Four years,” said Tristan.

“Did you do the big family get together thing for Thanksgiving?”

“Unfortunately.” The flatness of Tristan’s tone clued him in that he probably wasn’t going to get any more information about family background at the moment.

Brian swallowed hard and changed the subject. “You know, if you want some furniture that matches the period of the house a little better, I could probably get you a lead on some estate auctions,” he suggested.

“Are you implying I’m missing the interior decorator gene that’s supposed to go with being gay?” asked Tristan, smirking.

“Honey, an interior decorator would keel over dead seeing that gorgeous bed paired with the fifty-nine dollar simulated wood grain dresser and plaid chair,” teased Brian raising his voice to near falsetto and gesturing with a limp wrist. Tristan snickered and pulled Brian into his arms. The kiss they shared was broken by laughter from both of them.

“Oh, hell, gonna have to stop. Gotta go to work,” Tristan snickered. He turned his head sideways to rest his temple on Brian’s nose, trying to catch his breath.

“One of these days... I’d like to spend more than just two or three hours with you,” said Brian, placing a kiss along Tristan’s cheekbone. For a long moment, the only response he got was the tightening of Tristan’s fingers on his hip and shoulder.

“My schedule is usually such a wreck... but, yeah, I’d like that.”

Pulling into the precinct parking lot to drop Tristan off, Brian turned to look at Tristan.

“Can you do me a favor?” he asked.

“I can try.”

“When you get off work tonight, can you call me and tell you’re okay? I know it’s probably business as usual for you, but I’m going to spend the rest of the day wondering if it went off... well, without shooting,” said Brian. Tristan gave him a slow smile.

“Yes, I’ll call you. I promise.”

Brian was staring into the refrigerator hoping for inspiration on what to have for dinner when his cell phone rang. He glanced at the display as he pulled it from his pocket. It was Tristan’s number. The one that had been so hard to get.

“I really hope you’re calling to tell me you’re okay,” answered Brian.

“I’m fine. No shooting at all. Just some running and a little wrestling to get the handcuffs on one guy.”

“Good. I’m relieved.”

“It’s been a while since...” Tristan’s voice trailed off.

“Anybody asked you to report in like a sixteen-year-old that borrowed the car?” Brian suggested. There was a light snort of amusement from the other end.

“Actually... since anybody cared,” Tristan said softly. “Thank you.”

A Glimpse Inside

Copyright © 2009 by A.R. Moler

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

Printed in the United States of America.

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

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