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Blake Deveraux

**D**angerous  
Liaisons

Book Two

MEN OF DANGER

# *Dangerous Liaisons*

*By*

*Blake Deveraux*

*I'd like to dedicate this book to my  
partner of twenty-three years.*

*Without your love, kindness, and  
unfailing support, I wouldn't be the  
man I am today. Your courage  
inspires me and your patience gives  
me hope for the future.*



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Dangerous Liaisons by Blake Deveraux

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# *Dangerous Liaisons*

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## Chapter One

Daniel pulled his shiny BMW convertible effortlessly into the driveway of the brick house he and Brandon would soon call “home.” That was a big deal for both men. Daniel’s heart soared; a warm sensation flushed his soul as he took in the handsome man seated beside him. Dirty and tired, Brandon’s wild blond hair was a mess. Even shirtless, his favorite ‘holey’ jeans with bits of flesh showing in all the wrong places, he looked breathtaking. Daniel never ceased to be amazed at how sexual and beautiful this man could be.

Equally sweaty and tired, Daniel had unbuttoned his oxford shirt to cool himself from the long day’s work in the summer heat. His 50ls were dirty. Still he couldn’t keep the smile off of his face. He loved Brandon. It was a new experience for Daniel. He’d never allowed anyone to breach the barriers that this man had. Yet Brandon was still a work in progress.

Brandon frequently reverted to his former habit of assuming the worst. When Daniel spotted the handsome man serving drinks at the local bar, he’d never expected to find love. Not when he’d given up, settling for being the most aggressive Dom at the local S&M club, The Pig Pen... Still, he couldn’t get Brandon out of his mind. He wanted that beauty in his life and, more specifically, in his bed.

It hadn't mattered how many ways Brandon pushed him away, Daniel had the courage to make his move. The intense, wild relationship, the passionate sex, all were expected. But Brandon himself...he hadn't been expected. That beautiful exterior, the charm and flair for flamboyant style were all a shield, a way to keep people at bay. Looking at his handsome face and form, no one would believe Brandon had seen more pain in his early life than most experienced in a lifetime.

Under the polished exterior hid a troubled survivor. Brandon had been programmed by his abusers for years; so much so, he didn't even believe his "good looks" were real. To him, it was all only a façade. The toll the world had taken on him showed. Even now, he often would bait Daniel, just to see if today was the day that Daniel would forget himself and hurt Brandon. Daniel knew it was a test, but at times it was an infuriating character trait. It would be easier, he knew, if he *didn't* love the man. But he did. That simple fact made his heart ache at times; yet it always made him smile.

Brandon had ceased crooning along with the CD in the BMW, since Daniel had turned the radio down. The powerful sports car continued to purr as the men sat silent, looking at the front of their new home. Brandon smiled as he took in the many changes he'd made in the house. Daniel, a man normally uninterested in the "frills," had grown particularly fond of Brandon's decision that the "nasty" painted door needed replacing with a mahogany and cut-glass door more befitting of the

character of the house.

The crystal chandelier shone brightly through the cut-glass door as Brandon lay his head on his lover's shoulder. Daniel turned the engine off and kept his voice soft. "What's on your mind, baby?"

Brandon's expression grew reflective as he answered. Daniel knew that Brandon had a habit of obsessing on his perceived shortcomings. He'd avoided the question since they'd signed the papers for the house, "How is this fair to you?"

"Come again?" Daniel turned toward him, Brandon's head still lying on his shoulder.

"Well," Brandon looked forward out the windshield, avoiding his lover's gaze, "I know we signed the papers for this house together, but you make a lot more money than I do, and you had lots of money from your house, and I don't understand how the little bit of money I added makes me own even a bathroom in *this* house."

Brandon had obviously fallen in love with the house. It loomed large and impressive, larger than anything he had ever dreamed of living in. It had a swimming pool, a pool house and five bedrooms. Brandon repeatedly reminded Daniel how he'd be "trading down," by dating him, by loving him. Daniel hated it when Brandon brought up the disparity between the two men's financial situations.



Brandon scooted closer to Daniel, “I love you, I can’t lie about that. I just think you deserve better than me. I can’t afford this house. I’m poor white trash, and you’re, well...”

Daniel stopped him mid sentence. “I really am tired of that phrase, Brandon! I don’t ever want to hear that from you again, really.”

Brandon retreated to his side of the car. “The truth hurts, Daniel, and that’s the truth. I’ll never fit in with *your crowd*. I’m just not sophisticated. I’m not cool. I’m just tired of being sorry, Daniel. I’m sorry that I can’t be what you want. I’m sorry I can’t be as successful as you. I’m sorry...” his words trailed off as he stared blankly at the windshield.

Daniel slid toward him and placed his hands under Brandon’s face. “More than anything, *I’m* tired of that. Please look at me. Look at me like a man. Like my equal, not like a slave trying to please his master. I love you. That’s a fact that will not change.”

Brandon slowly worked his hands around Daniel’s waist, sliding his fingers carefully underneath the open shirt, kissing his nipples gently. “I love you. I just wish I deserved someone as wonderful as you.”

Daniel’s eyes closed, in part because of the pleasure his lover imparted, and in part because he grew frustrated at Brandon’s relentless feelings of inadequacy. “I wish I deserved someone as wonderful as *you*, Brandon, that’s the reality of our

situation. You are a far better man than I'll ever be."

Brandon ran his hands around Daniel's back hard and pulled him close. Daniel felt him sigh deeply. "Mmmm you smell absolutely delicious. I do love a man who knows the value of a good day's work." He continued kissing his chest, slowly working his way down toward the growing tent in Daniel's Levi's.

"Brandon, baby. Not here, there are families out. We're going to get thrown out of the neighborhood before we ever move our furniture in!" Daniel moaned, squirming in his seat to relieve the intense discomfort the erection in his pants had caused. He took Brandon's hand, adjusting his cock to allow it to slide beside his leg.

"Killjoy." Brandon sulked.

"We need to go in," Daniel said sullenly.

Brandon rose, exiting the car in a hurried fashion. He slammed the door, mainly to allow Daniel to surmise his displeasure with a disappointed flourish.

"You may never know what I had in store for you, big man!"

Daniel quickly followed his lover, again adjusting the bulge in his jeans. He grabbed him around the waist, savoring the sight of the shirtless man's impressive body. "I hope you'll let me find out in just a few minutes after we get inside. Deal?"

Brandon dug in his pants for the key to the new door that still smelled of varnish. "Nice door, huh?" A sly, knowing grin spread on his face as he turned the

key.

Daniel patted him on the ass, “Of course, the most talented designer in Atlanta picked it out. I’ll have to be sure to give him a call and tell him how *much* I enjoy it.”

Brandon, obviously pleased with himself and the results of his many weeks of work on their new home, smirked, “I’ll give him the message.”



Daniel dropped a sleeping bag in the foyer, aimlessly wandering from room to room in the empty house.

Daniel watched Brandon run through the house. He’d spent many days and nights renovating prior to “the big day.” Uninterested in the décor, Brandon chose to head for the inviting, oversized pool at the rear of the house. It had been a terribly hot day; they were both tired, and in need of some relaxation. Daniel heard Brandon unlatch the French doors that opened onto the deck area.

Daniel continued wandering through the empty rooms. He smiled as he heard Brandon call him from the pool area. “Hey, big guy, are you coming outside or what?” He walked toward the doors that stood open in the paneled office area that opened onto the deck.

There was a large, tiled swimming pool with a fountain that flowed from the back wall of the bricked enclosure, over a marble ledge, to an area below the larger

pool that was more convenient for swimming.

Brandon had been most excited about the pool when they'd looked at the house. He'd always wanted a pool. Brandon made it terribly obvious to Daniel that he could care less about the house right now; the pool was his pride and joy. Daniel watched as his handsome lover carefully caressed the marble columns that surrounded the perimeter of the pool, oblivious to his presence.

Brandon had created a Greek-style paradise. He'd come over the night before to put the plants around the pool. The designer remained insistent that Daniel would be the first person to see it the way he'd envisioned it. Brandon kept the pool area completely off-limits to Daniel. He hadn't laid eyes on it since they'd closed the note.

Brandon stood transfixed, oblivious to Daniel's presence at the moment. The young man stopped admiring the area. He dropped his jeans, diving naked into the cool water of the pool. He swam the length of the pool, pulling himself out of the water. His lover stood with his back to the house, admiring the magnificent statue that stood in the midst of the fountain, still unaware of his presence. It was Daniel's favorite, Michelangelo's David.

Daniel stood in the open French doors watching Brandon for several minutes before he spoke. Brandon stood, seemingly mesmerized by the serenity of the fountain, the sound of the water and the large marble statue that stood in its

midst. His tanned body reflected the drops of water that ran slowly down his back. The soft glow of the pool's lighting gave the illusion that Daniel had stumbled upon some type of heavenly place.

"I don't think I've ever seen anything as beautiful in my life ever." Daniel finally broke the silence.

Brandon turned, shocked back into reality. "You like it? *Really?* I was worried you'd think the fountain was over the top."

"I am more impressed with the naked man admiring the fountain, actually." Daniel walked over to Brandon, taking him into his arms. He'd dropped the shirt in the house. He stood with his jeans still straining to contain a growing erection.

"You don't like it do you?" Brandon's expression fell.

"I love it. It's more than beautiful. But nothing will ever compare with you, Brandon. You are more beautiful than anything or anyone I've ever seen before."

Brandon worked his fingers around the waistband of the button-fly jeans. He skillfully released the hot throbbing erection Daniel had forced into submission earlier. "I can see you like something out here, that's for sure."

Daniel dropped the jeans to the ground. He kissed his lover passionately as he kicked the jeans out of the way.

Suddenly in a move worthy of an Olympic gymnast, Brandon worked his way out of Daniel's grasp, diving headfirst into the pool. He swam furiously

toward the shallow end of the water. Daniel laughed heartily, diving in behind him, cock still standing at full attention.

Brandon, a skillful swimmer, also far more limber than Daniel, easily made it to the stairs of the pool long before his partner. He lounged on his back with his body draped up the incline of the stairs. He looked as though he were about to take a nap when Daniel finally swam up to the stairs.

Moving deftly between Brandon's legs and up across his chest, Daniel, placing one arm on either side of the lounging man, towered over him, legs astride him. "I want you now," Daniel whispered, his lips barely touching Brandon's face.

He kissed Brandon passionately again. He ran his fingers through the handsome man's mane of blond hair. Daniel pulled him close into him. He could feel the heat of his erection straining against Brandon's ass. Pulling him closer into him, Daniel's muscular arms grasped him tightly. Brandon gasped audibly. "I want you too. Don't wait, I want it!"

Brandon, still half in and half out of the water, moaned, grinding hard against his lover's cock. Daniel wanted to take him. He needed the warmth of his body against him. Every fiber of his being begged for this man's attention.

Daniel continued kissing him and grinding their bodies together. Daniel made a deliberate effort not to penetrate him. Brandon moaned. Daniel knew his lover wanted him now. He'd watched his lover working all day, his impressive

body straining with the weight of the items he'd moved. It had taken all the restraint Daniel could muster to deny his lust, his desire to take Brandon right then and there, in the middle of the day.

Finally, obviously unwilling to wait, Brandon wrapped his legs around Daniel. He sunk slowly toward the throbbing cock between them. He relaxed himself before making his move. He forcefully pushed himself downward onto Daniel's cock.

Daniel was so overtaken by the intensity of his actions that he involuntarily bit Brandon on the lip. "I'm sorry, baby, but damn!"

Daniel feverishly pushed into him, lifting. The intensity of his lust growing with each thrust. He lifted him more and more with each push, until eventually he'd lifted his lover to the edge of the pool deck.

Brandon fell backward onto the cool ceramic tile floor, enraptured that he'd gotten the attention he'd so badly needed all day. Daniel could feel his cock swelling inside of his lover's body. He couldn't hold out much longer.

Brandon lifted his legs higher, pulling Daniel back toward him, causing the large man to fall forward, putting all of his weight on him. Daniel drove hard into Brandon's waiting hole. He feverishly pushed against his lover, causing the fine hairs on Daniel's hard stomach to brush against Brandon's cock with each thrust he made.

Daniel smiled as Brandon pumped out what felt like a gallon of his seed onto his stomach. Feeling this warmth between the two men, Daniel came furiously into Brandon's satisfied bottom. His lover fell spent, breathing heavily, smiling as if he'd just won the lottery. He was obviously quite satisfied with himself. Daniel cracked a sideways grin as he rested on his lover's spent frame. He felt complete.

The two men collapsed against the tile pool deck. Daniel kissed his lover passionately on the mouth. "Babe, that was fucking out of this world. You sure do know how to give a man a housewarming present."

"So do you, big man!" Brandon said happily.



## Chapter Two

The crisp air of morning wafted through the uncovered windows in the master bedroom.

Lying naked on the large bed that he'd had delivered earlier that week, Brandon smiled, pleased Daniel had allowed him to pick the furniture for the new bedroom. The focus of the room: a huge cherry bed with massive carved posts at each corner. A traditional bedroom, for an unconventional man; Brandon snickered at the irony.

Daniel had risen moments before to relieve himself for the morning. Brandon chuckled, hearing Daniel in the next room. He sighed with great relief at the rushing sound of urine filling the toilet bowl. Brandon rose, alarmed that he heard the sound of a large truck door moving on a van outside.

Brandon looked at the clock, "Five a.m., Jesus." Daniel had awakened, as always, before dawn. It was an unfortunate by-product of his years of military service. Brandon had become accustomed to the reality that he'd seldom be awake before his lover. Today, however, was the exception. Brandon had awakened hours earlier, anxious about the move. His stomach fluttered and he could barely contain himself. He fidgeted, giddy with excitement. He loved arranging a house.

This was perhaps his most challenging and exhilarating project to date. He could easily guide complete strangers into a home design worthy of a magazine cover. Making a compromise between Daniel's contemporary furniture and his own love for traditional, heavy-carved furniture had been maddening for Brandon.

Fortunately for him, Daniel had little affection for the furnishings that had been in the home he'd lived in prior to the two men purchasing this home. Brandon seized the opportunity to expand his lover's taste in the more traditional. He'd bought several pieces to complement the hand-carved pieces he'd had in his apartment before they'd moved them out. The bedroom suite furnishings by far were his favorite though.

Daniel returned from the bathroom, scratching himself sleepily, still naked, cock dangling, and hair wild from falling exhausted into bed from the previous day's work. "What the hell? Did I hear the truck outside? It's five a.m. for Christ's sake. Surely it's not the movers."

Brandon stood at the window overlooking the front driveway. He said curiously, "Daniel, the cute blond mover, the one with the intense green eyes—I think his name is Charles. He's in the front yard. He's unloading stuff like a madman, putting it on the porch."

Daniel walked up behind Brandon, pressed his body against him and leaned over his shoulder. Brandon could feel Daniel's cock pressing against his buttocks.

“I feel like a quickie, but what the heck is up with him?” Daniel frowned, pointing to the handsome mover furiously unloading the truck.

Brandon flipped around, pushing Daniel backward against the wall. “I never want you to let *anybody* keep you from giving me a shot at that amazing body of yours. We don’t have time for a morning fuck, but it would be a shame for you to waste that hard-on you’ve got going there.”

Daniel’s cock stood fully erect in front of him. Brandon smiled lazily as he kissed Daniel’s chest, working his way down the trail of hairs leading to the dark mass of hair crowning Daniel’s impressive manhood. He wet the fine hairs on his stomach, tracing the ripples of his well-defined abs with his fingers. “That’s my favorite trail to hike, baby!” Brandon gave his lover a wink.

Daniel gasped, unable to speak. Brandon could feel his lover’s heartbeat as he savored the taste of his cock. Daniel moaned loudly as Brandon dove hungrily onto his lover’s massive cock. He took his hands, parting Daniel’s legs, swallowing his cock to the hilt. He buried his face in the musk of Daniel’s body, the hairs brushing his face gently. He breathed in the scent of his lover.

Brandon felt Daniel’s cock swell with the attention he was giving it. He slid his hand between his thighs, parting them. Brandon wet his fingers with his saliva. He carefully inserted one finger deep inside his lover’s forbidden passage. Daniel moaned, “*Oh, Christ!*”

Brandon grinned, brimming with self-satisfaction. *I love making him squirm.* For him, nothing gratified him more than knowing he'd driven his lover to the height of ecstasy, simply with his actions. It was intoxicating.

Brandon looked up at his lover, the large, handsome Marine, who stood motionless, powerless in his grasp. In that moment, with Daniel's cock throbbing in his throat, he felt loved. His heart swelled with the unfamiliar contentment of genuine happiness. He loved this man more than anyone he'd ever known. It was a feeling that made his heart swell. It brought a wave of emotion that he couldn't contain. He wanted Daniel to release his seed deep inside him. He was desperate for it.

Brandon relaxed, taking the remainder of the massive, swollen member deep inside his throat. He slowly inserted two more fingers inside of Daniel's tight sphincter.

Daniel's legs shook violently, his knees buckling as he spurted volumes of his hot sticky cum deep inside Brandon's throat. He grabbed Brandon's head, his fingers locked in the wild, blond locks of hair, fucking his face furiously with each spurt of his seed. He sank slowly toward the ground, taking Brandon with him.

Brandon felt the emotion of his realization swelling up inside as he moved slowly up Daniel's body, the two men both now seated on the floor in a heap. He began to weep. He wasn't sad, he was overwhelmed. *This is what love feels like?*

He'd had his lover like this hundreds of times, what was different? He felt the love. It was real. It wasn't something Daniel did, it was in his eyes. The fact that he'd let Brandon violate him anally, even though he'd never allowed another lover to do that to him, spoke volumes. Even the house the two men shared, the furniture surrounding them, all of it was a validation of the devotion the two men shared.

Brandon couldn't stop the tears. He didn't want Daniel to think he'd hurt him in the throws of passion, but he couldn't stop crying.

Daniel looked at him. "Oh baby, I'm sorry. Did I hurt you?"

"No, Daniel. I'm not sure what's wrong with me, but I love you. I can't bear the thought of you ever leaving me. I can't stop the feelings. I never want to live without you. I don't understand what's happening to me. I don't want to be like this. I'm a big wimp. You'll never want to fuck me again, but I can't help it. I love you so much."

Daniel smiled broadly. "Brandon, that's called trust. You love me enough to trust me. That's a scary and amazing thing, I know. It makes me want to cry too, but right now I'm so goddamn happy from that fantastic orgasm I can't do anything but smile. But know this, baby, I love those tears. They mean that you want me as much as I want you. That means the world to me."

Brandon took a moment to compose himself; kissed his lover. He shot Daniel

a wicked grin, sliding into a pair of tattered jeans that he'd retrieved from the pile of clothes his lover had worn the day before. He opted again to go shirtless in the extreme heat of the August morning. Daniel rose, quickly showered, and picked up a clean pair of shorts and a t-shirt. Brandon adjusted his hair in the bathroom mirror. Daniel's jeans were several sizes too large for Brandon, but he didn't care. He loved wearing the same jeans his lover had worn the day before. It made him horny just knowing that they'd shared the same clothing.

Daniel stood behind Brandon, watching him prepare for the day. In the reflection in the mirror he could see his lover watching him; his eyes seemed to trace each inch of his body. It pleased Brandon. Daniel's jeans hung precariously low on his hips, the lean curve of his stomach and chiseled muscles drew a "V" leading into the crotch of the button-fly jeans. Daniel walked over to him, playfully running his hands down the back of the oversized jeans, cupping Brandon's muscular ass. "I wish I had time to take care of you as well as you have taken care of me this morning."

"You are a bad, bad man!" Brandon quipped. "We need to find out why Charles is here, alone, and why the hell he has half the house already on the front lawn."

"Actually, yeah," Daniel agreed. "It's kind of weird for the movers to send two guys to load, but one guy to unload..."

Brandon quickly descended the stairs with Daniel in tow. Brandon disarmed the new alarm system, opening the front door. He was greeted by a huge armoire. “Well, I guess I’ll go around.”

The two men exited the house from the side door. They saw the handsome young mover wrestling the large, stainless steel refrigerator down the ramp on a hand truck. The bulky item dwarfed the young man’s frame as he quickly trotted down the ramp.

“Charles.” Daniel’s remark had an agitated tone. “What the hell are you doing? I don’t much appreciate you dropping my furniture off on the front porch here. Did you intend to put it in the house at any point?”

Brandon snapped angrily, “Don’t yell at him, Daniel. He’s just trying to get things going, that’s all. Right, Charles?”

The young man pushed the hand truck to the bottom of the ramp, letting the refrigerator come to rest in the driveway along with most of the men’s other belongings. “I’m very sorry, Mr. Deveraux. You and Mr. Winslow don’t have to move a thing. Please, just let me get the truck emptied. I’ll come back personally and put everything in the house. Please just let me get the truck back, sir.” Charles shifted his feet nervously.

Brandon moved over to the handsome young man, long blond wavy hair covering most of his face. Brandon had noticed the young man’s beautiful hair the

day before, but it had been in a neat pony tail. “Don’t worry about it, Charles. If we have to pay extra for the truck, we will. Your dad won’t mind. Actually he’ll probably be pleased you brought in a few extra dollars.” Brandon tried to reassure him, sensing there may be a far more sinister reason for the need to return the truck.

“By the way, sweetheart,” Brandon added playfully, trying to lift the mood, “I *love* this gorgeous head of hair, but you shouldn’t hide that cute face of yours behind...” Brandon took his hand and swept back the long tresses of hair covering the young man’s face, expecting to see the piercing green eyes he’d commented to Daniel about earlier that morning. Instead Brandon gasped, shocked to see a black and blue swollen eye on one side, and the terrified look of a trapped animal on the other.

“Jesus Christ, Charles. What the hell happened to you?” Daniel’s remark rang as much an accusation as a question. He literally lunged toward the two men. “Did you hurt yourself unloading all this by yourself?”

“Oh no sir, Mr. Deveraux!” Charles frowned. “Nothing like that, no sir.”

“It’s Daniel, please, and he’s Brandon. We’re just regular guys, just like you. Now, what the hell happened?”

“It’s nothing, sir, uh I mean, Daniel, sir.” Charles floundered.

“It’s not sir, either. It’s just Daniel. I want a straight answer. If this is



because you don't have any help, I intend on calling your father. He needs to know that this is no way to run a business."

"*No sir!* Please!" he screeched at Daniel. "I just got in a fight with some guy last night at a bar, that's all. Please don't call my dad. That will make things a lot worse. He expects his truck back in an hour and if it's not there...well, I can't be late, sir, that's all."

He began to shake violently as he spoke to Daniel. Brandon could see the sheer terror in his eyes. Daniel's expression grew more exasperated.

"This is crazy, Charles. Your father has to know it takes more than an hour to unload a houseful of furniture," Daniel barked at Charles. Brandon worried that he was going to frighten the young man more than he already was. Daniel pressed for an answer. "I want the truth right now or I'm calling your father. He really isn't running a very good organization here. As a businessman myself, I don't let poor treatment of employees, son or not, go unnoticed. He should treat you at least as well as his other employees. You've obviously had a difficult evening and he sends you here alone to unload a houseful of furniture?"

Brandon walked back over to where the two men stood talking and put his arm around Daniel. Charles' form shook even more violently. He began apologizing to Daniel profusely. Brandon tried to reassure him. "He's right, you know. You shouldn't let this get you so upset. It's just a thing. Nobody's gonna lose sleep over

it. I'm not, Daniel's not..."

Daniel shook his head affirmatively as Brandon moved over to the shaking young man. "And *you* most certainly shouldn't, sweetheart." With the kind words, he put his arm across the mover's shoulder, gripping him firmly, letting him know that he and Daniel would support him if there were problems with his father, the owner of the moving company.

When he gripped the young man's shoulder, Charles yelped in pain. Brandon quickly retreated, noticing that his hand had a faint discoloration of blood and damp from touching Charles' dark navy shirt. He'd assumed he was just sweating from the hard work. It became obvious his eye was not his only wound.

Daniel pulled Brandon quickly away from the young mover, who retreated from them. The young man resumed feverishly unloading the truck, removing the last two items not yet deposited either in the driveway, in the garage, or on the porch.

"Brandon, I'm not sure what's going on here, but it's obvious to me Charles is hurt badly. I'm not sure what's happened to him. I want you to take him inside and get him something to drink and see if you can get him to open up. It's pretty obvious that I scare the shit out of him, too." Daniel's expression grew more worried as he looked toward the young man struggling with another piece of furniture.

Brandon nodded at Daniel as he walked back to the truck. "Come with me, Charles, right now. Daniel is going to take care of these couple of things. Don't make him feel like a complete wimp because you unloaded all this stuff and didn't let him help."

"But..." Charles stammered.

"Not another word, you don't want to make my man look bad, do you?"

"No, sir," Charles said pensively.

"I don't want to hear any of that either, Charles. I am *no* sir!" Brandon laughed nervously, leading the handsome blond toward the kitchen.

Brandon took the opportunity to carry one of the large leather bar stools toward the kitchen.

Charles followed suit, stating, "At least I should make myself useful."

The two men arrived in the kitchen. Brandon took a beer from the counter that he and Daniel had brought to have something cold to drink for the night in the house without furniture. "Do you drink this shit?" Brandon pointed, disgusted, at a bottle of imported beer. Daniel adored the stuff, but to Brandon, beer simply nauseated him. He preferred wine coolers or hard liquor to beer.

"Sure," Charles replied, his eyes revealed a level of comfort.

"Now tell me, and don't bullshit me. You can't bullshit a bullshitter, Charles. What happened to you last night, and why are you here alone? Where's your

helper?”

“TJ quit this morning. When he saw what had happened, I guess he figured out why, and he told my dad to fuck off, basically.” Charles shifted his foot as he stared blankly at the tiled floor. He took a sip of the beer Brandon handed him.

“Are you and TJ involved?” Brandon paused, hoping he hadn’t been too forward.

“Oh, no! TJ is gay. I mean he’s cool and all, but he’s into guys.”

Brandon was taken aback. He’d assumed that the handsome young man was gay. His first experience with the young man, he’d walked in on Daniel and Brandon nude, in bed, and his *reaction* had made it obvious that he enjoyed the view.

“Charles, it’s fine with me if you’re gay. It’s fine if you’re not. I think you’re a sweet guy, and if you *are* straight, then you’re a lot cooler than most straight guys. You didn’t give Daniel and I a hard time about the *situation* you caught us in the other morning,” Brandon reassured the young man, hoping that his assumption hadn’t offended him.

“That’s basically what happened. TJ told my dad that we’d walked in on you two and was just kind of laughing about how funny it was and how cool you both were about it. He doesn’t think about stuff before he says it. Anyhow, he said something like ‘and boy you should have seen the tent that Charles was pitching in

his pants.' My dad freaked. He basically told me to get my shit and get out; he didn't raise a goddamn queer. Sorry, Brandon, no offense."

"You're not the ignorant SOB that said it, so don't apologize. Does your dad really believe that just getting a hard-on because you see two people naked really makes you gay? Goddamn, Charles."

"Honestly it's kind of been a thing, see? I'm not real experienced with girls. I just don't seem to get them. Well, like friends, but that's all. Anyhow, my dad has been trying for a while to make me act like all the other guys. He wants me to bed every girl in my path. It embarrasses him that I'm a virgin, I guess."

Brandon coughed, nearly spitting out the cola he was sipping. "A virgin? A doll like you? I can't imagine you couldn't have any woman, or man for that matter, that you wanted."

"I'm just kind of confused, I think. It did make me excited to see you guys like that. But I don't know what that means. I tried to fuck a girl once but I couldn't get hard. I was surprised the other day when it happened in front of you two. TJ didn't mean any harm, he just didn't think about how mad my dad would get if he thought I was gay. I don't even know if I'm anything. I think I just wasn't meant to have sex."

"Well I have to say, with a body like yours, you were meant to have sex." Brandon laughed. He looked at Charles more seriously. "Your dad had no right to

say that, even if you *are* gay. It shouldn't matter who the hell you want to fuck. He's your father. He should accept you for who you are."

"Does your dad accept *you*?" Charles cocked his head at Brandon.

Brandon looked sadly at the ground. "No, some people never get it. But you don't have to let him treat you like a second-class person because of it, whether you're gay or not. I'm not making that decision for you and *he* shouldn't either. You're a sweet guy. That ought to be enough for him! Now, let me see where I hurt your shoulder. Take off the shirt."

Charles' eyes flew open wide, like a trapped animal. "*No!*"

Brandon, ignoring Charles' denial, walked behind the young man, lifting the soaked shirt from his back, nearly pulling him off the bar stool. "*Fuck!*"

Brandon's eyes burned hot, filled with rage. He knew those marks. "A *goddamn* extension cord, Charles?"

"How'd you know that?" Charles' words grew panicked; he was motionless, frozen in fear.

"Did your father do that to you because he thinks you might be gay? That's fucking assault, Charles. He should go to jail!" Brandon picked up the phone, dialing quickly.

Charles took the phone from his hands. "He just wants the best for me, that's all. If he thinks if I'm gay..." his words trailed off as tears fell from his chin.

“This is not how someone who loves you treats you. Do you understand that, Charles? I’ve been there and you don’t have to take it. Damn it, man, don’t you get it that nobody should treat you like that, gay or not. *Not ever!*”

Charles looked at the cell phone he’d taken from Brandon. “Oh, God! He’s gonna kill me. He told me to have the truck back by now!”

Daniel stood in the doorway. Brandon realized that he’d heard the whole conversation. He stepped cautiously into the kitchen. “Brandon, baby. Let me speak to you in the foyer for a second.”

Brandon followed Daniel to the next room.

“I heard everything,” Daniel said sullenly.

“Let’s go fuck him up, Daniel. His father beat him with a goddamn extension cord! He’s gay. You know it and I know it. He might not know it, but it shouldn’t matter. His psycho father wants the goddamn truck back. I’ll take the fucking truck back, and park it inside his ass!”

“Brandon, calm down. We can’t fight this guy’s battles. I’d really like to know how you know, how you recognized the marks on his back. You are a little too personally involved here to be objective. If you go off half-cocked here that asshole won’t end up in jail, *you* will.” Daniel’s words grew harsh in reaction to Brandon’s anger.

“This is some shit! I’m the one losing it, and you’re the voice of reason. This

is something for the books, but what *do* you think we should do?” Brandon tapped his foot impatiently.

“Well. I tell you what. You go take care of Charles. Get him upstairs to our room; it’s already put together. Get him in the bath and clean him up so he doesn’t end up with an infection from those cuts.”

Brandon had been so furious after realizing what Charles’ father had done that he hadn’t even noticed the sea of bodies moving furniture into the house. “Who are those men, Daniel?”

“I called the employment service, they sent over ten guys. They’ll have the stuff in in a few minutes. You and I can rearrange it to your liking later, but for now, I think Charles needs a friend.” Daniel leaned in and kissed Brandon tenderly. “Take care of him, baby. He needs some TLC.”

Brandon followed Daniel back into the kitchen. Charles looked at the two men. They both smiled as they returned. Charles mumbled, “I need to go; my dad’s going to be furious.” His eyes revealed his sorrow as he painfully attempted to pull the dampened shirt over his head. “I have to get some things figured out. I’ve got to find an apartment. I can’t stay there anymore. He threw me out.”

Daniel growled angrily. “You’re not going back there, Charles. That’s the end of that. That SOB is not going to...” Brandon shot Daniel a hard look as the large Marine barked angrily at the young man. Brandon knew that Daniel wanted to



help Charles, but he also knew that his lover's attempt at *help* would certainly frighten the already terrified young man.

Pausing for a moment after Brandon's harsh look, Daniel softened his tone considerably. "I have arranged for two *friends* of mine to return the truck. They're on the way with it right now. As for your stuff, we'll take you shopping tomorrow for whatever you need. For tonight you can wear some of Brandon's clothes, okay? You two are about the same size."

Brandon quickly shot Daniel a glare, "Who'd you get to return the truck?"

Daniel replied in a matter-of-fact tone, "James and Andrew, from The Pen. I don't think you'll have to worry about your dad being pissed, Charles."

Brandon covered his mouth, stifling a loud, shocked laugh. "I'll say!" Brandon smirked, enjoying the irony of the situation. It would be unlikely that Charles' dad would have anything to say to the two men. If he had any sense of self-preservation, he'd probably tip them.

Charles looked confused, "Who are they and what is The Pen?"

Brandon laughed again pausing to reflect on the night he'd met the two very large, tattooed men clad in leather. Both dangerous men by anyone's estimation, Andrew and James would certainly inspire respect. Even though they were hulking, muscular and intimidating men, they were both *very* gay. He couldn't help finding the irony funny. Finally he smiled, "They are two guys from Daniel's past.

Let me just say, if anyone can make your dad 'rethink' his ideas on gay men, those two could arrange it. He won't bother you again. Rest assured, you'll be fine, sweetheart."

## Chapter Three

Brandon listened outside the closed door as Charles sank cautiously into the bath. He couldn't bear to hear Charles groaning in pain. Brandon opened the door to the large bathroom to see the naked man slowly lowering himself into the tub.

"Oh God, I'm sorry, Brandon." The embarrassed man attempted to cover his crotch.

"Charles, don't apologize. I walked in on you. I couldn't leave you alone like this. You need help. Don't be a ninny; you don't have anything I haven't seen before. Now, let me help you okay?" Brandon walked over. Taking his arm, he helped lower the shaking man into the tub.

Charles groaned as he carefully settled into the soothing bath.

Brandon surveyed the damage. Riddled with bruises and cuts, Charles' lean muscular body made him shake his head with disbelief. He'd been kicked, punched and beaten with the plug end of an extension cord. The wounds from the metal cut deep, causing the weeping injuries on the man's back. Brandon instructed the wounded man to lie back and enjoy the jets.

He took a cloth and carefully rinsed Charles' shoulders and chest. The young man tried to fight, begging Brandon to allow him to wash himself. Finally he

relented, unable to argue with Brandon's persistence. Brandon ran his hand down the man's chest with care, massaging the soap into his smooth, soft skin.

Brandon released the water from the tub. He took the cloth and rinsed the soap from his chest. As the water ran out of the tub, he carefully rinsed off Charles' legs. His hand brushed the fine patch of blond pubic hair above the wounded man's cock. It was obvious that Charles was enjoying the attention. His cock was fully extended as the water subsided.

When the wounded man in the tub saw Brandon smiling at the erection now standing between them, he tried to apologize. "I don't know why that happened. I'm so sorry, I'm so embarrassed!"

Brandon reached down. Brushing his hand against the terrified man's leg, he reassured him. "It's okay, it's natural. You're just reacting to someone being nice to you." He continued rubbing his leg reassuringly. The action made Charles' cock leap forward, brushing against Brandon's hand. Charles looked frightened. As Brandon's hand rested on the young man's thigh, Charles' cock streamed a line of cum all over his thighs and Brandon's fingers.

Charles started to cry. "It's true! I *am* gay! Fuck!"

"Look, Charles, I could explain a long list of medical reasons for all this, but basically here it is. The reason I like Daniel to spank me with his belt is that, after the stinging, the touch of Daniel's hands, the feel of his body against me, loving me,

is so intense sometimes I come without even trying. That's all that happened to you. Your body is on high alert and your nerves are hurt. A kind touch from someone you find attractive felt good. So you had an orgasm. It's not a big deal. It's not like we had sex. You had a woody and you got off. That doesn't make you gay. It makes you human." Brandon continued without waiting for a comment. "If you are gay, accept that you are a good man, and it shouldn't matter to anybody but you if you're gay or not. If not, I'll still think you're a good guy."

Brandon left the man alone to dry off and put on a pair of his lounging pants and a borrowed t-shirt. Daniel sat reading in his leather chair when Brandon returned to the room. Brandon told his lover about the conversation and the young man's hysteria over the unexpected orgasm. Daniel whispered, "Gay or not, if getting a sponge bath from you didn't give him a woody, I'd think he was dead!" He laughed quietly, his intention obviously to avoid embarrassing Charles.

"I was hoping you wouldn't be mad. I didn't mean to, but he's just so sweet, I didn't want him to feel like any of this was his fault," Brandon remarked cautiously.

"I'm not mad. Like I said, you've given me more than one orgasm without trying, baby. I wouldn't be surprised that you could give a cute virgin a hard-on. I expect that it's been quite a while since anyone has given him any *attention*."

Brandon sat down in his lover's lap. "You're such a sweetheart. I love you,

big man, really I do. By the way how does the house look?”

“Beautiful, you did a magnificent job. I’ve made up a bed for Charles in the guest room. You think he’ll mind if I talk to him for a bit?” Daniel’s eyes twinkled as he questioned his lover.

“I’ll tell him you’re harmless.” Brandon smiled as he left the room to make sure that Charles had what he needed. It had been a long day; the two men had talked downstairs for hours.

Charles thanked Brandon for his hospitality as he led the way to the guest room.

Brandon returned to the bedroom. He sat quietly thinking of the marks on Charles’ back. It made him physically ill. He shook a bit; thinking of his own troubled past. He felt as if the past wouldn’t leave him. He hoped Daniel would never find out all the details of his life. The sadness of the day left him exhausted. He fell asleep on the bed. His thoughts racing madly as his body finally gave up the fight.



Daniel wandered throughout the house, taking in the furnishings, contemplating the day’s events. He wanted to talk to Charles about his life and the direction it should take. He looked in on the young man, deciding that he should simply allow him to get some rest. He watched as the exhausted man crawled

silently into the clean sheets. He thought of how much he loved Brandon. He knew that seeing this beautiful, kind man wounded had more than likely struck a familiar chord with his lover.

He walked quietly toward the master bedroom. As he looked through the door, he saw Brandon curled into a fetal position on the bed. He lay down carefully so as to not wake his lover up. He continued reading the book he'd started earlier that week. As he read, he heard his lover moaning. Brandon mumbled incoherently, talking in his sleep again.

It made Daniel worry when he did that, it almost always foretold a nightmare and a violent awakening. Daniel considered whether to wake him or not. "Don't burn me please. I'm a whore, don't burn me, I'll be good." Brandon moaned in his sleep. "No! No! I'll be good!" Daniel bent down to kiss his lover, but Brandon sat up abruptly, eyes pleading. "Please don't hurt me; I'll be better next time."

Daniel shook his lover into consciousness. "It's me, baby. I love you. I'll never hurt you. No one can hurt you ever again! Please come back to me, Brandon."

Brandon sat up. He looked around the room, and then he said simply, "Thanks for waking me, Daniel. Just a bad dream." He lay back down on the bed, falling asleep almost instantly.

Daniel looked carefully at Brandon. He spoke lovingly to his sleeping lover.

“What has happened in your life? I love you so much; I’m going to make it okay for you.”

Daniel couldn’t help but wonder how he’d managed to overlook the possibility that Charles’ trauma would turn Brandon’s world upside down. He wondered if he should have sent the wounded man to stay with Quinton and Ben.

He bent down, kissing Brandon on the forehead again. He intended to make his lover feel safe, one way or the other.



## Chapter Four

Daniel awoke early, a by-product of his Marine training. He noticed the handsome man lying next to him. The covers were in a heap on the floor; perspiration soaked the sheet underneath Brandon's exhausted body. He lay desperately clutching Daniel's arm. Daniel was concerned; his lover's fingers restricted the circulation in his forearm. It had been a long night for both men.

Daniel was restless most of the night worrying about his troubled lover. Brandon's happiness and stability worried him most, and how this new element in their lives could negatively affect him. Daniel simply didn't have the heart to have Brandon ask Charles to leave, nor could he send him to stay with their friends. The connection between the two men made Daniel think. They seemed eerily similar.

With a sudden jolt Brandon's eyes popped open. "I swear I won't tell anybody, Dad. It'll be like I died, I swear."

Daniel couldn't believe his ears. "What the hell, Brandon? Why would you say something like that, baby? That's just wrong. What did your father do to you?"

Brandon's expression was bleary and disoriented. He quickly rose from the bed, kissing Daniel reassuringly on the head. "It's just a bad dream, sweetheart. My dad's a great guy; everybody loves him. And I swear on my life, he never hurt me."

His words were mumbled, nearly incomprehensible.

“I’m not convinced.” Daniel’s tone grew impatient as Brandon continued toward the bathroom.

Brandon furrowed his brow, glaring at Daniel, “I swear on your life, and on our relationship, my father never fucked me, used me, or otherwise abused me. Is that specific enough?”

Daniel watched his nude lover walk into the bathroom, lift the lid, and urinate for what seemed like an eternity. He threw caution to the wind, asking, “When are you going to let me in, Brandon? There is so much that I don’t know, so much about you that is a mystery. I want to know everything, baby. Do you think I would love you less?”

Brandon returned to the bedroom and moved to the window, staring out blankly, away from Daniel. “I know you would still love me; I just don’t know if you’d ever want me again. I don’t know if I’d want you to want me. I’m really fucked up, Daniel. *That’s* the whole truth.”

What could Daniel do? As Brandon walked naked from the room, Daniel said absently, “I’m gonna check on Charles, okay sweetheart?”

Daniel considered the blond man sleeping in the guest room. He couldn’t help comparing Brandon and Charles. They could be brothers. Both men were very blond, very handsome, and very troubled it seemed. Even in physical appearance

they were strikingly similar. Both men had very lean, muscular, smooth, tanned bodies.

“Brandon!” Daniel shouted. He smiled at the naked man strolling undaunted toward the guest bedroom, “Don’t you think you should throw on some shorts? You know the poor man is struggling, you wouldn’t want to send him off the deep end now, would you?” He laughed as he watched his lover strut defiantly down the hall.

Brandon shot an angry glare, annoyed. “For God’s sake, like he’s never seen a naked man before...”

Daniel returned to his bedroom, shaking his head. “Not one as hot as you, I doubt.” He laughed as he struggled, putting on the pair of 2(x)ist briefs he’d laid out the night before. He knew they were Brandon’s favorite, even if he didn’t particularly care for them, preferring boxers himself. The attempt to please his lover made Daniel snicker.



Brandon stood in the doorway of the guest room. He looked in on Charles as he lay sleeping. He saw the blood-stained sheet that lay across the young man’s back. It broke his heart. “Fucking bastard,” he murmured while watching the young man sleep. He couldn’t see his face, but his long blond hair lay flowing across the pillows.

Walking past the sleeping man, Brandon went to the guest bathroom to retrieve some peroxide, a clean white rag, and some Moderma medicated salve to help avoid scarring on the young man's skin.

Brandon's movements caused Charles to stir in the bed. Still sleepily dozing, he turned toward the door; eyes still closed, he yawned. He hadn't yet seen Brandon.

"Mind if I clean those cuts up for you? I don't want them to scar. Charles, if you don't let me take care of them, you'll be carrying the marks forever." Brandon sighed sadly.

He moved to the side of the bed next to the sleepy young man. Charles had been so exhausted from moving most of the furniture by himself that he'd barely moved all night. Charles yawned broadly; eyes still closed, he stretched both arms above his head. As he lowered his arms, one of them fell dully into Brandon's naked lap, his hand lying open across his crotch.

Charles' eyes opened abruptly to see his hand cupping the man's penis. "*Jesus Christ!* I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to..." He removed his hand as if it were on a hot stove. "I didn't know you were, uh..."

"Naked?" Brandon's reply a sarcastic smirk.

"Yeah, uh, I am so sorry, sir...uh I mean, Brandon..."

"Well, at least you got that part right. I am not a sir. As for naked, yeah, I

always sleep naked. I don't get dressed until I've showered. I wanted to take care of your cuts first, though. I've been thinking. You shouldn't let those go for long, or you'll have scars. A fine-looking man like you shouldn't have those kinds of scars; people will get the wrong idea."

Charles looked puzzled. "What idea?"

Brandon thought carefully. "In the world today, honey, people see a pretty young man like you with those kinds of scars, and let's just say, some big dumb ass man might think you *enjoy* being somebody's whipping boy."

Charles pulled the hair back from his handsome face. His eye, still swollen, continued changing colors and wasn't as puffy as before. The ice last night had helped a lot, Brandon surmised.

Charles met Brandon's gaze, "So you think it's okay if I'm gay? I'm not weird or fucked up or anything? I mean, it's great that you're gay, but I'm just a regular guy. Wait a minute, that came out wrong! I'm just gonna shut up."

Brandon laughed as he maneuvered Charles, getting him to turn his back to him. "Sweetheart, I know what you meant. Just so you know, most gay men are *regular* guys. They just are regular guys, who for one reason or the other, like to get fucked or to fuck other guys. I don't think it's any different than some straight guys who like blondes, or skinny women, or whatever the flavor of the day."

Charles winced, sucking in his breath as Brandon continued to clean the

deep cuts in the young man's back. "I guess you're right, but I just come from a real strict family. They think gay people are all perverts and child molesters. I just haven't been around that many gay people. My dad actually said that you guys probably go trolling for teenage boys to *turn them*. I got so mad at him."

Charles' expression grew deadly serious. "I don't know when I knew about my attractions. I didn't like girls, not like that anyhow, but nobody turned me. I just always knew I was different, I just didn't understand how till I started noticing guy's...well you know..."

"Cocks." Brandon smiled, applying the last bit of ointment to his back and chest. "All done, big man. Charles, you don't have to say you're gay for me to be your friend. If you aren't sure, take the time to find out what you want. Don't let me decide that for you. If you like girls, you should date girls. You'll break a million hearts with a face like that..."

Charles looked down at the bed, leaning against the headboard. "Thing is, the sex thing just never really worked with girls. I tried twice, I really tried. I couldn't even get it up. I felt bad; the girl thought it was her. She assumed that I thought she was ugly. She was really pretty and smart. I just couldn't quit lusting after her brother. Honestly, I almost managed it the second time. It was probably because I was remembering seeing her brother in the locker room at school in the shower. When I saw her face, while we were...doing it... I knew it was wrong. I

didn't want her. Worse, I knew she wanted me. I would have hurt her worse. I told her I was dating someone else and was cheating on her, so that she'd get mad and throw me out. It's lame I know, but..."

"It's not lame at all," Brandon said, smiling broadly. "It was the right thing to do." He put his hand across Charles' chest, "You have a big heart. That's something rare. Don't let anyone take that from you."

Brandon's hand fell into Charles' lap greeted by a raging erection pitching a tent in the sheet. "Oh sweetheart, I'm sorry! Did I hurt you?"

Embarrassed, Charles looked down. "No, I'm sorry I can't control that sometimes, and you, well, you're here."

"No explanation needed. There's some lube in the cabinet, in there. You should take care of that, when I go. It clears the mind." Brandon laughed quietly as he rose to leave.

"Yeah, I will. Thanks." Charles smiled, again blushing with embarrassment.

Brandon caught the silhouette of his lover in the hallway, leaning against the door sipping his morning coffee wearing just his briefs. He'd been listening to the two young men talk.

Brandon rose, and walking over to Daniel, he kissed him. He ran his hand down the tall, muscular man's well-defined chest. He played luxuriously with the fine hairs on his upper chest, occasionally wandering down the trail of hair leading

to the bikini briefs that barely held his manhood.

Charles stared, obviously transfixed on his every move. He watched Brandon's casual foreplay, but his eyes seemed fixed on Daniel's now massive erection, straining against the black bikini briefs. The head of his penis strained against the slim, elastic waistband, finally peeking out of the top.

"Down, boy!" Brandon playfully pushed the swelling member back into his lover's underwear. Daniel groaned in discomfort.

Brandon noticed Charles' eyes; they were frozen on Daniel's crotch. He knew he shouldn't have teased Daniel in front of Charles; it wasn't fair to the young man.

Charles looked down; his cock had pushed away both his boxers and the sheet. It now stood fully erect in front of him, oozing pre-cum at the sight of Daniel's dick. He shoved his cock hard down into the covers. Standing quickly, wrapping the sheet around him, he ran toward the bathroom. Brandon jumped, startled at the sound of Charles slamming the bathroom door.

Daniel kissed Brandon. "Now look what you've done! Go make nice with Charles, then get your ass back to bed."

Brandon quickly walked to the door, checking the knob. Charles had failed to lock the door. Brandon leaned in an effort to console the embarrassed man, who sat on the toilet masturbating wildly. Mortified tears of embarrassment were



evident on his face. Brandon's entrance, still naked, caused Charles to release the pent-up tension. Brandon was shocked at the force of the climax.

"Oh God, I didn't think it could get any worse!" Charles frowned. "I swear, I didn't mean to look at your boyfriend's cock, it just was there, and shit! I'm going to leave before I make a complete fool of myself."

"Charles, don't be a drama queen, sweetheart. If that cock didn't make your dick hard, I'd know you were straight!" Brandon laughed reassuringly. "I told you last night, it's okay. It's only natural to have thoughts like that. I do, Daniel does, and it's not a big deal. For that matter, I think Daniel thinks you're cuter than I am. So if that makes you feel any better..."

"No that's worse! Now you think I'm going to be making moves on him."

"I don't worry about Daniel, Charles. If he wants someone else, there's nothing I can do to stop him. So why worry? If he loves me, I have to accept that. It's that simple."

Brandon walked toward the bedroom door. "Now, if you don't mind, I have a horny Marine to deal with." He laughed, adjusting his cock provocatively as he closed the door on the puzzled young man.

## Chapter Five

Brandon moved quickly toward the master bedroom, giddy with excitement. His stomach fluttered with anticipation. Daniel had put him on notice, he was wanted.

He moved into the bedroom, closing the door behind him. Daniel stood nude in the center of the room. Brandon shot him a suggestive look, licking his lips lustily. “May I come in?”

“Of course, I would like to talk to you about some work I need done in the bedroom. I need some wood taken care of, for starters.” Daniel pointed toward his cock, red, swollen, and throbbing in front of him.

Brandon slid across the bed, landing feetfirst in front of Daniel. He pushed himself against the man’s well-defined chest. The hairs there were rough against Brandon’s smooth body. He loved the feeling of his lover against him. He could feel the heat of Daniel’s erection burning against his stomach.

He grabbed Daniel by the ass with both hands, growling roughly, “I want that cock! Are you going to give it to me or not?” Brandon hoped that Daniel took the cue that he was in the mood to be naughty.

“You bet your sweet ass I am. In more ways than one!” Daniel pushed

Brandon by the head down toward his knees. With his hand, he gently pulled Brandon's hair, pulling him away from his cock, facing the young man looking up toward his face. "You want this cock, bitch?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you think you deserve this cock, boy?"

Brandon grinned slyly, glad that Daniel had continued the aggressive dance he'd begun. "No, sir."

"I'll give you a taste. But that's all, for now."

With that Daniel pulled Brandon forward, allowing him to engulf the entirety of his erection. Brandon hungrily swallowed it, shoving it deeper into his throat. Brandon could barely breathe his nose was so deeply embedded in the bush of curly hair crowning Daniel's massive cock. He badly wanted to be rewarded, given his lover's load.

Daniel, apparently unwilling to give in just yet, was having none of it. "*Not yet!*" He pulled Brandon up forcefully. His mouth made a loud suction noise as he was removed from his happy pursuit of cock diving.

"Get me my belt. I think you need to be taught who's in charge here, young man," Daniel growled, giving Brandon a knowing wink.

Brandon practically ran to the closet, retrieving what was his favorite belt from Daniel's large collection.

Daniel paused, breaking from the game. He asked Brandon, “Are you sure, baby?” He nodded toward the wide belt with numerous metal grommet holes.

“More than life itself.” Brandon smiled sexily as he lay across the arm of Daniel’s favorite leather lounge chair. Brandon loved watching his lover read in that chair, and it excited him just having his face in the seat of the chair where his lover’s body often rested.

Daniel now resumed the role of disciplinarian. “I’m going to expect you to behave after this, do you understand? No more teasing of the pretty young boys in the neighborhood, swimming naked. Am I clear?”

Brandon smirked. *He knows there’s no way I’m gonna stop swimming naked!* He loved skinny-dipping now that he had a pool of his own. There was no way Daniel could really expect him to always wear a suit. He gave an exaggerated pout, “But sir... I...”

With a quick slap, Daniel gave his lover a swat with the belt. Brandon flinched a bit from the sting, but his cock, fully erect downward between his legs, pressed hard against the arm of the chair. He moaned with delight.

Daniel continued, “You think I don’t know how you try to get me excited when we’re out. You strut around, looking sexy, flaunting that adorable bubble butt of yours in front of me, knowing I can’t do a thing about it. Then you just make me wait, don’t you, boy? You think that’s funny, don’t you, boy?”

“I’m not trying to make you horny when I touch you in public, sir...” Brandon lied, knowing that punishment would soon follow.

Slap, slap, slap. Daniel gave three hard swats to the reddened ass now spread before him. All of his senses heightened, Brandon could barely contain himself. He wanted to get fucked. His ass was on fire, and he needed Daniel to put out that fire. He blurted out, “I know I’m a cock slut, sir. Please, just fuck me!”

Daniel smiled lustily as he moved to the front of the chair. He sat down while keeping Brandon draped over the arm. He guided Brandon’s mouth, pushed it down onto his cock. “Get me good and hard first, boy. Then I’ll think about fucking you.”

Brandon again swallowed his lover’s cock. This time he didn’t give him the full attention he knew would send Daniel over the top. He didn’t want his cock soft till it filled him. He wanted sex and he wanted it now! He wanted to be filled with his lover’s seed. He felt Daniel’s hands softly tracing the small of his back, a cool trail of lubricant tracing his lower back, running down the crack of his ass, drizzling across his balls, and finally dripping off his cock. Daniel had prepared him for what he wanted. Brandon sighed, contented.

He felt Daniel’s hands massaging his aching butt. His ass cheeks burned furiously, but the soft feeling of Daniel’s hands coupled with the cool lubricant was so intense, Brandon thought he’d lose control and come on the chair arm. He

concentrated hard to stave off the nearly unstoppable force of his imminent climax. Suddenly he felt Daniel's fingers thrust into his sphincter. He pushed hard against the tight muscles of his ass, causing a rush of pain to burn into his guts.

Brandon couldn't contain his bliss at the unexpected move. The pain and the pleasure ran together so flawlessly it was hard for him to know where one ended and the other began. His tight muscles relaxed a bit, allowing Daniel to insert two more fingers deep within his love canal. He moaned loudly, falling face-first onto his lover's aching cock. He swallowed it so far that his face pushed hard into Daniel's body, causing him to groan.

"Not yet!" Daniel shouted, begging Brandon to pull off of his erection. Brandon quickly obliged. He didn't want Daniel to come that way. He wanted him in his body, deep in his ass. Daniel stood, cock bobbing in front of him. He walked behind Brandon, caressing his cherry red ass, preparing him to be filled. His mind raced, his body reacted, and he was desperate for his lover's attention.

"I'm going to fuck you till you beg me to stop!" Daniel said gruffly. With that, he plunged deep into Brandon's waiting hole.

*"Oh, God! No, Never! I never want you to stop!"* Brandon squealed.

Sliding momentarily from the role play, Daniel laughed involuntarily. He leaned over, kissing the back of Brandon's neck. "Baby, I wouldn't stop till you want me to." He purred lovingly.

Brandon reached around. Unwilling to wait any longer, he grabbed Daniel's legs and pulled him in tighter, causing Daniel to fall full weight onto him. Daniel's cock pushed deeply within Brandon's body. Brandon groaned loudly, satisfied that he'd taken his lover to the hilt. Hoping to bring his lover to climax, he bore down hard on him, tightening his sphincter around the white-hot cock that pleasantly filled his body. Daniel feverishly pushed against him, pumping into his aching hole.

Daniel pulled back for a moment, giving Brandon's ass a quick slap. "You like that, boy?"

*"Fuck, yes! Oh, God, yes!"*

He drove into Brandon again, four more deep thrusts, then he quickly withdrew. This time he slapped the other side, twice. "You like that too, boy?"

*"Fuck, yes!"* Brandon's mind was awash with lust, unable to consider anything but the intense feeling of contentment he experienced. He pressed against his lover, grinding against the chair arm, shoving Daniel's cock into him in the process. Daniel's breath was heavy, heady with lust. He grabbed Brandon's cock, pulling at it hard as he pushed one final time into his lover's body.

Daniel's cock pulsed hard as he pushed deep inside Brandon's ass. With each spurt of his hot, sticky semen, he filled the inside of Brandon's bottom. Brandon convulsed wildly against the chair, pumping his cock into Daniel's hand until he sprayed the arm of the leather chair with his thick, white cum. He fell

exhausted against the chair as Daniel pulled away, withdrawing from inside him. Daniel plopped down into the chair, pulling Brandon into his lap.

“Baby, I don’t know if I can take thirty or forty more years of that kind of sex. My heart can’t take it!” Daniel laughed.

“Well, sweetie, what a way to go though...” Brandon kissed his lover deeply. He allowed his tongue to explore Daniel’s mouth as the two sat arm in arm, kissing for several minutes. “I love you, Daniel.”

“Not half as much as I love you, Brandon.”

“You’ll have a long time to figure out if that’s true, big man.” Brandon kissed his lover again.



## Chapter Six

Charles sat lazily sipping a lukewarm cup of coffee. He'd slept late, taking advantage of an uneventful Saturday morning. He hadn't gotten anything accomplished today, and here it was: afternoon, still in his sleep clothes. It had been a few weeks since he'd moved into the house with the two men. Thanks to Brandon's careful attention to his wounds, they'd healed. Other than the emotional ones, the scars left by his father's rage had almost faded. He ran his fingers across the slightly raised scar on his chest. Brandon and Daniel agreed to rent him the pool house in exchange for his helping out with the lawn maintenance and keeping the pool clean. For him it was a deal made in heaven. The apartment was beautiful and he had a friend to talk to. Brandon had truly become his friend. He knew that Daniel was a kind man, but the two had so little in common that their relationship hadn't progressed as his and Brandon's had.

His face flushed red, remembering the embarrassing scene he'd caused after watching Daniel and Brandon together. He wanted to know what it felt like to be in love, but for now he'd settle for knowing what it meant to have a good time with another man. He wanted to explore his sexuality.

Until recently, Charles had grown to believe that he was asexual. Girls were

a mystery to him. He'd never felt any chemistry with a girl. He'd always found men's bodies exciting, but he wasn't sure if he was gay, or what it meant.

He daydreamed often of what it would be like to touch Brandon's body. He certainly wasn't in love with Brandon. He knew Brandon's heart belonged to Daniel, but Charles couldn't help but want his body. He was so intense and sexual. Seeing Brandon nude made Charles' cock jump to attention daily. Seeing Brandon and Daniel together, though, had cemented the realization for him that he needed to be true to his sexual identity.

Daniel's body made Charles want to do things he'd never considered before, but fantasizing about Daniel was problematic, since he knew the handsome Marine was far too aloof. He'd never want someone like Charles: inexperienced and young. Brandon was younger than Daniel, but he was sexy as hell, and the attraction was obvious. Charles didn't want to cause the two men problems so he tried hard to avoid Brandon and Daniel, knowing that he longed for sexual favors from his new friends. He knew having Brandon sexually was out of the question.

*I'm going to do the next best thing. I'm going out and I'm going to get lucky one way or the other.* Today was the day, Charles decided. *I am going to get lucky today if it harelips the devil!*

Charles heard a loud splash outside the window. Parting the curtain, he saw Brandon's exquisite body, nude, swimming laps in the pool. Charles' dick sprung

to life.

“Damn it!” he muttered, taking in the empty room around him. He stood transfixed as Daniel walked to the poolside wearing a tiny bikini swimsuit. His cock, nestled tightly in the white spandex fabric, made Charles salivate. The suit was very low cut, the top of the suit lay precariously at the base of his penis. Charles watched as the two men swam together, pausing regularly to kiss. Daniel picked up Brandon forcefully. He tossed him headfirst into the deep water of the pool.

Unconsciously Charles began rubbing his throbbing member through Brandon’s silk lounging pants. He’d loaned Charles the pants shortly after coming to stay there. The fabric felt amazing. He watched the two men climb out of the pool. Brandon’s cock, flaccid, was still amazing all the same. Daniel strutted toward him, obviously affected by the nude form now lying casually in the lounge chairs beside the pool. Daniel’s cock strained against the tiny white bikini. Since it was wet, it clung to his manhood, leaving very little to the imagination.

Charles slumped down into a chair beside the window, masturbating as he watched the two men talk, kiss, and in general enjoy the morning. It took very little for the young man’s cock to release a hot stream of cum across his stomach. *Yes, today is the day, he thought, I am going to get lucky. I’m getting cock from someone.*

Charles showered quickly, throwing on a pair of the Levi’s he’d picked up at

the thrift store. He picked up three stray dollar bills, the only money he had in the house. He knew he shouldn't go out tonight, but he feared his brain would explode from the tension. As he left the pool house, he pulled on a clean, white tee. He heard the door go closed behind him. Hopefully jacking off would keep his cock in check while he talked to the two men he so desperately wanted to have sexually.

"What's up guys?" Charles motioned nonchalantly toward the two men.

"Not much, just taking a quick swim." Daniel grinned as he dried his hair with the towel on the chair beside him. "We do have something to discuss though—Brandon?"

"Charles, Daniel has been driving me nuts wanting me to hire an assistant. For that matter, my boss, Victoria, hired this nearsighted woman with the personality of a stick of gum for me. I need the help, but the woman made me want to run a wooden stake through her heart. I'm quite sure on a full moon she grows fur."

"Brandon..." Daniel interrupted, smiling at Brandon's tirade "...focus on the matter at hand."

"Anyhow, you need a job and I need an assistant. It's not a glamorous job, but it pays okay: six hundred a week plus benefits."

Charles was dumbfounded; he barely made three hundred a week working for his dad. He couldn't imagine his luck; it was a job he'd love. He'd helped

Brandon several times since he'd let the werewolf woman go. "That's too much, Brandon. I'll work for what I was making with my dad. I already have a place. I mean, assuming you guys don't want rid of me."

Daniel interjected, "Charles, I didn't offer you the apartment to be nice; I did it because it's a profitable deal for me too. I don't have to worry about strangers taking my stuff when they do the lawn or clean the pool. Also I don't have time to do that stuff anyhow, since I've been working on the new project at work. So no, neither of us wants 'rid' of you.

"You should also know, as for the money Brandon is offering, trust me when I tell you, you'll earn it. This man is a maniac at work; he doesn't know how to stop."

Charles looked at Brandon with concern. "If you think I can do the job, I'd love to. I need to work; more than that, I'm down to my last hundred dollars in my savings account."

Brandon laughed. "Great. Monday, 8 a.m. be ready to get your ass worked off!"

Charles decided, *It's now or never!* He threw an idea out... "What are you guys doing tonight? I was hoping we could all go out. I'd like to..."

Brandon winked at him, "Sweetheart, that bulge in your pants is explanation enough. You wanna get laid!"

“*Fuck!*” Charles frowned, pushing his erection downward in an attempt to hide his condition. “I’m so sorry, sir.” He nodded at Daniel. He feared that the handsome Marine would grow angered at his obvious reaction to Brandon’s body. Charles considered, however, that it was more likely the handsome Marine’s body, his presence, that had produced the reaction.

Daniel smiled. “In case you haven’t noticed, seeing Brandon naked does it to me every time.” He pointed to his bulging crotch.

“I’d like to go to the club myself. I enjoy showing this big hunk off anyhow. Quint and Ben have been after us for a month to go out. What do you say? Let’s go to Just Richards.” Brandon motioned toward Daniel.

“Sounds like a plan!” Daniel stood, heading back toward the house.

“Cutie, come in. I’ll get you something hot to wear to the club. Okay?” Brandon replied.

Charles smiled, sitting down in the chair vacated by Daniel. “You don’t mind?”

“Of course not. We need to make you hot—that is if you’re going to get lucky tonight. Of course with a face like that, and a body to match, you’ll have your pick of men, baby!” Brandon quipped as he rose to return to the house.

Charles followed the naked man, smiling nervously. “Man, you sure make it hard on a man, pardon the pun.” He patted Brandon on the ass. “You’re so hot I’m

surprised you get any rest. I'd figure Daniel would work you out every thirty minutes, especially since you walk around naked most of the time."

Brandon laughed, "I *am* an exhibitionist at heart, I suppose, but I just adore the feeling of the sun on my skin."

The two men quickly ran toward the master suite to retrieve clothing for their night out.

Charles' stomach felt like he was about to start the first day of school. He giggled nervously at the promise of the sexual release he so desperately needed.

## Chapter Seven

Daniel stood in front of the building that housed the bar where he and Brandon first met. He laughed internally at the play on words flashing on the sign. “Just Richards”—the implication “just dicks...” He surveyed the four men with him. By far the most underdressed in the group, Daniel opted for a Hugo Boss suit paired with a black t-shirt. Brandon and Charles stood together, trying to hurry the other men up. Brandon wore a skintight pair of leather jeans, a see-thru muscle shirt and his favorite snakeskin boots, the outfit accessorized to the hilt. His hair was spiked to perfection with enough product to impale anyone unfortunate enough to brush against it.

Charles wore a pair of Abercrombie distressed jeans, a Dolce & Gabbana linen shirt, and his long blond hair fell in waves across his young face. He chatted nervously with Brandon, Quinton, and Ben as they all headed for the door of the bar. Quinton and Ben, both impeccably dressed, paused to wait for Daniel who lagged behind. Ben extended his arm around Quinton’s waist as he addressed Daniel. “I’m glad you guys decided to take us up; it’s been too long since we all had a good time.”

Daniel wondered if it was a good idea to pick this particular bar tonight. It



had been Brandon's suggestion; so if he was okay with it, Daniel felt no reason to argue.

The five men sat together at a large round table, silent. Loud music thundered as the masses of men, both young and old, walked past toward the dance floor or the bar. The five men made up an unusual bunch, as diverse as it gets. Brandon and Charles exemplified personal style and youth. Quint and Ben looked as though they had just left a fashion show. And Daniel looked like an investment banker. He laughed at the stark contrast to their appearance as he watched Brandon rise to get drinks from the bar.

As they sat together the awkward lull in conversation seemed an eternity. Finally Quinton broke the silence. "So, Charles, I hear you're going to work with Brandon?"

"Yes, I think so, if he doesn't change his mind."

"Honey, you'll love it. He's so creative, I love seeing him work. I would..." Quinton's words trailed off as he felt a hand on his shoulder.

"Could I buy you a drink?" A large man with deep, piercing eyes asked, nodding in Charles' direction.

Unsure if he was the object of the question, Charles motioned at himself pensively. "Me?"

"Of course. That is if you don't mind leaving your friends for a while."

Brandon pinched Charles hard on the thigh. “Go over and let the big hunk of beef buy you a drink, Charles.”

Charles jumped at Brandon’s abrupt action. He looked crossly at Brandon before finally responding to the man now leaning over the two of them. “I guess that would be okay.” Charles followed the man toward the bar.

Daniel watched the two sitting at the bar. He leaned over and kissed Brandon. “I love you, baby. Keep an eye on those two; I’m not sure that guy is the kind of guy Charles should be hanging out with.” Daniel rose, loudly scraping his chair across the floor. He deliberately walked past Charles and his suitor.

He heard the large man say, “My name’s Harold, and your friends called you Charles?”

“Yeah, I’m Charles. I stay in the guest house behind Brandon’s house. I help keep the grounds up.”

Harold put his hand squarely on Charles’ ass. “You’re certainly getting me up.”

Daniel’s eyes rolled up into his head. “God, what an asshole,” he whispered as he entered the men’s room.

Quinton stood at the sink in the men’s room. “Mmmm...a front row seat!” He laughed as he dried his hands and Daniel zipped and returned from the urinal.

“You are soo bad Quint!” Daniel bowed dramatically.

“It’s no fun being good. I prefer keeping people on their toes.” Quinton smiled and adjusted his hair as he returned to Ben and Brandon.

Brandon danced with Ben, moving gracefully across the dance floor, completely ignoring the couple at the bar. He had left his cellular phone lying on the table. Daniel ignored the vibrating phone, opting to continue toward the bar.

Daniel strained to hear the conversation between the two men at the bar. He didn’t like the posture this man had concerning Charles. He had no doubt that this guy exemplified the very characteristics Charles should avoid. Daniel knew how to spot an asshole, and this guy had it written all over him. Charles laughed nervously, probably enamored with the attention, Daniel surmised.

Daniel walked toward the dance floor and tapped Brandon on the shoulder. “Mind if I cut in?”

Ben bowed gracefully allowing Daniel to sweep Brandon into his arms. He swayed slow and easy with the handsome man held close. He leaned in, kissing him. The two men swayed arm in arm, the loud music severely out of sync with their motion. Daniel didn’t care. Masses of men danced provocatively to the music, parting specifically around the two men seemingly oblivious to the music or the bodies surrounding them. Brandon laid his head on Daniel’s broad chest and parted the shirt he wore to kiss the center of his chest.

Daniel whispered into Brandon’s ear, “I think you should sidetrack Charles

and get him away from that jerk. His first time shouldn't be with an asshole."

"How'd you know he was a virgin?" Brandon pulled back and questioned his lover.

"I'm not an idiot, Brandon. I just think he is in over his head. Maybe by infinity."

"I'm enjoying this far too much." Brandon tucked his hand inside the buttons of the shirt and ran his fingers through the hair on Daniel's chest. "Mmmmm..."

Daniel saw Quinton coming toward them with an ashen, worried look. He held Brandon's phone, his expression deadly serious. "Daniel, I think you need to take this call, now."

Quinton took Brandon's hand, leading him back to the table, carefully adjusting his hair as Brandon watched Daniel using his phone. The voice on the other end of the phone rattled off bits of information. Daniel's heart sank. He knew now why Quint had given *him* the phone. Brandon would be devastated at the news. He quickly flipped the phone shut.

As he turned he heard Brandon shouting loudly above the booming music in the club. "What the fuck is going on? I'm not stupid. *Why has Daniel got my fucking phone?*"

"It's going to be okay, I just thought Daniel should take the call, that's all."

Quint forced a half-hearted smile, putting his hand under Brandon's face.

Daniel returned to the table, putting the phone down beside Brandon. "We need to go now, baby. It's important."

"Don't fuck with me, what's going on?"

"It's Otis, he's in the hospital." Daniel persisted, tugging at Brandon, forcefully pulling the young man from his seat. "Make sure Charles is okay, Ben, please. I don't like the ass he's with."

Ben frowned, remarking with a worried tone, "Daniel, sweetheart, they left together while you were on the phone. I'm sorry, I didn't know."

"Fuck!" Daniel furrowed his brow angrily, "I can't think about this right now. I've got to get Brandon to the hospital."

Daniel led a silent Brandon from the bar. His lover stared blankly as Daniel guided him into the front seat of his sports car.

Daniel sped toward the large hospital in the heart of Atlanta. He continually reassured Brandon, still silently staring into space. "Otis needs you, baby. Please answer me. Stop staring."

"I want to go home."

Daniel pulled the car in front of the hospital entrance. He tossed the keys to a valet along with a fifty dollar bill, "I'll be in coronary care, please get up with me in a few." He dragged Brandon from the car, pulling him forcefully toward the

desk. “Brandon, if you don’t see Otis now, you’ll never see him again. It’s bad. Your picture and phone number were in his wallet. He told the doctor you were his son. He wants you here. You’re all he’s got. Damn it. *Snap out of it; be a man!*”

Brandon’s eyes filled with tears. He shook violently, sobbing as he slid toward the ground. Daniel caught him, pulling the inconsolable man into his chest. “I never do this, baby, but you have got to pull yourself together. I know you love Otis. I do too. He’s a fine man. Right now what’s important is making his time count. He pulled his shirt out of his pants and wiped Brandon’s eyes. “Blow.”

Brandon laughed nervously at Daniel fathering him. “You’re right; I’m sorry.”

They walked quickly toward the intensive care unit. The sterile environment made Daniel nervous. The smell of antiseptic and the sound of miscellaneous machines and monitors made his head spin anxiously. He hated hospitals, but he stiffened his spine. He needed to keep it together; Brandon needed him.

A nurse walked toward the two men, now standing outside the unit. “Are you Mr. Winslow?”

Brandon nodded affirmatively.

Daniel’s attention snapped toward the frightened young man, taken aback. To his knowledge, this was the first time he’d ever known Brandon to allow anyone to refer to him as Mr. anything. It proved Brandon was terrified and hurt.

The nurse led the two men along a long, sterile corridor with beds housing the sick and dying. Tubes, machines, and medical equipment made noises that made Daniel's head want to explode. He *really* hated hospitals.

The nurse led the two men to the foot of a bed where a large black gentleman lay motionless. Numerous tubes connected to his body, oxygen in his nose, the IV dripping slowly into his arm, and a monitor spat out a readout of a heartbeat that grew fainter with each passing minute.

Brandon hoarsely asked the nurse, "What happened?"

"Age mostly, but his heart is worn out. He should have been medicated years ago, it just couldn't keep up. I shouldn't probably mention it, but I need to ask. He just keeps asking for his son. He's mentioned several times that he's a 'crazy white boy'. Your phone number and picture was the only thing in his wallet. Are you his son?" The polite nurse looked disbelieving at the blond-haired, blue-eyed man who held so tightly to Daniel's hand that it had turned white.

Brandon looked at her as tears streamed down his cheeks.

Daniel firmly pulled Brandon into him in hopes that he'd realize that he needed to stay strong for Otis. "Yes, ma'am, he is. Is there a problem with that?" He sounded as annoyed as he felt.

"No, sir, not at all; just the names were different...that's all..."

"He's the only father I have, ma'am," Brandon said honestly.

“I’ll leave you alone.”

“Do you think that’s wise? What if…” Brandon’s voice and face conveyed his worry.

“He has what he needs now, young man. He’s asked for hours for nothing but you. There’s nothing I can do for him. He *needs* his family.”

Brandon walked silently toward the head of the sleeping man. Daniel feared Otis had slipped into a coma and Brandon would be unable to say his final goodbyes. He watched as the young man lovingly wiped the old man’s wrinkled brow.

“Bout time somebody with sense got up in here.” A raspy, broken voice startled them as Brandon turned toward Daniel.

Brandon’s eyes lit up. “*You crazy old coot!* I knew you weren’t dead!”

“Not yet, anyhow. That’s why I wanted you here. You don’t cut Otis no slack. But you know, I’m not going to leave here.”

“Don’t be ridiculous!” Brandon barked. “I’m going to call someone and get you some help. A real doctor, not these hacks around here. Isn’t that right, Daniel? We’re going to get you better.” He paced, nervously dialing numbers mindlessly on his phone. Daniel had no clue who Brandon was trying to call. He didn’t think Brandon knew either.

“Come here, boy. I need to talk to you. Sit down on the bed.” Otis forced a



smile as he patted the side of the hospital bed.

Daniel said, "I'm going to give you guys some privacy."

"No, you need to hear this too. You are a good man, Daniel. I have some things to say to you, too. I don't have much time, so I need to keep it short."

"If you keep talking like that, I'm going to leave, Otis. Damn it!!"

"Hush up and sit down."

Brandon sat silently down beside the old man as ordered.

"I've told you I never forget a kindness. You were good to me. You treated me like a man. Most people just act embarrassed to see me 'cause I was dirty or crazy or whatever they thought of me. I'm kind of crazy, but it's the war and I just never..."

"I only did what anybody would do for someone who needed help." Brandon began to break up again. Daniel moved in behind Brandon and put his hand firmly on his shoulder.

"That's shit, and you know it. You are a good man, you're both good men. I didn't mean to be rude to you about the gay thing, before. I'm just old, and don't change too easy. But you two have been more men than a lot of assholes that ain't gay. I spent too much time in my life when I was young trying to become a *man*. I had to get old to realize it ain't who you screw, or how much you can lift, or how important other people think you are that makes you a man. You two showed me

that. It's how you treat a person that counts."

"I love you, Otis. I don't want you to die."

"It's too late for that, son... Sorry for that... I just kinda think if I'd've had a son, I'd like him to be like you...that's all. I don't wanna make you feel like... I just..."

Brandon fell, limp, face-first into the old man's chest. "You can't die! I won't fucking allow it!"

The old man put his hand on Brandon's shoulder as he sobbed inconsolably, "In my jacket is a number. When I go, you need to call that man. I've only got a few dollars from the service. They gave me money when I got out, and whatever shit they sent me since then, I didn't want it. It felt like blood money to me. But I want you to have what little I have. I was homeless because I didn't trust anyone. I thought the whole world was evil. You made me realize there was good in the world. I'll never be able to repay you for doing that for me. It ain't much but I want you to have it."

"I don't want money! I want you to get up and come home. I'm going to get some soup in you and you'll be fine. We'll find a specialist and he'll get you some pills. You'll be fine!" Brandon absently rubbed on top of the old man's callused hand.

Otis held tightly to Brandon's hand. "You are my family. A man should be able to leave what he has to a family."

The old man turned toward Daniel. “I have some stuff from the Marines, Daniel, if you want ’em, they’re yours.”

The old man’s grasp released. His hand fell onto the bed. Brandon rose and ran nervously to the nurse’s desk, where Daniel could hear him barking orders at them. “Get his fucking doctor on the phone! Why isn’t he here?”

Daniel walked over to the man’s bedside. “I’d be honored to have your medals, Otis.”

The old man whispered, “You take care of him, Daniel. There’s shit you don’t know. He needs you. Promise me. I can’t go till I know he’s not alone. He’s like me; he ain’t really got nobody.”

“I love him, Otis. I couldn’t leave him if I wanted. You know he loves you, that’s why, he...” Daniel paused as he looked out the door at Brandon, now frantically quizzing the old man’s doctor.

“I know, Daniel. He needs someone. I hope I made his life a little better with what I did for him. You make sure he sees that man about the money. It’s probably not much; I haven’t talked to that lawyer in thirty years. I set up a trust for my wife, but when she died, that’s the only person I had in the world. Whatever money the Marines has sent me went there. It’s probably not much... But I made sure he’d get it. Promise me. Swear it. I want to know I did something for him, he did so much for me.”

“I promise, Otis, but you’ve done more for Brandon than leaving him a few dollars. You gave him family. I’m trying to do the same. We have the same goal, you and I.”

Brandon walked back into the room solemnly. Otis reached out to the young man. “You take care, boy.”

Brandon took his hand and kissed the old man on the forehead. His hand fell lifelessly onto the bed as Otis’ eyes became blank.

Daniel walked behind his lover and hugged him. “He’s gone, baby.”

They walked silently away, heading toward the car. Daniel didn’t know how to console Brandon who didn’t weep. He barely blinked.

“It’s okay to cry, Brandon. You loved him. It’s natural.” Daniel turned to Brandon.

“Everybody who loves me dies. I want to go.”

Daniel kissed him on the forehead. “I love you, and I’m not going anywhere.”

## Chapter Eight

Brandon lay on the bed, silent, still clothed. Daniel's heart ached. He wished he could make Brandon's pain go away. Otis had hinted that he needed to reach the pain buried so deep in Brandon's heart. "You okay, baby?"

"I'm fine. I'm just...the timing is bad... I have to go..." Brandon rose; he quickly moved to the bathroom. Daniel heard the shower come on and heard Brandon hurriedly jump into the steaming enclosure. Within three minutes Brandon returned, showered and wearing a new set of clothes.

"Where are you headed?" Daniel asked.

Brandon leaned over and kissed him on the mouth. "Gotta go. Be back in a couple of hours," was his cryptic response.

Within moments Daniel heard Brandon's old truck leaving the driveway.

Daniel sat puzzled, considering how to react. He felt overwhelmed. Brandon was numb. He didn't know what to do. Daniel stood and looked out the window. How could he keep his promise to Otis when he didn't have a clue what Brandon needed? He sat down on the bedside. As he stared into the room for some sort of answer, he spotted Brandon's day planner. He shouldn't look in it—he knew it—but he had no idea where Brandon was headed. *Probably to work to take his mind off of*

things. But Daniel wanted to be there for his lover. He might *accidentally* end up where Brandon was working and take him out for a quick bite. He needed to talk to Brandon about the funeral arrangements. Otis had no family, so it was up to him and Brandon to make sure the old man received proper treatment in his final arrangements.

He wasn't sure how to make that happen, but he thought that it would be good for Brandon to have something to keep him occupied even if it were a funeral. Brandon would at least feel like he was taking care of Otis one last time. It seemed to drive Brandon, taking care of other people. He always wanted to look after everyone else; Brandon, however, needed to be taken care of far more than anyone. Daniel wiped a tear from his eye as he opened the day planner. He loved Brandon and wanted what was best for him.

The entry for today read "lunch w/David @ Striebecks" right next to that it said "Dan/NY."

Daniel thought carefully. He'd cancelled his morning flight to stay with Brandon. What did any of this mean? Who was David? Daniel refused to allow his imagination to run wild. Even in his concern for Brandon's mental state, he couldn't imagine that Brandon would cheat on him. Why would he? And this morning, of all mornings?

Daniel intended to find out what Brandon was doing though, cheating or

not. He'd begun to love Brandon so deeply that he couldn't see him hurt any more. If what he needed was someone else. He'd step aside.

Sullen, he drove to Striebecks, Brandon's favorite pizza place in a small community outside of Atlanta. It was a tiny little dive. *The kind of place two people who wanted to go unnoticed would go.* Sadness washed over Daniel.

Almost as soon as he opened the door of the restaurant, he saw Brandon in the rear of the building, sitting across from a tall, handsome man wearing a Marine Corps uniform. A major. Daniel sighed resolutely as he slunk defeated into a seat, safely out of view of the two men. He looked around the corner several times to see the two men talking very easily, as if they'd known each other for years. He saw the much taller man take Brandon's hand into his and offer him a handkerchief to dry his tears.

He'd told his lover about Otis, Daniel surmised. He saw Brandon break down sobbing. The tall man stood; he took Brandon into his arms, consoling him. Daniel's heart sank. He loved this uniformed man, trusted him. It was obvious. This man could reach a part of Brandon that Daniel could never reach. Daniel felt as though someone had taken a bayonet and run him through. He sat with his face buried in his hands. He smelled a familiar cologne as Brandon quickly walked past him and exited the door without noticing his presence. Daniel rose. He saw the major making a series of phone calls while still seated. He seemed visibly shaken,

growing exceedingly more agitated the more calls he made.

Daniel could finally take it no more. He rose to talk to the man. He walked over to the table. “We haven’t met but...”

The handsome man looked stunned for a moment. After an uncomfortable pause he stood. “Hi, Daniel, I’m David. I’ve heard so much about you. I wish you could say the same.”

Daniel was dumbfounded. *The unmitigated gall of this man! How dare he!* He obviously knew Brandon was involved yet he... Daniel’s mind raced wildly. *Now he makes a mockery of my concern!* His initial response to the exchange raged, violent and angry. He rethought the sanity of laying the man out right there and then, but considering he was a former Marine, he understood the consequences of that action. He had no intention, however, of allowing this prick to mock him anymore.

“Don’t pretend to know me, you son of a bitch! It’s obvious that Brandon loves you. I guess I have to accept that, but I don’t have to like you. And you most certainly are not going...” His words trailed off as he sat anxiously back into the chair previously vacated by his lover.

“I do know you, Daniel Francis Deveraux III. Your mother is Chloe, father is...well, Daniel Francis the second, career Marine. You have been a champion of gay rights in the military, an outspoken proponent of killing the ‘don’t ask don’t tell’ bullshit policy of the armed forces. You are a consultant for a number of



Fortune 500 companies, a liaison to the Pentagon..."

Daniel thundered, "If you know what's good for you, smart ass..." Daniel's heart beat wildly in his throat. His anger seethed internally. All sanity and reason flew wildly from his mind as he rose again with the full intention of following through on his previous plan of knocking this asshole unconscious.

David continued, "And I know that you love my brother."

Daniel stood frozen, shocked beyond words. He fell lifelessly back into the chair. "Brother?"

"Yes, he is. I know Brandon's never mentioned me, or probably any of his family. He has kept all of us at a distance from his life, for good reason. I wish he had trusted me before recently, but until he met you, I didn't even know where he was. He disappeared. You've been good for him. He reached out to me after he met you. I've agreed to allow him to decide what to do about that in his time. It seems, though, you have beaten him to it."

"I'm such an ignorant fool." Daniel buried his face in his hands again.

"I'm sure it looked kind of odd..." David continued with a rueful expression. "We'd planned this lunch long before this thing with Otis. I think you need to be there for my brother. Look, Brandon has been getting these letters. I think you should know. I think he should explain them, but he brought them to me."

Daniel saw the letters lying on the table, pictures paper clipped to them: a

disgusting array of photos that looked like they belonged on some filthy fetish web site. Daniel spotted a very young Brandon in the pictures with several young teenage boys sexually torturing and abusing him. Even at the young age in the pictures, Daniel couldn't mistake the handsome young man. He appeared to be twelve or thirteen. The photos were like a primer in torture.

More frightening than the disgusting acts visited on his lover, the thing Daniel noticed about the photos was the vacant, soulless stare of the young Brandon. The images, horrid and violent, struck a hauntingly familiar chord; especially one of the other faces in the photo. Daniel knew the face. He just couldn't put a name with the young man's face. Probably for the best. Daniel feared his reaction if he came into direct contact with someone who had hurt his lover that badly.

David, realizing that Daniel was horrified by the pictures, quickly shifted his stance. Daniel scooped up the pictures Brandon had brought his brother. "Where did these come from?" His voice grew hoarse as he struggled to process the array of photos.

"They came with the letters. I'm sorry, I didn't mean for you to see those. I wish I'd never seen them, but Brandon thought I needed to know what we were dealing with. I can't explain more. That's for Brandon to do. I would ask though, please don't pry into his past. That is a dangerous place for Brandon. It would

make things worse. Let him tell you in his time. Until then, these might help you understand who he is.”

David handed Daniel a tattered photo album. “Brandon gave me this. He said he wanted to end that part of his life forever. I think you have a right to know why he is so secretive. Just give me your word that you won’t ask anyone but Brandon about this stuff.”

“I swear.” Daniel rose, shaking David’s hand before walking silently toward the door. His mind raced, replaying the information. For now, his single motivation—getting home to Brandon. His lover needed someone to be there for him.

Picking up his cell phone, he called Brandon. “I’m coming home in a few minutes. Don’t leave; I want to make you dinner, okay?” Daniel sighed, relieved that Brandon had returned home. He was thankful his lover had agreed to have dinner with him at home.

Daniel tossed the photo album into the seat. *That’s going to have to wait for later, right now I have to get home and find a way to let him know how much he is loved.*

## Chapter Nine

The sky grew dark and foreboding as Daniel pulled into the driveway of the home the two men now shared. Running his hand across the cover, he pushed the photo album into his briefcase. Fumbling with the key, he heard the sound of Brandon whistling in the kitchen. He finally managed to open the door and tossed his keys on the ornate credenza in the front foyer. Daniel called through the house, “Baby, where are you?”

Brandon chirped happily from the kitchen. “I’m in here. I bought dinner. I can’t cook so I did the next best thing—found a good takeout.” He laughed nervously.

Daniel dropped his briefcase at the door of the kitchen, pausing for a moment, contemplating the photo album and the potential answers that lay within its yellowed pages. He shook off the thoughts as he walked behind Brandon, draping his arms around his waist suggestively. He kissed his lover on the neck. “That wasn’t necessary, baby. I intended to cook for *you*.”

“I wanted to make dinner special.” Brandon’s voice broke as he tried desperately to keep up the charade of cheerfulness.

Daniel squeezed his lover tightly from behind. “Baby, you’ve lost someone

you love. It's natural to be sad. You don't have to be happy for me. Give yourself permission to grieve."

Brandon turned, his eyes welled as he stared at the ground, avoiding Daniel's gaze. "I don't want to love you anymore."

Daniel stammered. "What?"

"Everybody I love dies. Otis. My moth... I just want you to be happy. I'm poison. Please, go find someone who deserves you."

Daniel pulled Brandon hard into him. "I'm not going anywhere. I don't have any plans on dying. I refuse to allow you to push me away."

He kissed his lover on the mouth. Deliberate and slow, he showered him with attention. He passionately kissed Brandon for several minutes. Daniel ran his fingers slowly through the wild locks of blond hair that framed Brandon's exquisite features, beginning to kiss his slow way down a tanned, slender neck.

"I do love you, Daniel." Brandon smiled, returning the favor, kissing his lover's neck.

Daniel cocked his head, cautioning the young man, "I don't want you to do this because you think I want it, baby. I want to make love to you. I want to let you know how special you are to me."

Brandon's expression grew intense, "You *really* love me, don't you?"

"More than the air I breathe." Daniel continued kissing Brandon's neck. He

fumbled with the buttons on the linen shirt he now recognized as his. He sniffed the shirt recognizing the D & G cologne he'd worn yesterday.

Brandon took the tail of the linen shirt in his hands. He sighed apologetically, "I just wanted you close to me. I'm sorry, I know..."

"Don't apologize. I love it when you wear my stuff, baby. It lets me know I'm on your mind." Daniel opened the shirt, kissing Brandon's lean muscular chest. He ran his tongue slowly over the velvet-smooth, tanned flesh that seemed to burn with passion for his touch. Daniel felt his lover's cock pressing hard against him through his tight denim. Deftly unbuttoning the fly, he released the white-hot erection burning in Brandon's jeans.

Brandon allowed his jeans to fall to the floor. His cock stood stiff between them. Daniel's breath grew shallow, his mind and body wildly aroused at the sight of the handsome man in the oversized white shirt that belonged to him. The linen shirt stood open, revealing the incredible body that begged for his attention.

Daniel grabbed Brandon, picking him up like an injured man, one hand under his knees and the other behind his back. He effortlessly carried his lover upstairs to their bedroom.

Brandon seemed to melt into the muscular grasp of his lover's arms. He laid his head on Daniel's shoulder as he was carefully placed on the large four-poster bed.

“I do love you, baby.” Daniel climbed onto the bed, stalking like a panther toward Brandon. The handsome man lay on his back, eyes closed and relaxed. Daniel moved his way slowly over the tanned, taut flesh that made him burn with desire. Daniel wanted to make wild passionate love to the handsome man, but tonight that wasn’t what his lover needed.

He touched Brandon for the better portion of an hour. Kissing, rubbing and exploring his body carefully and fully. Brandon tried numerous times to reciprocate, but Daniel cautioned him away. “This is for you, sweetheart. Enjoy yourself.”

Brandon relented, enjoying the intimacy of his lover’s touch. Daniel felt more powerful than he’d ever felt as a “Dom”. His lover moaned in pleasure with each touch he gave. He traced a path across Brandon’s chest, moving with slow deliberation from fingertips toward Brandon’s hips. His touch, feather soft, so light that he could see the tiny blond hairs on his lover’s legs seem to stand up as he ran his fingers down Brandon’s shapely thighs.

Daniel knelt down, kissing Brandon’s flat stomach. His lover’s body rose in response to the tender action. He ran his tongue along the ridges of Brandon’s tanned abdominal muscles, taking time to lap at his adorable belly button. Daniel found that to be one of Brandon’s most endearing quirks. He adored having his belly button kissed.

Brandon moaned again, this time almost inaudibly. "Yes!"

Daniel positioned himself, lying between Brandon's thighs. His hands explored Brandon's hips, stomach and chest. He took his lover's fully erect cock into his mouth. Daniel loved the taste of Brandon's flesh. He'd never before particularly enjoyed giving oral sex. His lover, though, had aroused desires in the Marine that he'd never knew existed. He enjoyed seeing Brandon surrender to his attention. He understood now why Brandon enjoyed being the more traditionally "submissive" partner, the power play of it. To Daniel it defied logic, but Brandon had opened new experiences in both love and sex for him.

Daniel looked up at Brandon, now intently watching as the Marine pleasured him. Daniel felt the warmth of his lover beneath him and the pleasure of his cock filling his mouth. His own cock pushed against the sheets below him. Daniel hated that he couldn't give as intense an oral experience to Brandon as his lover could provide, unsure that was even humanly possible.

As he dove hungrily onto the engorged penis, Daniel allowed his mind to go blank and simply enjoy the sensation of his lover's body. He felt Brandon's cock growing inside him. Its size challenged the Marine's less-than-expert efforts, but Daniel had no intention of allowing his inferior abilities to interfere with his enjoyment of this moment. The unfortunate noises, or his clumsiness, didn't discourage him. He wanted to swallow that magnificent cock one way or the



other.

Daniel dug his fingers deeply into Brandon's hips unconsciously as he forced the massive cock past his mouth, plunging it deep into his throat. He held it there as he dug even deeper into his lover's body. The scent of Brandon's body now permeated his senses. He couldn't believe the pleasure it gave him even as he struggled to keep the cock in his throat.

Brandon sat upright in the bed, grabbing Daniel by the hair. He dug his fingers deep into the dark curly locks. He screamed, "*Oh, God! Oh, Christ!*" Brandon's actions held his cock deep in his throat. He fought back the need to gag, relaxing, allowing the cock to slide effortlessly till his nose was buried in the fine blond hair above Brandon's swelling erection.

Daniel felt the warmth of his lover fill his body. The experience an intense, almost otherworldly feeling. He felt Brandon's hot seed slide effortlessly down his throat. His spirit felt as though it had left his body, watching the highly erotic scene from above.

Daniel heard a loud thump as Brandon fell limp against the headboard of the large bed. He spit out the shrinking cock as he saw his lover rubbing his head.

Daniel straddled Brandon's thighs and kissed his head. "I'm sorry, baby."

Brandon panted, breathlessly. "*Jesus*, Daniel. Who the hell taught you that? It sure wasn't me. *Fuck!*"

Daniel laughed. “I just kind of played it by ear, tried something new, that’s all.”

“Anytime you want to *try something new*, I’m game. That’s all I have to say!”  
Brandon smiled as he snuggled next to Daniel.

Daniel looked at the beautiful man who’d pulled the oversized shirt back around him in a loving way. “I love you, baby.” He watched as Brandon drifted happily into an exhausted sleep. Brandon’s fingers rubbed the fabric of Daniel’s favorite shirt in a comforting way. The tender action made the retired Marine smile.

It was going to be a difficult few days for them, and he was glad he’d been able to reach out to Brandon. He sighed, full of sadness as he thought about the conversation with David and the pictures he’d seen. It seemed another lifetime. How could someone hurt someone as sincere and loving as Brandon? He felt the anger rising in his body. He needed sleep. Daniel lay down in a feeble attempt to empty his mind. He needed to be there for Brandon. *That’s the most important thing.*

Daniel felt a faint kiss on his chest as he closed his eyes.

Brandon’s sleepy voice rustled the hairs on Daniel’s chest. “Love you too.”

## Chapter Ten

Daniel awoke abruptly around three a.m. He crept from the bed, leaving Brandon sleeping in the master bedroom. He couldn't get the horrid images out of his mind. David had swept the pictures away before he'd gotten a good look, but he'd seen enough. What were the letters about? Why were the pictures attached? What did any of this have to do with Otis?

The questions burned through Daniel's stomach. He ran his hands across the photo album David had given him. He wasn't even sure he could bear to look at it if it was as horrible as the pictures he'd seen on the table. He couldn't understand why Brandon's brother had given it to him in the first place.

A loud door slam and screeching tires roused Daniel from his deep thoughts.

He ran toward the front of the house to see a disheveled, half-naked Charles staggering toward the pool house. He opened the door and went outside to stop the man before he fell into the swimming pool. "What the fuck, Charles?"

Charles looked blearily at Daniel. "Do I have to be gay, Daniel? I don't want to be gay. No; I don't want to be anything." His words were slurred and nearly incomprehensible. He was obviously under the influence of some sort of drug, or alcohol, or both.

Daniel looked at the young man. His clothing was torn, his beautiful long blond hair was a tangled mess, and his eyes were glazed from intoxication. “How much have you had to drink?”

“Only two drinks. I’m not sure what happened, I had a drink and the room started to get dark, and the next thing I remember, he’s fucking me. I don’t think I’m very good at this sex thing, Daniel. I don’t want to try it anymore. It hurts too much.”

Daniel watched the man limp painfully toward the house. He knew instantly what had happened. He called to the young man. “Come in the kitchen; I’ll fix you some coffee, Charles. It wasn’t the alcohol that did this to you.”

“What do you mean?”

“We’ll talk about that later. For now, let’s get you cleaned up. Use the downstairs shower so you don’t wake up Brandon. He’s had a hard night. Otis died.”

“Fuck! And I’m out whoring around.” Charles’ loud shout rang with self-loathing. “I’m a worthless fuckup. Damn!”

“Shhh...” Daniel hushed the young man. “I wouldn’t call what happened to you whoring around. Just get cleaned up. We need to talk.”

“Nothing to talk about.” Charles disrobed sadly, walking toward the bathroom. “I’m just not meant to have sex, that’s all. It’s pretty obvious.”

Daniel poured himself a cup of the freshly brewed coffee. He sighed as he heard the shower water come on. "Poor kid." His heart sank.

He looked down at the photo album in front of him. He sighed, resolute as he opened the first page. A picture of a beautiful baby at the top of the page; beside it a picture of a beautiful woman holding the blond-haired baby. The woman obviously loved the child deeply. The connection, the love, seemed so intense it made Daniel shudder a bit. It was eerie. It seemed to him that the love leapt from the page. The picture haunted his thoughts. The caption under it simply read, "Me and Mom."

Daniel continued flipping the pages, he saw a blond young boy of maybe five or six. Brandon's good looks had come so early in life. *I'm not sure I've ever seen a cuter kid.* He laughed softly. He saw pictures of the young boy and another boy sitting under a tree reading. The caption read "Me and David before." *Odd name for a picture,* Daniel thought.

The next page had a photo of Brandon with his older brother, both dressed sharply in suits. Both boys both had tears streaming down their faces. Next to the boys was a large, strangely familiar man standing emotionless next to a casket. The caption underneath read simply:

"After."

Daniel began to weep. It was beginning to make sense to him. He knew

Brandon felt his mother's love, and unless he was badly mistaken, his father, at least from the photos, struck Daniel as a rather cold man. Daniel tried to compose himself, knowing that he needed to talk to Charles when he returned. Transfixed by the images, he couldn't stop looking at the photos.

He continued flipping through the pages. A consistent theme seemed to emerge. Brandon and his brother seemed inseparable, and his father rarely touched either one of the boys in the photos. Even in the funeral pictures he hadn't seen Brandon's father actually touching either one of his sons. It seemed almost too obvious.

Daniel found the last page in the book, the most curious of all. The pictures stopped at about the age of twelve except for one final entry. It was a photo of Brandon in full military uniform shaking hands with a congressman at what seemed like a graduation. Daniel looked carefully at the scene. He recognized the school: a prominent university, and a breeding ground for most of Washington's most notable politicians and military elite.

Daniel recognized the congressman as Walter Matthews, one of the loudest opponents of the "gay marriage" debate; an extreme right-wing operative. Daniel despised everything the man stood for. Why would someone like that be at Brandon's graduation? For that matter, why would someone as kind and as soft-hearted as Brandon want to attend what Daniel referred to as an "asshole factory"

like that?

A voice over his shoulder made Daniel jump with shock. “Did you guys meet there?” Charles asked.

Daniel tried to compose himself as he realized Charles had entered the room. He’d been so engrossed in thought he hadn’t sensed his presence. “No, I didn’t really even know he went there, till now.”

“Wow! Brandon’s dad is Senator Matthews?” Charles asked unbelieving.

Daniel looked at the caption under the picture. “Dad at graduation.”

“That’s not possible.” Daniel slammed the book shut. “Charles we need to talk.” Daniel made a quick shift in conversation.

“You want me to leave, right?”

“No, not at all. Tell me what happened, *exactly*,” Daniel ordered.

“Well it’s pretty much like I said. We went back to his place. He fixed us both drinks, I drank mine to loosen me up, and the next thing I know I feel a sharp pain. It feels like my ass is being ripped out. The guy was fucking me and I didn’t like it. It hurt like fuck and I don’t ever want to have sex again.” Charles’ words ran together, his expression frantic.

“For starters, sex shouldn’t hurt. Well sometimes a *little* pain makes it fun, but that’s another story. It should be because you want to get spanked or something like that, not because some asshole doesn’t give a shit if he rips you

open. Second, the reason you don't remember much is he most likely slipped you a *rufie*."

"What's that?" Charles asked innocently.

"Charles, I know you've heard of those before, the news calls it the date rape drug."

"Ohh, yeah, but that's only for girls."

"Charles, it works equally well on innocent young men like yourself. I feel awful that I didn't get you away from that jerk before he had a chance to rape you." Daniel frowned.

"I didn't get raped, Daniel. I wanted to have sex; I just didn't like it, that's all."

"When someone uses drugs to knock you out, forces his cock in you with no regard for how badly it hurts you, and leaves you half naked and limping in your front yard, in my book, that's rape. I'm sure you couldn't press charges or anything, because you did leave with the guy and it was obvious you wanted to have sex with him. But that doesn't give him permission to use your body without your consent. Do you understand, Charles?"

"I guess, but I still don't think I was cut out for sex. I can't handle the pain of it. I think I'd like it if it weren't for that. If you love Brandon why do you hurt him like that? I've heard him yell before. I don't understand."



Brandon, who Daniel had noticed standing in the doorway, replied, “I yell, sweetheart, because I love having sex with this handsome man. It’s not shouts of pain, Charles. I’m so sorry your first experience was so awful. Believe me, sex with someone who cares about you, and about your pleasure, is the most incredible thing in the world.”

Daniel nervously slid the photo album to the side as Brandon sat next to him. “Don’t give up on sex quite yet. I’m sure it will get better for you. You’re too handsome to be a monk.”

Brandon looked hard at the book as he rose and turned toward Charles. “Get some sleep, man. I’ll talk to you later okay?”

“Okay, B, and by the way, I’m really sorry about Otis.” Charles hugged Brandon and left for the pool house.

“Would you care to explain where in the *fuck*, you got that?” Brandon’s accusation rang loudly as he stood with his arms crossed, glaring at Daniel.

“David.”

“*What?*” Brandon screeched. “How do you... I don’t even want to know. You’ve been spying on me! *You sorry bastard!* How dare you. Find out anything interesting, asshole?”

Daniel felt horrible. He knew Brandon was right, he’d been spying and now he knew more about his lover than Brandon was ready for him to know. “I’m sorry.

I don't have an excuse. You're right."

Brandon continued on his tirade. "I'm going to kick David's ass after this fucking funeral, mark my words."

Daniel, now more confused than ever, asked, "What has any of this stuff got to do with the funeral? Second, we haven't even planned the funeral yet."

"You know so much, why don't you tell me? You wanted the truth, well here it is, asshole! My name is James Brandon Matthews. I died yesterday in a plane crash while on a Peace Corps mission in the Sudan. My father, the honorable Congressman Matthews, is going to give his 'selfless, caring' son the honorable burial he deserves. My brother is making the arrangements as we speak."

Daniel sat dumbfounded. "What the *fuck* are you talking about?"

"You are the one with all the answers," Brandon shouted, angrily picking up the photo album. It made a loud crash as he hurled it toward the trash can.

Daniel stood, crossed the room, and retrieved the album. "No! You won't throw this away, it's your past. You should cherish it, at least part of it." Daniel opened the book to the page with Brandon's mother's picture.

"You lousy fuck!" Brandon ran toward Daniel, punching him hard in the chest. He fell into the chair beside Daniel and began lovingly caressing the picture. "It's not right. You weren't supposed to know this shit. I was going to end it all and it's over. My damn smart ass brother had to ruin everything. He should learn

to mind his own business.”

“He was...he was doing what he felt was best for you.”

His lover drew in a labored breath. “Look, here’s the deal. I don’t want to repeat myself so just shut up and listen.” Brandon stood. His eyes, his posture that of a defeated man. “I’m being threatened by someone I went to school with, the military school. They did some shit to me there that wasn’t very cool. I don’t really want to talk about it, but one guy in particular got off on using me like a toilet, and a fuck hole. He always said he wasn’t a ‘queer’ like me ’cause if he had a girl he’d fuck her, but since I was all that was available, I’d have to do.”

Daniel’s mind raced back to the pictures; anger seethed in his soul.

“That sorry fuck showed you the pictures the asshole sent, didn’t he?”

“He tried to hide them, but I saw some of them, yes, Brandon.”

Brandon hid his face in his hands. “I’m so embarrassed, how will you ever look at me the same again?”

“Baby, you didn’t choose that shit. It was done to you.”

“In a way it was my fault. The reason he knew he could do it to me is that he caught me and another guy messing around and threatened to tell our fathers about us, so it was kind of my fault.”

Daniel reflected back on the images he’d seen. There was another damaged soul in those photos. He’d wondered who the other young boy had been.

Brandon seemed to sense the question, “His name was Frank. He killed himself,” Brandon said flatly.

“I’m so sorry.” Daniel looked painfully into his lover’s eyes. “But who’s threatening you?”

“It’s kind of complicated. I guess you know who my father is right? I mean you know about the kind of guy he is?”

“On that subject, Congressman Matthews is one of the most homophobic, right-wing nut jobs out there. How is it possible he has a gay son? It would seem that would be the sort of thing that would get out.”

“My dad sent me to military school to ‘make a man out of me.’ The week before I graduated, I had told Frank I wanted to move in with him when we graduated. His dad found out. He was forcing him to join the military. The day after graduation Frank put a gun in his mouth and...”

“I get it...” Daniel interrupted.

“Anyhow, my dad had no intention of my *interests*, getting out. He made that clear. After I lost Frank, I just decided it was safer for me just to disappear. That’s why I go by Winslow, not Matthews. It’s safer for my dad that way. I found out through the paper that my dad had told reporters I was in Africa with the Peace Corps. That was how it stayed, till I contacted David a while back.

“It was my idea to fake my death. That way my dad wouldn’t have to explain

about me. David just went along because he knew it was what I wanted.”

“That makes me want to hit someone!” Daniel’s head pounded; his heart raced. He angrily banged his fist on the table. “Your family would rather have you dead than gay? Doesn’t make you nuts, Brandon?”

“Not my brother,” Brandon said quickly. “He was completely opposed to the idea. He wants me to go public.”

“Is it your father blackmailing you?” Daniel pushed.

“No! My father has nothing to be gained by any of this. I’m a huge embarrassment to him. That’s why I disappeared. Dad has made this elaborate façade that is supposed to be my life. I’m a saint!” Brandon laughed nervously.

“Then, who?” Daniel demanded impatiently.

“One of the guys from the pictures... He’s a colonel now, and he’s running for office. He’s afraid I might go public with the story. It wouldn’t bode well. He’s a *family values*, candidate. He agrees with my father about how *the gays are destroying American family life*... It’s Colonel William Bellingham. He’s running for...”

“I know precisely who the fucking sadistic prick is, Brandon! I’ve met him before. I knew there was something disgusting about that bastard. He’s *too* clean. His record is perfect. He has *all* the right contacts. He was bred for office.”

“Exactly, and if it came out that he’d been part of what went on...well there would be questions. Basically, though, it would be way worse for my dad. But my

brother knows it won't end as long as Bellingham knows I'm out there. It was my idea though to fake my death. But now, I can sort of kill two birds with one stone."

"I'm more confused than ever. What does that mean?" Daniel asked, now scratching his head, puzzled.

"Otis deserves better than a pauper's funeral. My dad is going to make sure my funeral is appropriate to *honor my memory*. Now, there will be a body in the casket."

"This is a powder keg. You know this could blow up sky-high, Brandon. First, are you okay with planning *your* funeral? I mean, really, I'm not sure this is healthy at all. I think you need to talk to someone. This is really fucked up. I think you should talk to Joseph."

"Fuck you! I've told you a million times, I'm not going to some shrink to let him fuck with my head. *No! No! No!*" Brandon ranted.

"He's a very kind man. Second, he's a friend, and he'll just help you work out the emotions about this stuff." Daniel began dialing the phone.

Brandon grabbed his cell; he stormed out of the room, furious.

## Chapter Eleven

Daniel worked nervously on his hair attempting to get his mind off the events of the day. He heard the doorbell ring. Brandon yelled loudly at the closed bathroom door, “I think your *friend* is here.”

“Get it for me would you, sweetheart?” Daniel leaned out the bathroom door, hoping that Brandon would be forced to be polite to his friend.

“No, I won’t!” was the curt reply.

Daniel opened the door fully and hurried past the annoyed man with his arms folded. “Don’t be rude. Joseph is a sweet guy.”

Joseph opened the door slightly. “Is anyone home?”

Daniel walked toward the front door. He looked at the top of the stairs at Brandon, still angrily glaring at him, arms folded. He sighed deeply as he opened the mahogany door. “Sorry, I didn’t hear the bell.”

Brandon came down the stairs. Daniel hadn’t paid attention to his clothing when he’d passed him. Brandon was wearing an Italian suit with a thin linen shirt. It fit him sinfully. Daniel salivated as he looked at the handsome man. The suit looked as if it were made for him. The pants hugged his beautiful ass. He had no idea that Brandon could look that hot in anything. “Damn you look hot!” Daniel

exclaimed before he thought about what he'd said, or that Joe was listening.

Brandon walked over and kissed Daniel on the mouth. "Enjoy the view, baby, 'cause that's *all* you're getting out of me. I'm not talking to *him*!" Brandon's hateful tone was only surpassed by the look of disgust as he pointed to Daniel's guest without ever addressing the man directly.

"Joseph." The tall, well-dressed psychiatrist offered his name, pushing himself toward Brandon forcefully. He held his hand out at the annoyed young man before him.

Brandon looked at Joseph and extended his hand as his expression grew more exasperated than angry. "I'm sorry, don't mean to be rude. I just don't think a shrink is what I need right now."

"How about a friend?" Joseph smiled broadly.

"I guess I could fix you a drink at least. Daniel's an ass, but I can't be a bad host. My mother would turn..."

Daniel gasped a bit at the slip from his lover. He'd never heard Brandon really mention his mother before.

"I miss my mom, too, Brandon. She'd have kicked my ass for butting in where I wasn't wanted." Joseph laughed.

Daniel watched the two men exit toward the kitchen laughing nervously. "God, I hope this works," Daniel mumbled as he shut the door. He walked



solemnly to his study sipping some lukewarm coffee. Outside the window he saw Charles cleaning out the pool. He opened the door and called for the young man to join him inside.

“Yes, sir?” Charles said as he entered the room. “I should really get a shirt.” The young man nervously fidgeted as he entered the room.

Daniel couldn’t help but appreciate the handsome form in front of him. He had on a yellow bikini swimsuit that belonged to Brandon. “It’s not a problem. That’s more than Brandon wears to swim.” He laughed as he motioned to the chair beside him.

“Yeah, but I’m supposed to be at work.”

“Charles, be yourself, be comfortable. I want you to be happy here. As for me, having a handsome man in a bikini at my pool is not the worst problem to have.”

“If you don’t mind,” Charles said carefully.

Daniel sat down and patted the man playfully on the thigh. “I don’t mind.”

Charles shifted nervously as he fought to keep the growing bulge in his swimsuit in subjection. He pushed down hard on his crotch to conceal the growing erection in his lap.

“And while we’re on the subject, you don’t have to be ashamed of *that*, either. It’s natural. I’m not offended. Actually, I’m twelve years older than you. And

frankly the fact that I can still have that effect on a man, especially one as cute as you, is flattering.” Daniel winked at the young man. “Now, I want you to make me a promise. Charles, please don’t go out, at least don’t find yourself in a position to have sex, until you’ve had time to talk to Brandon. I know it’s a little weird with me. Brandon is your friend, he wouldn’t steer you wrong. I wouldn’t mislead you either, but I understand. It’s more uncomfortable talking with me than Brandon.”

“He *is* my friend; I guess it’s easier to be open with him. I would like to ask you a couple of questions though. Do you think Brandon gets mad at me ’cause he knows I think you are...well, he knows... You’re just a very good-looking guy, that’s all.”

“Brandon is cool with that. He knows I wouldn’t cheat on him. That’s all that needs to be said. But I will say, and please don’t take this as a come on, I just want you to know you can do better than that asshole the other night. If I were single, I’d definitely be on you like white on rice.” Daniel laughed, clearing his throat.

Charles’ face flushed red, “Thank you. Now *I’m* flattered. I better get back to work.” He rose and exited, returning to the task of cleaning the pool.

Daniel stood for an hour absently staring out the window, watching Charles clean the pool. Eventually he returned the cleaning tools to the shed then dove into the crystal clear water. His long blond hair draped across his back as he swam

effortlessly toward the shallow water, just outside the den window.

“Nice view.” Joseph chuckled as he entered the room.

“Where’s Brandon?” Daniel queried, quickly shifting the conversation.

“I gave him something to help him sleep. We had a pretty intense session. He really opened up; I think he really needed to talk. He basically purged. Of course, I can’t divulge anything we talked about. I can say that you need to allow him to deal with this in *his* time. Don’t push things anymore. He’s on the verge of a break, with everything that’s been thrown at him in the last few months; he truly can’t handle anything else. Make sure you keep your sex life alive too. The last thing he needs is to feel like you don’t want him. For Brandon, a lot of his safety is wrapped up in his ability to keep you *happy*. It may seem unnatural at the time, but it’s how he reaches out.”

“That shouldn’t be a problem, I can’t turn him down. That’s the one thing we’ve never had trouble with. I do have one question, though. Do you think this funeral thing is healthy?”

“Not at all. Having said that, it’s his decision to make. I’m going to give you a prescription. If things get out of hand, or Brandon seems to lose control, get that pill in him and call me immediately. This is a potentially life-changing event. You need to be aware.” Joseph joined Daniel at the window. “Nice view...”

“Go introduce yourself. That’s Charles. He’s a sweetheart.”

“I can see that,” Joseph added, smiling nervously.

“If I didn’t know better, Joe, I’d think you were smitten.”

“Don’t be ridiculous, but he is amazing to look at.” Joseph smiled as they watched the tall blond sunning himself at the pool’s edge. “I think I’ll say hi at least.”

Daniel smiled and smacked Joseph’s ass as he exited the house toward the pool. “Don’t be a stranger.” He watched the two men chatting uncomfortably as he closed the French doors in the study. He needed to check on Brandon.

Daniel climbed the stairs toward the master bedroom. Brandon lay sleeping in the large bed, naked. Daniel pulled the cover over the exhausted man’s muscular body. “God I love you.”

## Chapter Twelve

Brandon looked nervously at the computer readouts on the airport screen. “David’s supposed to call me with the flight number. I can’t buy a ticket because my name would...”

A loud ringing in his pocket caused him to jump. He answered David’s call. “I understand, gate nineteen? Okay.” He glanced at his lover. “We’ve got to go to gate nineteen. The plane is ready for us to board.”

“What about tickets?” Daniel asked, concerned.

“I’m sure that’s taken care of. My brother is very efficient. He wouldn’t forget anything. By the way, do I look *normal* enough?” Brandon asked honestly.

“Of course, you look like a CIA agent, actually.” Daniel laughed, pointing to the mirrored glasses and dark suit Brandon had chosen for the occasion. Brandon felt like he was dressed in someone else’s body. His hair was carefully combed and styled. He’d put a rinse on it to tone the color down to make himself more presentable. He’d nearly not recognized the brunette man in the mirror when he’d gotten dressed.

“I like the old Brandon better!” Daniel confessed, patting his lover on the backside playfully.

“*Stop it!*” Brandon ordered angrily. “We talked about this. *No funny business!*”

“Sorry,” Daniel pouted, childishly staring at the ground.

“It’s very risky for me, being there anyhow. If someone would recognize my face, it could go to hell quick,” Brandon added apologetically.

“I wouldn’t recognize you if I hadn’t slept with you last night, sexy,” Daniel whispered suggestively as the two men walked up to the desk at gate nineteen.

“I’m here to...” Brandon said cautiously.

From the entrance of the gate, two officers in full formal uniform interrupted Brandon’s inquiry. They walked toward him and Daniel and shook his hand. “Yes, sir, you and your guest will be flying nonstop to Washington. This is Lieutenant Fleming; he’ll be your liaison. He’ll see that you arrive and receive priority clearance.”

The two men boarded the large jet. “This is a military plane,” Daniel whispered to Brandon. “They never fly from a commercial airport.”

“You’d be amazed at what a properly motivated congressman can get done,” Brandon quipped.

“I’ll be with you throughout your stay in DC if that’s acceptable,” the lieutenant stated.

“Of course,” Brandon replied.

The officer led the two men to a large room at the rear of the plane. “The

conference room is completely private and designed for confidential meetings. If you gentlemen would care to use it to discuss business before you arrive, feel free. The room is soundproof and has a one-way door lock so you can feel confident that your conversations will stay private. Thank you again for your time, gentlemen. Mr. Winslow,” the Marine nodded toward Brandon. “Good day, First Lieutenant.” The tall Marine saluted Daniel as he left the room.

“Fuck, Brandon, he knows I’m military.” Daniel’s eyes grew wide as he shut the door on the conference room.

“Well you do outrank him. He assumes you’re going to pay your respects to a congressman’s son. He thinks you’re about to be appointed to a high level appointment, and I’m your assistant. David doesn’t leave much to chance, Daniel.”

Brandon took off the dark sunglasses and tossed them onto the table. He walked suggestively over toward Daniel. He put his hand on the handsome Marine’s crotch. “You bad, bad man. You’ve got a woody.” Brandon laughed.

Daniel whispered, “*Shhh...* You’re going to get us in trouble.”

“The walls are soundproof. I’ll prove it. *Ohhhhhhhh, stop it! No! Don’t do it! Please don’t kill me. Aaaaaaa...*” Brandon screamed like a madman.

Daniel rushed over, shoving Brandon against the huge walnut table in the center of the room. He put his hand over his mouth and whispered loudly, “Are you out of your fucking mind!”

Brandon removed his lover's fingers from his mouth, "Nobody came, now did they?"

"No, I guess not..." Daniel said, puzzled. "How'd you know that?"

"My dad's a congressman; it's not my first time on one of these things." Brandon smirked cavalierly.

"And here I thought I was the world traveler." Daniel grinned playfully.

"I want you, now!" Brandon growled.

"Now who's being bad?" Daniel said, kissing his lover quickly.

Brandon ran his hands down slowly to the Marine's pants. He deftly unzipped and unbuttoned the neatly pressed khakis. "I should have known. *Underwear!*" Brandon's tone dripped with sarcasm as he had Daniel carefully step out of his pants. "Can't wrinkle these, we have my funeral to go to."

Brandon quickly disrobed and neatly folded his suit on the sofa in the corner. He stood nude in front of Daniel, rubbing the Marine's crotch through the bikini underwear.

"New?" Brandon queried.

"If you mention your funeral again, all bets are off."

Brandon laughed as he pulled the bulging briefs off his impressive cock. Daniel pushed Brandon away from his swollen member. "I'm serious, Brandon. Knock that shit off."



“All right, all right, just give it back to me, please. Ready to join the mile high club?”

Daniel sighed, leaning back against the table. Brandon worked his way down the burning cock before him. He needed Daniel now. He frantically worked his way down the swollen cock as Daniel moaned loudly. “Please fuck me, baby. I need you in me now. Please, I’ll do anything if you’ll fuck me, *please!* ”

Daniel winked, picking his lover up with both arms. His massive biceps bulged as he sat his lover on the cool walnut table. He faced Brandon, kissing him softly and deeply.

Brandon felt the heat from Daniel’s crotch burning against him. “*Please, fuck me!*” He begged impatiently.

“Shhh,” Daniel whispered. “I don’t trust these walls.”

“Then fuck me!” Brandon gasped. Daniel pulled him tightly to him rubbing his cock, now lubricated with a thick layer of pre-cum oozing from the tip. He pushed his cock hard against the object of his lust. Brandon moaned loudly. He knew how to hasten this along. He breathed out deeply and relaxed his sphincter against the throbbing erection that threatened to violate him. He felt the burning member stretch his ass as Daniel drove full length into his lover.

“Christ!” Daniel moaned.

“Now who’s yelling?” Brandon laughed.

Daniel pushed hard against his lover; again and again he drove his cock into the depths of his body. Brandon adored the feeling of completion from having Daniel deep inside of him. He began to remember the first time they'd had sex. His cock sprang at the memory. He loved this man, and now, here, in one of his darkest hours, it seemed that Daniel truly loved him. His love had followed him to this horrid spectacle.

A lump grew in his throat as he felt the combination of his thoughts and the intensity of his coming orgasm. He felt loved. It was so unreal. He knew it before, but now, here, thirty-five thousand feet in the air, nothing in his mind could deny the fact. Daniel loved him. He bore down hard on his lover's cock and leaned down and pulled Daniel with all the force in his body into him. His nails dug deeply into his flesh.

Daniel fell against his chest. His heavy body heaved as he filled Brandon with an unbelievable amount of hot, sticky cum. Brandon felt his cock pulsing against Daniel's stomach. Daniel picked him up, still impaled on his cock, and probed his mouth with his tongue. Brandon squealed as he shot his seed all over the two men's bodies.

Daniel put his spent lover back down onto the sweaty surface of the table, which they'd made their own only minutes ago. He bent over as his shrinking cock slid from Brandon's ass. The abruptness of it made Brandon whine. Daniel bent

down and lapped up the still sticky cum from Brandon's chest. The intensity of the workout had made Brandon's exceptional body glisten. Each vein visible, every muscle clearly defined under the tanned smooth flesh. "Damn you're hot!" Daniel said breathlessly.

Brandon watched his lover bathing him with affection both literally and figuratively. "You love me, don't you?" Brandon tried to cover his emotional state.

"Christ, did I hurt you? I am so sorry, Brandon, why didn't you say so?"

"No. No, you didn't. It was beyond great." Brandon wiped his eyes. "You *do* love me, don't you?" His eyes searched Daniel's deeply.

"Of course I do, I've told you that a thousand times." Daniel stepped back with a confused look on his face.

Brandon grabbed him and hugged him. He squeezed him tightly. He didn't want to let him go. His nails dug hard into Daniel's back. He felt his body going limp as he melted into Daniel's strong grasp. "Thank you. You didn't have to come here, but you did. I love you, I love you, I love you."

"Baby, I know that, really I do." Daniel kissed Brandon softly on the forehead. "I'm glad you know that I love you too. I wish you knew it earlier...but I'm glad."

"It's not that, I'm just always on guard since Fr—" Brandon stopped short of saying his dead friend's name. He didn't want Daniel to think he had unresolved

feelings about Frank.

“I don’t care why you know it, I’m just glad you do. I also want you to allow yourself to admit you loved Frank. He was part of your life. It’s okay to miss him. It doesn’t mean you love me less. You need to cherish your memories with Frank. Honestly, I wouldn’t want to be with someone who stopped loving me just because I died.”

A large red light over the doors began to blink. “It’s time to land.”

Brandon rose quickly and kissed Daniel. “There’s a shower in here, we still have time.”

The two men showered quickly and re-dressed. Brandon carefully protected his hair. Quinton had spent quite a bit of time making him look like a boring Republican. He laughed internally.

They opened the door, to see the lieutenant seated in the front of the plane. “Gentlemen, please have a seat, we’re about to land.”

Daniel smiled at Brandon as he walked toward the seat. Brandon tried desperately to not give off “the vibe.” He had to be respectable. Not for his father. If it was just about him he’d blow his ass out of office in a second. But there was his brother. He’d never asked to have an intolerant ass as a father any more than Brandon had.

Then there was Daniel. Brandon didn’t know how any of this would affect

him. He hated that his lover had been dragged into this mess. He was so engrossed in the drama that he hadn't really even had time to grieve for Otis. After all, it was *his* funeral. It seemed surreal to Brandon. He wanted desperately to run away. That would be the easy thing to do.

Brandon felt Daniel's fingers digging into his arm as the plane touched down. He looked into his eyes; Daniel was white as a ghost. Brandon laughed, "Can I have my arm back now?"

Daniel's voice was hoarse. "Oh sorry, yeah sure."

"You're scared of flying, aren't you?"

"Don't make fun. I love flying, I *hate* landing. That's all."

Brandon laughed. "You're such a baby."

Daniel frowned at him. Brandon had momentarily forgotten their perceived roles. Brandon stared painfully at the floor. He had to get himself together before he revealed the true nature of the trip to the officer.

The lieutenant, apparently sensing the tension, added, "No matter how many times I fly, I get nervous on takeoff, myself."

Daniel smiled. "I guess I'm not alone then, huh?"

The three men stood as the plane came to a stop at Ronald Regan Airport in DC. Brandon stood at the open door, looking at the limousine parked on the tarmac. "David doesn't miss a thing," he whispered to Daniel.

The lieutenant led the two men to the waiting limousine. Daniel opened the door. Brandon smiled widely, lowering his mirrored glasses at seeing his uniformed brother seated in the back of the black stretch.

The lieutenant said, "I'll be up front, if you need me please feel free to buzz, there's soundproof glass between the front and the back. I won't hear you otherwise."

Brandon settled comfortably into the leather seat as he watched the tinted glass go up between the front and the back of the limo. As soon as he heard the glass seat fully into the gasket, he punched his brother in the arm. "How's my favorite asshole?"

"Man, you've gotten a lot stronger since the last time we fought!" David rubbed his arm from the blow. "Does he do that shit to you?" he asked Daniel.

"Only when I get out of line. I made the mistake of introducing him to the joys of boxing and weightlifting. Now he's pretty much stout enough to kick my ass," Daniel laughed. "I hope you're not upset with me about my making an ass of myself before, Major."

"David is fine. At least when we're alone. And, no, I told you anyone who is as good for my brother as you obviously are is good with me."

Brandon looked sadly at the floor. "Have they gotten Otis yet?"

"Yes, and you'll have time to say goodbye privately before the service. The

funeral home has been told this is a Secret Service matter, and they are bound by law to keep all information concerning this burial top secret. You'll be fine."

"The casket will be sealed after you leave and no one else will be allowed to open it. After the service he is set to be cremated. That is the only way to ensure that an exhumation isn't looming in the future," Brandon's brother continued.

"Are you sure you can handle this?" Daniel asked, holding Brandon's hand.

"I have to. It's just...the only way."

"I'm there for you, Brandon." Daniel kissed Brandon lovingly on the mouth. "Oh, I'm sorry," he said apologetically to David.

"Don't apologize. I'm glad to see that you love my brother. It's wonderful."

"We'll be good at the funeral. I promise," Brandon added kissing David on the cheek playfully.

"That would be good." David smiled.

## Chapter Thirteen

Daniel sat silently, watching Brandon holding the antique urn that held Otis' remains. He'd been silent since the service. During the funeral, Brandon sat emotionless as the numerous dignitaries recounted the depth of love his father had for his devoted son. Daniel had felt the bile rising in his throat from anger at the hypocrisy of the comments.

The plane made a loud noise as the engines reversed at the Hartsfield Atlanta Airport. They'd had the plane to themselves, but Brandon remained in a world of his own.

The concern Daniel had for his lover had caused him to completely forget the paralyzing fear of the plane's landing. He finally spoke up as the plane came to a stop. "Good to be home, huh?"

"Yeah," Brandon said, his expression blank. "I'm sorry you had to go through that."

Daniel leaned over, kissing Brandon full on the mouth, then set the urn onto the floor beside them. "I'm sick being of a robot. I love you. I don't want you to forget that, ever."

"Thanks, baby. Let's go home." Brandon picked up the urn and exited the



military jet.

They walked together, Brandon with his head lying on Daniel's broad shoulders. Daniel inhaled deeply, glad to have his lover back. He'd felt like he was with a stranger in DC. He'd been cold and distant. He walked to the valet counter to ask for his keys.

"Here you go, Mr. Deveraux. Ms. Bell had it delivered yesterday." The valet motioned to a large, black Lincoln Navigator.

"That's not ours. It's a big ugly truck, you can't miss it." Brandon laughed, dismissing the man with a wave.

"Actually, I've been meaning to talk to you about that, baby. Victoria had it sent over; she wanted to thank you for closing the deal on the museum. She sent you a note. I just didn't know how to bring it up. You didn't seem in the mood."

The cryptic note simply read, "Tks again. You made us *both* a lot of money this year. Pls accept my small gift as a token, kisses, V."

"That's mine? Where's my truck?" Brandon paced, his expression concerned.

"It went to a charity. Someone who needs a truck to earn a living will get it, and with it, a new beginning. You wouldn't want to interfere with someone's ability to take care of themselves, would you?" Daniel smiled, knowing that Brandon would be ashamed to ask for the truck back from someone who truly needed it.

“Shit!” was Brandon’s only response as he walked toward the passenger seat.

“No, big boy! This is your ride, you drive it.” Daniel smiled as he directed Brandon to the driver’s seat of the luxury SUV.

“I wonder if Charles is okay.” Brandon arranged his luggage into the back of the vehicle. Daniel smiled as Brandon carefully wiped his handprint off the tailgate after closing it.

“You deserve a car as beautiful as you.” Daniel beamed.

“It cost more than I’m worth. That much is for sure. You could buy and sell me for half what this thing cost. There must be some mistake.” Brandon frowned.

“Baby, Victoria has never given anybody anything. You earned it. Let me assure you. If she spent sixty thousand on this thing, I assure you she cleared ten times that amount off of you. That’s the truth. Second, there is not enough money in the world to replace you.” Daniel smiled as he slid his hand onto Brandon’s thigh.

“I am worried about Charles, though,” Brandon continued, ignoring Daniel’s reassurances.

“Yeah I’ve been wanting to talk to you about that.” Daniel looked at Brandon, measuring his words carefully. “I think maybe you should help Charles out, just to let him know there’s more to sex than pain.”

Brandon looked puzzled. Daniel had known this would probably come off

badly before he'd brought it up. He simply knew there was no way for Charles to realize that there could be tenderness, and that there could be love, if he continued to accept the advances of men who weren't worthy of his attention. Daniel knew Charles was attracted to Brandon, so it would be easier for Brandon to "show him the ropes," so to speak.

Daniel had no doubts Charles wasn't a threat to their relationship, since he knew Brandon needed an aggressive man to keep him happy. Charles, although exceedingly handsome, exemplified a bottom boy. And Brandon did possess a fine cock which could, from time to time, be a valuable asset.

Brandon finally found his voice and blurted out, "Do you want to fuck Charles? I guess it's okay if that's what you want." Brandon's eyes were wide with concern.

"No! Of course not. I love you, Brandon. That's why I'd never do that. I simply meant you can fuck, and I'm not threatened by Charles. If you were to show him that sex can be fun, he might be more willing to hold out for a real man." Daniel was quick to clarify what he meant.

"I'm not so sure that's a good idea. I mean, wouldn't that be like cheating on you?" Brandon looked hard at Daniel with an anxious stare as he pulled into the driveway.

"Not if I'm okay with it. If you'd prefer, I could be present, just so everybody

is cool with it. I just think it's sad that he's given up on happiness so young, that's all. Sex is a big part of happiness, Brandon; you know that."

Brandon smiled as he cupped his hand over Daniel's crotch. "Don't I know it. Charles is adorable. How do I know you won't want him instead of me, later on?" Brandon's voice grew deadly serious.

"The same way I know that *you* won't want Charles instead of me. We're made for each other, but that doesn't mean we can't help out a friend in need."

"Friends with benefits, huh?" Brandon laughed.

"Basically, yeah."

"One condition." Brandon raised his eyebrows. "I call all the shots. You know I *can't* be with Charles, he's too sweet."

"Thanks, asshole," Daniel said in an exaggerated tone.

"You know what I mean!"

"Yes, continue." Daniel smirked.

"I love you. I need someone strong like you. And Charles is a lot like me, so I need to know you just want me. I'm the one who stands to lose here. You see that, don't you?" Brandon's tone had deteriorated to a faint whisper.

Daniel looked at the young man's eyes. He momentarily wished he'd never brought it up. He'd thought that it would be empowering to Brandon. Daniel, of course, was intrigued at the possibility of seeing the two young men together

sexually. He hadn't considered the reality that Brandon would consider Charles a threat, since Daniel had no intentions of touching Charles.

"Forget I mentioned it, Brandon. I'm sorry, I just thought... I'm not sure what I thought, but I don't want you to worry, so forget I mentioned it."

"Charles is sad," Brandon said solemnly.

"Yes, and hurt," Daniel added.

"My terms, understood?"

"Absolutely."

Daniel watched as Brandon maneuvered the SUV through the streets of the Atlanta suburb. His mind raced wildly. *God, I hope this wasn't a big mistake.*

## Chapter Fourteen

As the sun rose slowly over the horizon, Daniel stood nude in front of the picture window in the large master suite. He stretched lazily as he watched a squirrel scamper from statue to statue around the borders of the pool area behind the house.

“Damn, you make it hard on a man. I have to go see that lawyer this morning or I’d ride that thing for a while!” Brandon giggled, grabbing Daniel’s morning erection.

“Then don’t tease me, you terrible man!” Daniel snapped, playing.

Brandon sauntered toward the bathroom, turning on the multiple shower heads in the walk-in shower. Daniel watched as his lover stretched slowly, allowing him to take in the amazing symmetry of his muscular form. *Damn, I’m horny!* His thoughts ranged through the sinfully erotic this morning.

Daniel stood watching as his lover luxuriously lathered his body part by part with the fragrant bottle of A & F body wash. Daniel loved the smell on him. Daniel began to massage his balls through his boxers as he saw Brandon turn, working his fingers through his wild blond hair. The lathering suds fell slowly down his muscular back and trickled down the shapely, tanned ass that Daniel

loved so much.

He leaned against the sink. *Fuck it!* Lust was far stronger than his need for decorum. He grabbed some lotion from the counter and slowly he massaged his throbbing member. Brandon continued working his fingers across his back. He lathered his body slowly, eventually running his hand down his front, still facing away from Daniel. He turned slightly so that Daniel caught a glimpse of Brandon's full-on erection. He saw his lover slowly rubbing it and running his other hand carefully across his chest. Daniel adored seeing him nude, but he'd never seen Brandon pleasure himself. It was amazing, and erotic as hell. His posture was so intense, so deliberate. His body seemed to be completely on point.

Brandon's muscles visibly seemed to tighten, a quiet moan escaping his pouting lips. The scene was more than Daniel could take—the sight of Brandon's cock pulsing in his grasp, along with the sounds of pleasure coming from the shower, sent Daniel over the top. He feverishly pumped his cock as he spilled a surprisingly large load of his seed onto his legs and the counter. He watched as Brandon took his fingers and lapped up his own cum from the end of his fading erection.

Daniel was shocked when Brandon let out a throaty comment, his voice dripping with sexual tension. “Was it good for you too?”

“You little bitch! You knew I was watching, didn't you?”

Brandon turned off the water. Turning, he stepped out of the shower, drying himself. He kissed his lover platonically on the forehead. "I'll never tell!" His upper lip curled in the way it did when he was exceedingly satisfied with himself. Brandon sauntered toward the closet, whistling a happy tune.

"I better get a quick shower myself." Daniel laughed.

"I'd say so," Brandon replied as he returned to the room, now partially clothed.

As they walked toward the front door of the large house they shared, Brandon paused to pat the ornate urn containing Otis' remains after his cremation. "I'm not sure why this was so important to you, old guy, but I guess I'll be good to my word."

Daniel smiled as they strolled toward the new SUV. Their destination was the downtown headquarters of one of the largest legal and investment firms in Atlanta.

"How do you think Otis could afford such a big-time lawyer?" Brandon scratched his head with a puzzled gaze as they headed toward town.

"Well, from what I could gather, Otis set up this trust thing over forty years ago. He hadn't had any contact with them until very recently when he'd contacted the firm again. He said he had talked to them about a year ago to make you the beneficiary of whatever money he had from the service, as well as some sort of



settlement concerning the death of his wife.” Daniel offered all the old man had told him.

“He should have left it to a church or something. Not me.” Brandon fidgeted in his seat nervously as he bit his bottom lip in a worried way.

“I’m sure he took care of whatever his religious convictions were before he took care of you.”

The two men rode the rest of the way in silence. Daniel couldn’t help wonder though why such a big firm would handle what would probably amount to less than a thousand-dollar estate? The military didn’t generally allow but a small single payout upon retirement. Daniel assumed any benefits monthly he’d received had been spent for his daily living expenses. Even with interest, over forty years it couldn’t be much. In addition there would obviously be administration fees for the estate. Daniel surmised from the lofty building those fees would more than likely dwarf any inheritance Brandon would receive.

Brandon negotiated the large SUV to the front of the building. As they exited the vehicle, a valet took his keys, handing him a small ticket. Daniel passed the young Latino man a twenty-dollar tip. “You might want to consider tipping the valet now, considering for the first time in years your car is worth more than the tip.” Daniel couldn’t resist the chance to tease.

Oblivious to the comment, Brandon pressed on toward the offices of

Wilhelm, Schmidt, and Bradley. Daniel ran to catch up. “Hang on, I’m coming.”

“Sorry.” Brandon held open the door to the impressive office.

“We’re here about the Jackson estate,” Brandon offered to the young man behind the desk.

“I’ll tell Mr. Wilhelm you’re here.” The handsome secretary had deep red hair.

“I wonder if what they say about redheads is true,” Brandon whispered to Daniel.

Daniel laughed quietly. “Maybe, you should ask.”

“Mr. Wilhelm will see you now.” Daniel had barely sat down when the young assistant made the announcement.

“That was quick,” Brandon remarked, surprised.

“Wasn’t it?”

“Gentlemen.” An aging, well-dressed lawyer in what Daniel surmised was a thousand-dollar suit held out his hand. “Name’s Wilhelm. You are...”

“Brandon.” Daniel grinned at his lover’s defiant answer.

“Yes.” The lawyer shuffled some papers absently as he returned to his desk.

“Let me get right to the point here.”

Daniel thought, *Yeah, this is going to be short and sweet! This guy charges five hundred dollars an hour, I’m sure he has better things to do than to deal with us.*

The lawyer continued, “Mr. Jackson, as I’m sure you know, was a veteran. He left the service in...let me see... 1972. Since that time, he had his pension from the Marines deposited in a trust account for his wife... Martha. Upon his wife’s death in 1973 until recently there was no stated beneficiary, as Mr. Jackson had no heirs. My firm, however, did continue receiving monthly installments from the Marines for the last thirty-some-odd years. Mr. Jackson made it abundantly clear he did not intend to withdraw this money, so we continued to invest in various funds, etc.”

Daniel could tell that all the legal discussion left Brandon in a blur. He’d checked out and stood, emotionless, looking out the window as the lawyer continued to rattle on facts.

“Listen, Mr. Whatever Your Name Is...” Brandon spun around to face the lawyer, “I loved that old man, and I’m getting pissed off right about now! You obviously didn’t know him. Why don’t we cut to the chase? You can get your sizable retainer out of whatever few dollars that poor man had to leave and I’ll get out of here before I end up in jail for punching your arrogant ass in the mouth. What do you say?”

Daniel panicked. He stood up quickly, grabbing Brandon around the waist. “Baby, don’t take out your grief on this man. He’s just doing his job.”

“I’ll make it brief, sir,” the lawyer continued as if Brandon hadn’t exploded.

“Basically there is a significant tax bill due as well as administration costs. Those expenses will have to be deducted from the inheritance, of course.”

“*But, of course!*” Brandon’s tone dripped with sarcasm. He glared angrily at the lawyer. “We better get this moving, Daniel, or I’m going to owe this asshole money for being in his office.”

The lawyer paused, Daniel surmised to allow Brandon to calm down a bit, before he continued. “However the net would be roughly two point four million dollars.”

“I owe you two million dollars?” Brandon screeched.

“No, baby, I think Otis left you two million dollars.” Daniel fell, flabbergasted, into a nearby chair. “How is that possible?”

“Actually, sir, it’s a combination of things. Mr. Jackson’s pension was never touched, so it was invested in stocks and Treasury bills. We have an excellent history of taking care of our investors.” The lawyer gleamed with pride. “In addition, Mr. Jackson’s wife was killed by a drunken driver. Her estate received a one million dollar settlement as a result of the incident. Mr. Jackson was in no state at that point to handle a protracted trial, so we accepted. He declined accepting any of the money, however, saying I believe...” the lawyer continued while shuffling papers.

“... It was blood money.” Brandon filled in the blank.

“*That’s* what he meant.” Daniel remembered the cryptic reference the night Otis died.

“Yes. The funds are currently in a portfolio, I simply need your signature to transfer ownership and authorize the payouts of the necessary taxes and fees.”

Brandon leaned over the desk, absently signing all the forms in front of him. “Why me?”

The lawyer spread his hands. “About a year and a half ago, Mr. Jackson contacted us in an effort to make these arrangements. The information that he gave us was that you were his son. We didn’t really question it, frankly, since he had the right to leave his estate to whomever he chose. It would seem that you were who he chose, young man. I should also mention that a stipend is set aside to take care of his wife’s grave, as well as a single payout to the church of your choosing.”

“Of course.” Brandon stammered. “I’ll get back to you on that.” Suddenly, Brandon turned on his heels, “Actually, Father O’Brien, at Our Lady of Sorrows. He’s a good man. He has the soup kitchen that used to feed Otis. Actually take whatever he set aside, and make it yearly. Okay?”

“Yes sir, Mr. Winslow.”

Brandon frowned. Daniel knew the last name felt foreign to Brandon. It hurt him badly to hear it as well. “Is that all, Mr. Wilhelm?” Daniel rose to leave.

“It’s been a pleasure meeting you.” The lawyer extended his hand to Brandon.

“Thank you, sir.” Brandon cocked his head slightly as he quietly left the room ahead of the two men.

“I don’t think it’s sunk in that he’s now a wealthy man,” the lawyer whispered to Daniel.

“He’s been through a lot. It’ll take a while for all this to settle in. Thank you, again.” Daniel sighed, closing the door behind him.

“Do you think Otis knew there was that much money there?” Brandon’s blankness eased only a bit as they headed toward the parking lot.

“My best guess is, yeah. He just didn’t want it. He wanted someone he loved to have it. Someone who didn’t have the emotional connections to where it came from, I suppose.” Daniel smiled, pulling Brandon closer into him.

“That sneaky old fucker!” Brandon laughed.

## Chapter Fifteen

The drive home from the lawyer's office had for the most part been a silent one. Brandon had a million questions running through his mind but didn't voice any of them. None of it made sense. Why would Otis leave that much money to him? What should he do with the money? As he negotiated the large vehicle into the driveway, parking it in front of the house, he simply brushed all thoughts of the inheritance from his mind.

As they climbed out of the Navigator, Daniel smiled when he caught Brandon carefully picking small bits of leaves that had fallen into the floorboard of the new SUV. Brandon felt cross and cursed. "Fucking leaves!" He frowned, carefully closing the door on the large vehicle. He didn't think he should be driving such a nice vehicle, but it seemed somehow wrong not to take care of it, since he had it.

"I think Vickie did well," Daniel smiled smugly.

"I *still* think it's a mistake." Brandon chuckled his keys toward Daniel as he passed him, quickly heading for the door.

"Not a chance. It fits you."

Brandon heard subtle noises from the darkened porch of the large house.

Daniel looked at him, putting his arm in front of him. The Marine in him went on point. "Hang on, Brandon," he whispered and dove quickly into the darkness, grabbing a slumped figure by the throat. "*Thought you'd just hang out and rob someone, you son of a bitch, huh!*" Daniel shouted at the figure that lurked in the darkened corner of the entrance of the house.

Brandon quickly ran toward the front door. He quickly unlocked it. Reaching inside, he turned on the light.

Daniel quickly dropped the figure onto the wooden floor as soon as the light illuminated the porch.

"What the *fuck?*" Daniel barked sharply at the man, who lay coughing from the near choking.

Charles croaked out a raspy response, "I'm so sorry, I just forgot my keys." His eyes were red and swollen. Brandon sat down beside the crumpled man. Charles began to cry as he put his head in Brandon's lap.

"Did you go out again?" Daniel's remark was more an accusation than a question.

"I know what you said," Charles relented.

"Then why did..." Daniel continued, his tone growing more agitated.

"*In the house!*" Brandon ordered, looking crossly at his lover. "Charles, what happened?"



“It doesn’t matter. Same shit different day,” Charles lamented.

“Did you get hurt again?”

“No, I couldn’t go through with it. He made me suck him off and left me to walk home. I give up.” Charles sighed.

“Can I ask you a question?” Brandon smiled, rubbing Charles’ hair through his fingers. “Would you be offended if we offered to help you out?”

“Of course not, you guys are my friends, but how do you mean?” Charles looked up at Brandon, puzzled.

Brandon continued rubbing his fingers through the young man’s hair. “Sit up for a sec.”

Charles sat up, still watching Brandon’s face carefully.

“I need for you to understand something, Charles. I love Daniel. Nothing will ever change that. He’s my partner. That’s a fact. You are my friend, but he is my love. Does that make sense to you?”

“Well, duh,” Charles said, laughing.

Brandon put his hand carefully into Charles’ lap. “I know you are turned on by Daniel’s body.” Charles’ erection pushed against the fabric of his jeans.

“I’m sorry,” Charles looked sadly at the ground.

“Enough of that! Just understand I want you to know what it feels like to be with someone who cares about your pleasure. But you need to know I’m not going

to fall in love with you. Daniel is in love with me. Those are the facts.” Brandon watched Charles for a reaction.

“I’m terribly confused.” Charles scratched his head.

Brandon grabbed Charles, kissing him deeply. His tongue probed the young man’s mouth. He felt the handsome man melt under his touch. Charles’ cock pulsed against his grasp. Brandon slowly unbuttoned the denim shirt that covered the bronze flesh, now heaving with anticipation. Brandon continued kissing the young man for what seemed like an eternity. Charles moaned involuntarily at the deep kisses. Brandon’s hands probed the slim muscular chest. His fingers lightly teased the tiny, bronzed nipples, standing rigid now at his touch. Brandon felt a hand slide across his back as Daniel sat down next to the two men. Daniel handed him a glass of wine.

“*Fuck!* I’m so sorry! I never should have done that!” Charles screeched.

“Charles, calm down, it’s okay. *I* kissed *you*. Daniel knew I was going to do that,” Brandon reassured the visibly shaken man. Charles was terrified. Brandon could feel his body violently shaking against him.

Daniel leaned over, kissing Brandon very slowly and passionately. “Come on upstairs when you boys are done talking, okay?”

Brandon smiled as Daniel disappeared inside. He savored the sight of the handsome Marine, naked except for a robe draped precariously across his

shoulders, his cock visible. With each step the robe moved suggestively, brushing against the swelling member.

Charles stood, turning to quickly leave the porch.

“Don’t go.” Brandon pulled Charles back down onto the porch. “I want to show you how to enjoy your body. That’s all.”

He pushed Charles backward, unzipping his jeans. Brandon took the young man’s swollen cock into his mouth. He swallowed it with one quick move. Charles’ eyes snapped wide open. Brandon knew his pupil would not be able to withstand much attention without having an orgasm, so he felt it best to get a quick one out of the way. He listened as Charles moaned, “No, no, no, I can’t!” Brandon grinned knowingly as he continued swallowing the slender dick. Sure he could.

Brandon savored the eagerness of Charles’ body. He felt his body react profoundly with each movement. Brandon put his hands squarely under the young man’s sublime ass. Brandon adored Charles’ ass. He had the quintessential ‘bubble butt.’

Charles moaned and began pushing his hips forward into Brandon’s hungry mouth. Brandon knew his lover couldn’t hold out much longer, his lust now overtaking any reservations he’d had earlier. Brandon moistened his ring finger and inserted it deeply into the eager pupil’s tight hole. Charles shook with excitement.

Brandon pushed farther into his body. His fingers probing the excited man's prostate. He knew that would be all he could take.

Without a word, Charles emptied his seed deep into Brandon's throat.

Brandon smiled as he licked his lips, finishing off the eager man's shrinking cock. Charles had tears streaming down his cheeks, yet he was smiling.

"Good?" Brandon asked.

"I can't move," Charles said, falling lifeless onto the darkened porch.

"That means I did my job. Meet me upstairs, okay?"

"Are you sure?" Charles asked cautiously.

"Daniel and I both are."

Brandon stood, adjusted himself, and walked inside. He was confident he'd made a lasting impression on the inexperienced young man. He hoped he'd been clear enough about the inadvisability of assigning emotion to what was simply an expression of friendship. He wanted his friend to appreciate what sex and, at some point, love could be like. Brandon's mind was still a little perplexed that Daniel had perpetrated this coupling, but now it seemed the time was at hand.

Brandon quickly scaled the stairs, eager to enjoy the view he'd gotten earlier when his lover had enticed him so provocatively on the porch. Daniel lay naked in the large four-poster bed. His hard, muscular body seemed to dominate the space. Brandon closed his eyes, taking in the scene in his mind. He adored the sight of his

lover nude, relaxed in that bed. It made his cock jump to attention for the first time tonight. He'd been so interested in Charles' enjoyment he hadn't thought much about his own. He walked into the room, now lit simply by the numerous candles lending their golden glow around the bed.

The soft light flickering made Daniel's body otherworldly. The shadows deepened in the indentions of his perfectly chiseled abdomen. His amazing chest rose and fell in anticipation of Brandon's arrival. Brandon dropped all his clothing at the door. He stood nude in the candlelight. "Do I please you?"

"Like no other man on earth." Daniel sighed deeply as he motioned him toward the large mahogany bed. Brandon slowly crept onto the bed. He slowly and gently began to touch Daniel's body. His fingers carefully traced each inch of his carefully sculpted muscles. Brandon wanted to impale himself on the white-hot rod pressing against his thigh as he kissed his lover slowly and passionately.

"Are you sure about this?" Brandon couldn't help but worry about the implications of the sexual experiment.

"As long as you are."

"No one could ever take your place," Brandon confessed.

"Nor could anyone take yours," Daniel reassured him.

Brandon sat across the substantial thighs of his lover, causing the massive erection to push up hard between his ass cheeks. He felt the heat searing his flesh.

He leaned over, kneading Daniel's impressive chest. His tongue encircled his nipples as he carefully nibbled on the tiny tips. Brandon breathed deeply the manly scent of his lover. The scent was intoxicating. He felt complete.

Brandon could hear shallow breaths coming from the darkened doorway to the bedroom. He leaned over, whispering into Daniel's ear, "We have company."

"I know, sweetheart. It's your game. You make the rules." Daniel smiled wickedly at him.

"Come in, Charles. Don't lurk."

The young man walked cautiously into the room, pausing at the side of the bed where the two men lay entwined in a passionate embrace. Brandon sat up still straddling his lover, who lay across the bed with his hands folded behind his head very casually. Brandon saw Charles' eyes fixed on Daniel's cock, pressed hard against his ass. Brandon pulled the young man into him and kissed him deeply. He felt Daniel's cock push harder against his ass. Daniel was enjoying the view. Brandon smiled wickedly at his lover.

He pulled Charles hard into him, his fingers digging deeply into the bronzed flesh of his toned ass. His tongue probed Charles' waiting mouth. He heard his friend moan with exquisite pleasure. "Like that?" he asked suggestively.

"Fuck, yeah," was the eager response.

"I know something else you like. I saw you eyeing Daniel's cock. Charles'

eyes immediately went to the floor. Brandon pulled his face up and kissed him again. “You may taste it. Daniel only fucks me. But you may taste his cock. You might enjoy the neighborhood, anyhow.” Brandon laughed as he pointed at the massive cock now making what felt like a permanent indentation in the flesh of his ass. Daniel was as erect as he’d ever felt him. Brandon leaned over and kissed Daniel passionately. He went to work nibbling on his nipples as he felt Charles cautiously climb onto the bed.

He felt Charles’ warm body pressed against his, also astride Daniel’s muscular thighs. Charles’ cock now pressed hard next to Daniel’s cock. He smiled; he was obviously in heaven. Charles kissed the back of Brandon’s neck, working his way slowly down his shoulder to his arm. He felt the warmth of his body leave as Charles worked his way slowly, carefully, down his back, bathing him with kisses. Charles’ tongue, warm and intense, made Brandon harder than ever. Brandon kissed his lover’s neck, working his way down Daniel’s arms. He ran his tongue deep into the pit of his arm. The warmth of his body, combined with the scent, made Brandon’s cock ooze with the anticipation of things to come.

Brandon let out an involuntary moan when in an unexpected move Charles thrust his tongue deeply into his ass. Brandon began grinding against Daniel’s stomach. He could feel the warmth of his cock against his hole, as well as the moisture of Charles’ tongue probing him deeply. He wished Daniel would drive his

cock deep home. He knew it was selfish. But fuck kindness; he wanted a good old-fashioned fucking right now! The excitement of the two men he was with was nearly more than he could handle. Daniel grabbed his ass and pulled it wide open now for Charles to bathe with attention.

Brandon knew his ability to restrain himself, with the level of arousal he felt, was nearly done. He needed to rein in the situation a bit. He pulled away from the two men for a moment and sat down beside Charles. “Daniel, baby, please sit up a bit.” Daniel dutifully pulled several pillows up at the headboard. He grinned slyly as he sat up in the bed.

Brandon smiled. “Charles, go on, I know you want to taste it.” Charles looked like a deer caught in headlights. Brandon bent down and swallowed Daniel’s cock with one swift movement. He made several passes and sat back up licking his lips. “Phenomenal. Now, your turn, big guy.”

Charles looked terrified. His eyes darted toward Brandon then back at Daniel. Brandon gave a knowing look to Daniel.

Daniel smirked, “I don’t think that was a request, Charles. In this game Brandon’s calling the shots, so if you want to play, I suggest you get to it.”

Charles smiled like a child on Christmas morning. “Yes, sir!”

Brandon watched him slowly work as much of the massive cock as he could handle into his mouth. He obviously struggled, but it was intoxicating watching



the young man work so frantically to please Daniel. It was also interesting to Brandon that despite the fact an amazingly handsome blond was giving him a blow job, Daniel had yet to take his eyes off *Brandon*.

Finally Daniel pulled Brandon into him, kissing him deeply. “Give him something to remember.”

Brandon moved behind the young man feverishly trying to devour the oversized member in his mouth. He leaned over and draped his body over Charles’ back. His cock rested firmly against his tight hole. Brandon whispered, “Do you want me?”

Without letting up he heard Charles mumble, “Uhhmm hummmm. Please...”

Daniel’s eyes remained fixed on Brandon. He leaned in, kissing him again.

Brandon took a bottle of Astroglide and generously rubbed Charles’ ass, back, his thighs, and legs, massaging and working his fingers deeply into the tanned flesh. He moved a single finger inside the tight sphincter. He felt Charles tighten up against his advances. He leaned in, kissing his back, as he worked his finger slowly around his hole.

Daniel whispered to the man happily lost in lust on his cock, “Charles, just relax. Let your mind and body go. Think about letting Brandon in. Think about how badly you want his cock in you. Just let it happen.”

Brandon almost instantly felt Charles loosen up as he took his finger and massaged the young man's prostate. Charles fell forward, causing him to swallow Daniel's cock to the hilt. Brandon heard him gag a bit but continue to swallow. "Good boy." Brandon prodded.

He worked two more fingers into Charles' ass. The pleasure of the move appeared too intense for Charles to continue working on Daniel's cock. He spit it out with a loud noise, moaning. Daniel smiled at Brandon.

Brandon reminded Charles, "You're not done with his cock yet, now are you?"

"No, sir." Charles grinned as he dove in again hungrily.

Brandon steadied himself behind the young man. He had three fingers now deeply inside Charles' body. "Just enjoy it, okay?" He slid his fingers out, and with one quick movement pushed the head of his cock into the tight hole. He felt the young man tense up tightly against him. Brandon reminded him, "Just relax, baby; you'll be glad you did." He felt the man's body relent, nearly swallowing his cock. He fell forward, the wide shaft of his cock now deep inside the handsome young man's eager body.

"*Oh, fuck yes!*" Charles moaned, taking a momentary break from his happy pursuit of cock sucking.

Brandon, now confident that he was relaxed enough to take his entire cock,

drove hard into the man's tight ass. He hadn't fucked much in his life, but his cock responded to this particular adventure. "You like that, boy?" Brandon asked coyly.

The moans of pleasure from Charles let Brandon know he was enraptured.

Brandon drove in deeper, unable to restrain himself.

Daniel growled to Brandon, "Fuck his tight little ass, boy! In a while I'm gonna fuck yours. Hell, in a while, we both might fuck your ass. What do you think of that, Charles?"

Brandon, upon hearing the forceful words of his lover, lost control. He pumped Charles full of his cream. He felt Charles pushing back against him, driving him deeper into his ass. "This boy is getting the hang of getting fucked." Brandon laughed.

He fell hard against Charles' body. Charles lay down; his face was pressed against Daniel's abdominal muscles. Daniel's cock pressed against Charles' chest. Daniel leaned in, kissing Brandon, who lay exhausted on Charles' back.

"Don't give up on me yet, Brandon. I still want that ass," Daniel reminded him.

"I want that cock." Brandon smiled.

Daniel looked at Charles. "Lie down on your back."

Brandon stuck his lip out in an exaggerated pout.

"Baby, I have an idea... I think you'll be glad..." Daniel smiled.

“Do as you’re told, boy!” Brandon ordered Charles.

Charles happily lay down, cock standing straight up between his legs.

Brandon looked at Daniel. “Now what, big man?”

“Well, you have a rock-hard cock in front of you. What would you normally do?”

Brandon smiled, applying a liberal glob of lube on the throbbing member. He sat, leaning over, and straddled Charles’ body. He looked at the young man, wide eyed and shaking. Brandon took the slender, hard cock in his hand and guided it expertly into his ass. He felt Charles’ body begin to shake with excitement. Brandon lowered himself fully onto the rock-hard cock. He settled in, resting his weight heavily against Charles. He didn’t move. He could sense that he couldn’t move a lot or Charles would come far too soon. The excitement of being fucked, along with the pleasure of sucking Daniel’s cock, had taken him to near orgasm. Brandon enjoyed the feeling of the handsome man filling his ass.

Brandon felt Daniel’s strong hands rubbing his back, massaging his neck. Daniel kissed Brandon’s neck. He felt his rock-hard cock pressing hard against his back. Daniel whispered into his ear, “You up for something intense?”

“Anything you want,” Brandon’s mind raced at the possibilities.

“If I hurt you, stop me,” Daniel cautioned.

Brandon breathed deeply wondering what his lover had in store.

Daniel moved slowly down his body. Brandon felt Daniel's mammoth member pressed against his already filled hole. Brandon gasped and breathed in deeply. "Relax," was Daniel's simple command.

Brandon felt his lover's much larger cock press hard against his ass. He fell forward onto Charles' heaving chest. His ass felt as though it were on fire. Charles' slender, long cock was pulsing deeply inside of him. He cautioned Charles, "Don't move."

Daniel began slowly guiding his cock into Brandon's already stretched hole. He moaned as Daniel drove deeper against Charles' cock, resting deep inside his ass. Daniel whispered into Brandon's ear, "Can you take it?"

Brandon moaned loudly, "*Please, just fuck me! Do it!*"

Daniel slowly, carefully, pushed against Brandon's burning flesh. His body felt as though it were on fire. The intensity of the heat of the two men, the pleasure of his lover's cock, overwhelmed any pain that he felt from the two cocks now deep in his body. He slowly moved against Charles' stomach, pushing against Daniel's crotch. Brandon heard Charles moan, "I'm going to come soon, I can't help it!"

Brandon felt the heat of the explosion within his body. The warmth of the hot seed caused Daniel to slide even deeper into his body. Charles' cum made Daniel's cock effortlessly slide deep inside him, over and over. Charles leaned up,

kissing Brandon deeply. Brandon felt his own orgasm build to fever pitch as he spewed his cum onto the young man's stomach. He felt Daniel grab his hips, digging his fingers deep into his flesh. Brandon knew his lover couldn't hold out any longer. He shouted, "*Please, Daniel, give it to me, fill me!*"

Daniel pumped what felt like a gallon of molten lava deep inside Brandon's love tunnel.

He felt the two throbbing cocks subsiding and slowly sliding from his ass. Daniel fell, spent, against the two men.

All three men lay in a heated sticky mass of lust. The scent of sex hung heavily in the air as they lay there, exhausted.

Daniel rolled over in the bed onto his back as Charles and Brandon rolled side by side, facing each other. "Are you okay?" Charles asked Brandon.

"Better than okay, I'm...jeez, that was great." Brandon smiled. He rolled over, kissing Daniel slowly. "And thank you, big man. That was more than good. I must admit though for a while I thought the two of you were going to come out my mouth." He laughed heartily.

The three men lay silently, arms entwined, bodies still touching, still one. Brandon fell happily asleep as the two men lying with him began breathing deeply.

## Chapter Sixteen

Charles lay silently watching the two men sleeping beside him. Even though he was deeply asleep, Brandon's fingers ran slowly and luxuriously across Daniel's body. They brushed the fine hairs on the Marine's thick, muscular chest. Charles marveled at the love between the two men.

He felt a feeling of satisfaction, and an odd feeling of loss. He had enjoyed the mind-blowing experience from the night before. He, however, didn't expect to be this envious of the connection Daniel and Brandon had. Even though he didn't really expect to have feelings for the two men, he was shocked at the fact that Daniel had been so focused on Brandon's pleasure. It was something Charles wanted for himself.

Charles rose silently, walking naked toward the bathroom. He needed a shower. He needed some perspective. He needed to get away from the two incredible bodies making him horny yet again this morning. Turning on the hot water, he stepped into the huge walk-in shower. He hoped Daniel wouldn't be upset with him using it.

As he felt the steam rising, Charles massaged the scented soap from Brandon's supply of designer soaps and colognes. He enjoyed the scent as he

lathered his body slowly. The water seemed to wash away all of his concerns, allowing him to clear his mind for a few moments.

From the bedroom, Charles heard the two men stirring. He decided it would be to his benefit to hasten his departure. He rinsed his body and readied himself to exit the shower. Charles heard a low voice. Then the distinct sound of Daniel urinating in the toilet caused him to pause. Should he stay put or just leave quickly? Before he could decide he heard Daniel ask, “Mind if I step in?”

Daniel walked into the large tiled area, taking advantage of the multiple shower heads. Charles watched him absentmindedly enjoying the steamy water, his massive muscles rippling as he lathered himself. Charles quickly exited the enclosure, borrowing one of Brandon’s cotton robes to allow him to get back to the pool house clothed.

Brandon roused slightly from the bed, still nude, and stretched out. “Hi, cutie. Come here.” He yawned, stretching as he patted the bed beside him.

Charles wished he could have just left, but it apparently wasn’t in the cards. He sat down silently beside Brandon.

“Are you okay? You look like you’ve got some regrets. I hope not, baby. I don’t. Daniel doesn’t.” Brandon’s smile reassured him.

“I’m not sure how I feel. I do know I can’t be overanalyzing this or I’ll go nuts. I’m not in love or anything like that,” Charles confessed.



“Well that much is good.” Brandon smiled. “Did you at least enjoy last night?”

“Oh my God, yes!”

“It didn’t hurt you?”

“No, well a little, but not a bad kind of pain. It was so intense I don’t know how to explain it.” Charles fumbled for proper expression.

“That’s how it should be, sweetheart. That’s what I wanted you to realize. If someone cares about you, sex can be amazing. I do care about you, Charles. I hope you consider me a friend.”

“Sure, I hope. I don’t want anything to change that, man. But I hope you understand. I don’t know if I can do *that* anymore with you guys. It makes me sad, because I want what you have. I know that sounds stupid, but...”

“It makes complete sense,” Brandon reassured him.

Daniel returned to the bedroom. His body glistened from the shower, dark curly hair encircling his handsome face. Charles watched Daniel plop down next to his lover. Brandon kissed him passionately on the mouth. “Mmmmmmm.”

“Charles, are you okay with last night?” Daniel asked.

“Yes, sir. I just think, it was probably best to keep it a onetime thing though... Sir.”

“Well, I respect that. I don’t think I’d care to share this good-looking man

right here very often anyhow. But you are a good friend to Brandon. I'm glad we could help you find a new aspect to your sex life." Daniel smiled as he leaned back pulling a pillow over his lap.

Charles felt thankful that Daniel covered his cock. "You guys showed me stuff I didn't know was possible. Honestly, Brandon," Charles added, "I don't know how you managed both of us..."

Brandon smiled, "Well, honestly, I'm not sure I could do that very often, I'm pretty out of it today. That was fun once, but I don't know how often I could handle it myself." Brandon paused for an instant. "I want to ask one more thing."

"I'm afraid to know." Charles paused.

"It's nothing bad. Quinton, my friend the hairdresser, asked the other day if I knew anyone who would pose with me for a painting. He wants to work on an 'erotic' piece for his collection," Brandon explained.

"Why not you and Daniel?" Charles asked.

"Charles, Daniel is not into posing for starters; second, Quint has a specific vision in mind. He wants similar body types in the painting. I think you'd be perfect if you'd be willing to do it."

"I'm not sure what kind of painting you mean." Charles looked puzzled at the pair.

"It's a nude, Charles," Daniel said flatly. "You'd be suggestively posed with

Brandon.”

“If you wouldn’t mind, sir, I guess it would be okay,” Charles said cautiously.

“Please knock of the sir shit, Charles,” Daniel replied smiling. “Of course I don’t mind. I plan on purchasing a print of the painting when it’s done. I doubt I could afford the original.”

Charles watched the two men lying together smiling and talking. He thought to himself, *I want to find someone to love me like that.*

## Chapter Seventeen

Several weeks had passed since the funeral and all of the revelations that came along with it. Daniel had pretty much allowed himself to put aside all the information for a later time. He'd put the photo album out of mind also. But now, here it sat staring at him on his desk.

Brandon lay sleeping deeply on the bed. Daniel couldn't help but worry. He heard the sad moans the man made many times at night, and the violent dreams that caused Brandon to wake in a cold sweat. Daniel needed to be able to make sense of all of it, but he wasn't sure quite how to do that.

Thankful that Joseph had talked Brandon into weekly visits, Daniel hoped it would help him to discuss his troubled past. He couldn't help but wonder though at times if it weren't counterproductive since Brandon's nightmares had escalated since the visits had begun. He flipped silently through the pages of the album, pausing again at the almost angelic sight of Brandon's mother holding her newborn son.

One thought did continually puzzle him—would Brandon ever love him the way that he obviously loved Frank, the young man he'd fallen so hopelessly in love with in military school. Many of his nightmares seemed to center around Frank. If

Brandon loved him, why would he so frequently be involved in the horrible memories of the past?

Daniel roused from his thoughts at a very coherent statement from a still-sleeping Brandon: "I'm just a whore, nobody loves me anyway." This sad statement was followed by, "He doesn't like boys. It's my fault. Don't hit him, please! *Please stop!*" Brandon screamed in horror. Daniel rushed to the bedside to rouse his sleeping lover.

The sheets around Brandon were soaked with sweat. His eyes, still closed, ran freely with tears. He seemed frozen, paralyzed as he screamed for his imagined tormentors to stop whatever occurred in his mind. Daniel grabbed Brandon and shook him awake, holding him by the upper arms and staring into his eyes.

Brandon gasped audibly and looked in horror into Daniel's eyes. He seemed transfixed, somehow present, yet not in the here and now. He shouted, "Please don't hurt him, I swear you can kill me; just stop hurting him, please. *Please!*"

Although his eyes were wide open and wild with fear, Daniel knew his lover remained still somehow stuck in the horror of his dream. He did the only thing he knew to do; he pulled Brandon in and kissed him lovingly on the lips. He reassured the young man he was safe at home and no one would ever hurt him again, ever.

Daniel pulled back from Brandon. He looked carefully into his lover's tear-stained eyes. "Who is in your dream, baby? Who is being hurt?"

“It doesn’t matter; it was just a dream.” Brandon dismissed the horror quickly.

“It does matter. It matters to me. Tell me the truth. I think I deserve that.”

“It’s about Frank. They used him to get to me. They’d beat him bloody. He wasn’t their ‘type’ so it didn’t matter to them what he looked like. If I didn’t do what they wanted, or more likely let them do what they wanted to me, they’d hurt Frank and make me watch. That’s how I got these.” Brandon pointed down at the nearly invisible scars on his abdomen. “I bit one of them when they hurt Frank, so they took turns kicking me in the stomach till I passed out. Frank took me to the hospital. I had to have my spleen removed. I told the doctors that I fell down the stairs.”

“You loved Frank very much, didn’t you?”

Brandon looked down at the floor. “I guess so.”

Daniel looked at his lover, sensing his angst. “Brandon, what makes me love you so much is that I know what a fine man you are. I respect the fact that you knew who you loved at that early age. I respect the fact that even though it meant you would be hurt, you stood up for what you believed in. That’s more than I can say for myself at that age.” Daniel remembered his many years of running from his sexuality. “I would be more disappointed if you told me you didn’t love him, frankly. I wouldn’t want to be with a man that could just stop loving someone.”

“He was my first real love, you know? I just wanted to be with him, and... He left me.”

“Baby, you need to remember that when people kill themselves it is an act of desperation. It isn’t rational. He didn’t want to leave you; he just didn’t know what else to do about the pain he was in.” Daniel touched his lover, softly rubbing his hair.

“You sound just like Joseph.” Brandon laughed.

“I guess that’s a compliment.”

“Yeah, he’s a smart guy. Pisses me off sometimes because he gets me a little too well, but he’s okay.” Brandon smiled.

“Brandon, I need to talk to you about something.” Daniel smiled at his anxious lover.

“Lord, I’m not sure if I’m up to more bad news.” Brandon frowned.

“It’s not bad, I promise. It’s about your last name, actually.”

“I don’t have one. I gave that up. If I can’t have the name that I was born with, the name my brother carries...” Daniel saw Brandon’s eyes welling with tears.

Daniel decided it wasn’t the right time to discuss it. Brandon had just opened his heart and allowed him to share his pain concerning Frank. He should let the subject go for now.

“Don’t think about that right now, okay? I’m planning on taking a month off

in October. I want to go away, out of the country. Think of the most magnificent paradise on earth, that's where I want to go." Daniel smiled broadly.

"Jamaica," Brandon immediately replied.

"Are you sure?" Daniel asked, surprised at the quick response.

"I want to go to Jamaica. But there's one other thing I want to talk to you about." Brandon twisted the sheets around his fingers nervously. He avoided Daniel's gaze. "I don't want to share you anymore. I know I made it happen. But I'm not okay with it again. I love you, and I never want to think about you with anyone, even if I'm there. I'm sorry, I didn't think I would mind, but I do mind. I want you to myself. I know it's selfish." Brandon looked downcast at the rug.

"I'm rather glad you brought it up. I'm a little more anxious than you. You are an incredibly handsome guy, and I don't ever want to feel like you might trade me in for a better looking guy," Daniel confessed.

Brandon moved over, he sat squarely on Daniel's lap. "That, my big old hunk of Marine, would be impossible. I've never met *anyone* who turned me on like you. Mmmmmmm..." Brandon growled as he licked his way up Daniel's tattooed bicep.

"Now that we have that out of the way, I need to get to town. I'm looking for office space, you know." Brandon smiled.

Daniel knew that Brandon's newfound wealth was weighing heavily on the young man's mind. He knew that Brandon had plans for his life. He didn't know



the particulars, but he had no doubt that Brandon would do something wonderful.

“Charles. You ready? Well, get your ass ready. I’ve got to find a new office.” Brandon ordered the young man on the other end of his cellular phone with a playful tone and sparkling eyes.

Daniel watched Brandon head toward the door, smiling as he prepared to leave. Brandon quickly ran back upstairs, kissing Daniel. “Sorry, baby, I about forgot. Love you. See ya later okay?”

“Of course. I have to have lunch with Mom today. She’s flying in. Would you like to meet her later?”

“Are you sure you want her to meet *me*?” Brandon frowned.

“Baby, I’m proud of you, of the man you are. You are amazing, why wouldn’t I want her to meet you?” Daniel smiled, patting Brandon on the ass.

“Well that, for starters.” Brandon nodded at his friendly gesture. “She’s not exactly wild about you living with a *man*.”

“She’s just old. She’s just set in her ways, but she loves me and I know she’ll love you. We’ve talked about you many times. You’ve talked with her several times on the phone. I think it’s time you two meet. It has been nearly two years, Brandon.” Daniel smiled.

“I’ve got to go.” Brandon kissed him again. He left in a flourish.

Daniel watched Brandon and Charles climb into the new black SUV. Daniel

was relieved that they'd decided to make the threesome experience a pleasant memory, one not to be repeated. Charles was far too sweet a guy to be hurt by what Daniel knew could be a disastrous situation. He deserved more. They all did.

Walking toward the kitchen, Daniel picked up the ringing phone. "Yes Mother?"

A fragile-sounding, yet forceful voice with a deep Southern drawl replied, "That's some way to answer the phone!"

"I have caller ID. I'll be at the airport when your plane lands," Daniel snapped, playfully.

"I'm in a limo, on my way there now."

"How the hell?" Daniel shouted.

"Language, young man!" his mother said crossly.

"You weren't supposed to land for an hour."

"Brandon arranged for a cute little plane to pick me up early. I felt like a queen. There was a limo waiting at my house and one at the airport at the runway. That was way too much. I had no idea there would be a limo when he told me to expect to get picked up."

Daniel stood dumbfounded, slack jawed. "Brandon did all that?"

"He seems like a sweet boy, Daniel. You could do worse for a friend. I'm so glad you two are rooming together."

“Mother, you know Brandon is more than my friend,” Daniel said impatiently.

“Don’t be fresh. I’ll be there in a few minutes. Don’t keep an old woman waiting, young man.”

Daniel heard a curt click as she ended the already abbreviated call. She always knew how to get around him. It infuriated him at times the way she seemed to be able to avoid the obvious.

He’d made no secret of his feelings for Brandon, but since his father’s death earlier that year, he’d been more active in discussing his relationship with his mother. His father loved him, he knew, but he also knew that his father refused to accept his homosexuality as a fact. His mother had accepted him. However, she’d never truly acknowledged the reality of the situation: that he’d never have the “American dream” she’d hoped for him; the wife, the kids and two point three kids.

He sighed as he sipped his morning coffee. He heard the large stretch limo pull up into the drive. He walked to the door. Looking himself over, he realized he probably should have dressed more appropriately. His jeans and polo shirt seemed a little casual for the occasion.

His mother exemplified style and grace, a true Southern belle. She still believed in dressing for dinner. She believed that there was nothing more obscene than rudeness. She also believed that men should be men, and women should be

women. Daniel knew his lifestyle was a direct affront to his mother's traditional Southern upbringing. The only saving grace, perhaps, he knew his mother loved him. There was never a doubt about that.

Chloe Deveraux stepped regally out of the limousine, her aged hand held by the tall, muscular driver who looked as if he were a cross between a romance novel superhero and a Dallas Cowboys linebacker. Brandon had gone out of his way to make this an enjoyable trip for his mother. Daniel smiled.

"Thank you, Brent." The attractive older woman smiled at the handsome driver.

"Thank you, Mrs. Deveraux. I've enjoyed the conversation."

"That's Ms. Deveraux, and I've enjoyed the view."

"*Mother!*" Daniel gaped, shocked at his mother's forwardness.

"What? He knows he's a slice of heaven. I'm just letting him know I'm old, but I'm not dead yet."

The handsome driver's face reddened at the comment. He silently stood waiting for further instructions as Daniel helped his mother out of the car.

"Come in, Mother," Daniel said, placing a twenty dollar bill in the driver's palm.

"Thank you, again." Chloe smiled as Daniel closed the door behind her.  
"Mmmmm."

“Mother, really is that necessary?” Daniel smiled painfully.

“Actually, yes, it is. Your father has been gone for some time, and at my age, it’s nice to enjoy at least looking.”

“Touché.” Daniel smiled.

The pair walked together, the older woman clad in an obscenely overdone fur coat, her long manicured nails wrapped around Daniel’s substantial arm. He looked down at her hand and noticed amongst the many rings one ring was specifically absent: her diamond wedding band. A magnificent piece of jewelry, Daniel couldn’t remember seeing her without it. It had been passed down in her family for years. Daniel thought out loud, “I really miss Dad.”

“I do, too.” His mother patted his arm as she sat down at the kitchen table.

Daniel walked to the counter and poured himself another cup of coffee. “Care for some?”

“No, but thank you.”

Daniel looked at his mother. In his mind she stayed young and beautiful and the ‘belle of the ball.’ She had been a debutante, the wife of an influential man, the mother of successful sons, and above all of that, she was a force to be reckoned with. She wielded the power of her charm and exceptional good looks like a mighty sword.

Now before him sat an aging woman, still very good-looking, but time had

definitely taken its toll on her body and her face. She seemed tired. It made Daniel sad. He missed the comfort he felt in her warm hugs as a boy. The intoxicating scent of Chanel No. 5 cologne wafted gently over his consciousness, lulling him into a familiar sense of security. A welcome reminder of a happier time.

Almost as if she'd sensed his sorrow, she motioned to him. "Give your old mom a hug."

He walked over and leaned down on one knee to hug his mother. He melted almost involuntarily into her still-firm grasp.

He felt the overwhelming emotion of the moment. His heart ached as he tried desperately to tear himself from his mother's grasp. He knew it was childish to hold on to her so strongly, but something inside him couldn't let her go.

"Baby, I'm sorry. I've been obtuse. I truly am a foolish old woman. I need for you to forgive me. I don't deserve a son like you."

Daniel pushed back, away from his mother, her eyes now reddened with the confession. "What do you mean? You've been a wonderful mother; best a guy could ask for."

"Don't patronize me, son. I've forced you to act like you are something you're not. It's just hard for me to understand why. But I know now, it doesn't matter anymore why. You don't always get to decide who you love. That's how life works. You found someone who loves you. Be thankful, son."

Flabbergasted, Daniel patted his mother lovingly on the hand. “I am. I’m very thankful. And in case it matters, I love him too. More than I’ve ever loved anyone. At least like *that*.” Daniel laughed nervously.

“I have something for you. I think you should have it.” His mother reached into her bag.

She pulled out a pair of matching black velvet boxes. “I’ve had these made. I hope you’ll like them, son.”

Daniel took the pair of boxes from his mother and carefully opened the pair, leaving them open on the table. “They’re amazing, Mom, but what does this mean?” Daniel asked as he took the first ring out of the box.

The small box glittered as he held it. The room seemed to grow larger as he stared at the handsome diamond band. It was identical to the second ring, only a much larger band; a gold band with small diamonds surrounding the perimeter. “Where did you buy these?”

“I didn’t buy them, I had them made from my...” His mother’s words trailed off as she touched her ring finger lovingly where the diamond wedding band had previously been. “That one’s for you, the other one is for Brandon.”

Daniel couldn’t speak, her words hung heavy in the air. “I...”

Chloe bent over and kissed her large, speechless son on the forehead. “I love you, baby. Make Mama proud.”

Daniel reeled. The world spun wildly around him. The ground under his body seemed to scarcely hold him steady. He was confused, but his mind couldn't get past the two boxes still open in front of him. "Mom, your ring." Daniel choked out now wiping the evidence of his feelings from his face.

"I want you to do what's right." His mother stood upright, straightening her composure. "I'm going to be staying at the Hilton. Call me for dinner; I hear they have a magnificent restaurant." Daniel's mother opened her phone and began dialing.

"I will." Daniel smiled, still kneeling at his mother's feet.

She tossed his curled hair off his forehead. "He's good for you."

"Yes, he is." Daniel nodded knowingly.



## Chapter Eighteen

Brandon rushed back toward the house he now called home. He was excited to fill Daniel in on his unbelievable luck. He'd finally found the perfect place for his new venture. He just had to clear up the final details, get the staff organized and his vision could be complete. He needed to get a commitment from Joseph. He knew of course that he wouldn't be able to see Joseph professionally any longer, though, if he wanted to work with him on this project.

He could scarcely breathe, the excitement making his head spin wildly as he pulled into the driveway. A momentary pause of panic gripped his heart as he wondered if Chloe had stayed to meet him in person. He went over each detail of her trip, dissecting each move. Less planning had gone into the last inaugural ball—his desperate attempt to impress her his way of saying thanks for having such an amazing son.

Charles sat tapping his fingers excitedly on the seat beside Brandon. "I think we should just call it 'A New Beginning'."

"That's amazing. It fits perfectly. That's the name." Brandon smiled as he reflected on the endless meetings and relentless onslaught of problems he'd faced. He wanted the new building to reflect the mission he'd embarked upon; making

sure no young man had to feel homeless or hopeless because his family didn't want him, whatever the reason. He certainly knew that young gay men estranged from their families would be drawn to it, but he didn't feel that was the only mission of 'A New Beginning' as Charles called it.

Years of lonely nights, tear-filled days, and thoughts of hopelessness had haunted his consciousness; reminded him of the importance of this vision. That was the single mission on his mind. No one should ever feel as alone as he had. He wanted others to know there are people who care. Otis had made that possible. He hoped in his heart that he could live up to the expectations he knew his friend had for him.

Turning off the engine, Brandon thanked Charles and watched the young man excitedly walk toward the pool house. Charles needed something to occupy his time. He hoped that he'd soon find someone to share his time with, to share his life with.



Daniel sat silent in the large wooden den that Brandon had carefully designed for his office. The smell of walnut and leather mixed made the room feel warm and inviting. Daniel looked around the room at the heavy draperies, the large wooden carved desk, and the careful order the room had. He felt safe here.

Sitting amongst the volumes of literature and miscellaneous trash novels

that previously littered his small home, he ran his fingers along each book, carefully lined up in an order probably only Brandon understood. The look of the room was regal. “Only Brandon could manage to make my life look like it made any sense,” Daniel mumbled as he ran his fingers past the collected works of William Shakespeare and past the collections of gay erotic novels just to the left of them. He chuckled at the irony as he noticed Brandon watching him survey the room.

“You don’t like it do you?” Brandon looked saddened by Daniel’s somber demeanor.

“Baby, I love it. I was just thinking I don’t really deserve something as wonderful as this. Somehow you’ve made sense out of what is a totally fucked-up mess, *me*.”

“Don’t be a drama queen.” Brandon smiled as he entered the room with a flourish, taking a moment to kiss Daniel carefully on the cheek.

“Sit down, baby.” Daniel looked solemnly at Brandon. “We need to talk.”

Brandon’s expression fell quickly. His movements became slow and calculated. His eyes fell immediately to the floor and he began to softly mumble an apology for whatever the perceived slight or wrongdoing was.

Daniel walked toward the pensive man, shoulders now dropped, eyes fallen, and stifling tears held back from pride.

“I’m sorry, baby.” Daniel forced a smile.

Brandon looked up suddenly, allowing Daniel to see the swollen red eyes and terrified expression on his face. “Why are you sorry? I’m the one who fucked up.”

“What do you think you did?” Daniel steeled himself for the answer.

“Being me. I was the one who wanted to bring Charles into our life, now... I guess I’m just sorry.” Brandon looked back at the floor, sadly shuffling his feet. His fingers traced the buttons on the leather wing-backed chair repeatedly like it was a connect the dots puzzle.

Daniel thought carefully on the best way to approach what he feared could either be the beginning or the end of the most rewarding, if most volatile, relationship of his life.

“That’s actually why I wanted to talk to you today.”

Brandon rose sadly and apologized again. He walked toward the door mumbling something about being gone by tonight.

Daniel knew that this was going south quickly. As much as he hated being aggressive with Brandon, at times it was the only way to save him from his own self-destruction. “Did I tell you to leave yet? Now, sit down!”

Brandon obediently sat back down. A new expression of fear and self-loathing seemed to permeate his very soul. He continued looking passively at the floor.

Daniel knelt at the feet of the frightened young man before him. He placed his hands on his lover's knee and felt him flinch noticeably. The reaction always made Daniel nauseous. He knew the conditioning Brandon had received wouldn't soon be overcome, and the very nature of their relationship at times made it harder for that to happen.

Daniel, now convinced that shock would be the only way to turn the situation around, said summarily, "Hit me."

"Sir?" Brandon looked up only momentarily in amazement.

Brandon's words only went to deepen the sickened feeling in Daniel's stomach. "You heard me, boy. *Hit me, goddamnit! Do as you are told!*"

"I can't!"

"*Do it!*" Daniel commanded.

"Please don't make me, sir," Brandon pleaded.

Daniel forcefully grabbed his lover's hand and raised it inches from his face. "Do it or I'll make you sorry you didn't!"

Brandon's hand shook violently in his. Daniel could see the utter horror in his lover's face. He knew this was a risky proposal, but he felt the only way to get his point across was to break through the walls they'd successfully built years earlier. Brandon pulled back his fist and tried desperately to do as he was told. Daniel breathed a sigh of relief when his lover's fist came to rest inches from his

face.

Brandon began punching his own stomach violently. “I’m a failure, sir. I can’t even do as I’m told. I’m a pitiful servant, sir.”

Daniel grabbed Brandon’s fist before he could punch himself again, saddened that he hadn’t considered that Brandon would take the initiative to hurt himself. “*Stop it, now!*”

Brandon again looked painfully at the ground, weeping sadly. He moaned repeated apologies. It was more than Daniel could bear. Through tear-stained eyes Daniel asked, “Do you know why I asked you to do that, Brandon?”

“No, sir.”

“My name is Daniel...” He reminded Brandon of many conversations about his referring to his lover as “Sir.”

“No, Daniel. I could never hurt you. Not even if you told me to. I swear I’ll do anything else you tell me. I’ll fuck anybody; let anybody you want fuck me. You can hit me, hurt me, even kill me; just please don’t ask me to hit you again, please. Please, please.”

“I did that so you’d understand that I would no more want to hurt *you*, than you’d want to hurt me. You could not do anything to disappoint me, Brandon. You know the feeling when your hand was about to strike me? That’s how I feel about you! I never want to see you hurt by anyone, most *especially* me.”

“You mean that?”

“Of course. I thought by now you understood that.”

“I guess I do, but I just always figure I’m a big fuckup and it’s only a matter of time till you figure that out.”

“I figured that out a long time ago.” Daniel chuckled.

“Asshole.”

“Exactly.” Daniel smiled. “We’re both fuckups, and we both need each other. Don’t you see that? I need you more than the air that I breathe. I feel sick when I think about my life before you. When I think of life without you, I can’t imagine it.” Daniel knelt between his lover’s thighs and laid his head in the handsome man’s lap. Brandon began twirling his curly hair between his fingers.

“I guess we deserve each other huh?” Brandon smiled.

“By the way, we’re having dinner at eight, at the Hilton with Mother,” Daniel added cautiously.

“Wow. That’s going to be a night to remember, huh?”

Daniel gently rubbed Brandon’s thighs as he lay still in his lover’s grasp. The feeling of security he felt with the man was surreal at times to him. He felt the room become warm. A light scent of Dolce & Gabbana cologne mingled with the leather and hand-rubbed wood washed over his body. He sighed deeply, breathing in a new chapter in his happiness.

Slowly Daniel worked his hand upward to Brandon's crotch. A noticeable bulge greeted his advances. He outlined the widened cock with his fingers. Brandon's head sank back slowly into the leather chair. Daniel breathed hotly onto the straining fabric. He placed his mouth fully over the covered cock, breathing in the heady scent of his lover's body.

Involuntarily, Brandon pushed forward toward Daniel's advances. The moans from his lover were music to his ears. Daniel quickly unzipped the carefully pressed pants, revealing an uncovered, reddened erection now seeping Brandon's fluids from the heat of Daniel's mouth.

Daniel forcefully removed Brandon's pants. He stood, disrobing provocatively. His body heaved with anticipation. His hungry mouth watering at the sight of his lover's growing cock. Daniel's cock stood boldly at attention as he stood before his seated lover.

Brandon leapt forward, swallowing Daniel's cock with the stealth of a ninja warrior attracting his prey. Daniel gasped loudly as he looked down to see his lover devouring his erection. Brandon smiled as he bobbed up and down on the throbbing member. Daniel moaned, begging his lover to stop. "Please, baby. Not yet."

Daniel withdrew from his lover's mouth and, leaning down, kissed him deeply. The taste of his pre-cum mingled with the familiar taste of Brandon. The



kiss felt as if it continued for an eternity; everything else in the universe melted away as bright flashes of light confirmed the depth of his feelings for his lover. His body begged for more as he broke the kiss.

Daniel pulled his lover tightly to him, the two men standing face to face. “I love you.”

Brandon kissed him again causing him to shiver with excitement. Brandon pushed him into the chair he’d previously vacated and sat on his lap. Daniel’s cock pressed deeply within Brandon’s sublime ass. He felt the pre-cum from his cock cause him to slide precariously toward Brandon’s tight love tunnel.

“No, I wanted to...” Daniel protested. Brandon continued kissing his lover, now straddling his lap. Daniel was powerless to stop the dance of which Brandon had taken the lead. Brandon’s cock pressed hard against Daniel’s rippled stomach, causing him to shake with excitement.

Suddenly, Daniel felt his cock slide effortlessly into Brandon’s willing body. Mercilessly Brandon drove Daniel deeply into his body. Blinding images of love, of the night they’d met, of the many wild sexual exchanges, as well as the deep emotional sadness the men had shared ran together.

Daniel moaned, overcome with his emotional revelations as well as the overwhelming sexual need for his lover. Brandon looked down into Daniel’s eyes, concerned, and smiled. “I love you, Daniel.”

Brandon's body rested fully on Daniel. The two men kissed again, this time with the hunger of starving men. Daniel grabbed Brandon's cock and feverishly pumped it as he felt himself give in to the explosion building in his loins. He felt his body pulse harder, now feeling the warmth of his seed engulfing his cock deep inside his lover's body.

Brandon squealed loudly as he emptied what seemed like an endless stream of his hot love fluids on Daniel's chest. The force of it had caused a trail beginning at his mouth leading down to his navel.

Daniel took his fingers and licked up the cum, deliciously savoring each drop. He leaned in, kissing his lover; he shared the delicious evidence of his pleasure.

Daniel smiled and looked at the clock on the wall: it read 6:45. "I'll race you to the shower."

"Yeah, we have a date tonight, I guess." Brandon rose, begrudgingly releasing Daniel's cock from his body.

"Last one to the shower's a rotten egg." Brandon smiled childishly as he ran toward the door.

Daniel paused, taking in the pleasant sight of the handsome man's naked form playfully running toward the door. "Deal."

## Chapter Nineteen

Brandon took in the image in the mirror. He had insisted on formal attire for the evening. Chloe was a lady; ladies expect gentlemen to dress properly for dinner. An uncomfortable knot grew in his stomach. He grimaced at the starched collar, bow tie, and cummerbund adorning the athletic reflection.

“Goddamn hair!” Brandon shouted as he angrily discarded a brush, throwing it across the room. As the brush whizzed through the air he saw a tux-clad Daniel duck, the brush just missing his head.

“Baby, what’s up?”

“Oops, sorry.” Brandon picked up the brush. He tried again, unsuccessfully working on making the wild locks of blond hair behave. The result was something less than fabulous. Continual work seemed only to make matters worse. A sick feeling made the large bed and some flannel pajamas seem like an immensely superior alternative to the night ahead.

“Why are you doing whatever it is you are doing to your hair?” Daniel asked cautiously.

“I’m trying to look respectable, you shit!”

“I want you to look like you. Not like someone I don’t recognize.” Daniel

smiled taking his hands and mussing the carefully plastered helmet Brandon had been working on for what seemed like hours.

“*Fuck!*” Brandon grimaced as he tried in vain to tame the now wild mess that had become his hair. “Your mother needs to like me!” A lump filled his throat making it nearly impossible to breathe or swallow. He desperately tried to keep the flood of terror now threatening to overflow at bay. He sniffed back a wall of fear and began straightening his hair again.

“Stop. My mother already loves you.”

“She’s never met me.” Brandon sulked.

“I want you to make yourself look comfortable. Get out of that damn tux. Fix your hair. Be you, Brandon.” Daniel smiled.

Brandon watched the handsome Marine flawlessly attired in his tuxedo. He looked as if he were born to wear it. The man’s form made Brandon’s cock jump to attention. He felt a whirlwind of butterflies in his stomach as he traced Daniel’s body with his eyes. His hair was perfect, his eyes sparkled. Daniel turned and flashed a broad smile; his straight white teeth seemed almost too perfect tonight. Brandon couldn’t find a single flaw with the man now leaving the room. He returned his attention to the mirror. He looked at the identical tux he wore, a smaller size of course, but identical. He sighed, “I can’t pull this shit off like Daniel. He’s right.”

Several minutes later, Brandon met Daniel, waiting patiently at the door. He'd taken the tuxedo and tweaked it. He removed the uncomfortable tuxedo pants, replaced by his favorite form-fitting jeans. The jeans made his already shapely ass more prominent, the embroidery on the pockets saw to that. The cut was ultra low-rise. He opted for a very tight, sheer black Gregg Homme shirt, cropped to allow a little flesh to shine just before the waistband of the jeans. A metal belt kept the jeans from allowing too much attention. He topped the ensemble with the tuxedo shirt, now unbuttoned and un-tucked, and finished the outfit with the starched black tuxedo jacket and black cowboy boots. His hair was the wild mess of blond, spiked insanity that it generally was.

Daniel turned to take in Brandon's new outfit. Brandon sucked in his stomach nervously. The room seemed to be closing in on him. It seemed almost as if he smelled the combination of fresh paint, office supplies, and disinfectant that he always associated with the first day of school. He stood, nervously adjusting his clothing, wishing he'd just kept the outfit as it was. He turned nervously, heading toward the stairs to re-dress. "This is a big mistake. Just go without me."

"Holy shit!" Daniel said loudly. "I'm not sure if I want to go either. I want to lick every inch of your incredible body. You look so fucking hot right now! If I could pull that outfit off I would wear it. *Fuck!* You'll definitely make a good impression. My mother loves a good-looking man. And believe me when I tell you,

you will be the hottest man at the Hilton—fuck, in Atlanta—tonight. Gay or straight, my mother really appreciates a good-looking man, as much as it pains me to say so.”

“You don’t think she’ll be offended? You said be myself.” Brandon gulped deeply, swallowing the fear that welled up deep from his gut. The room began to spin wildly. An intense burning in his legs begged him to run. He needed to escape. God, he wanted to disappear. “This is a mistake.”

“Actually, I was going to do this later but I need you to listen to me. This is the man I love. Not the starched, repressed mess I saw upstairs, trying desperately to fit into someone else’s mold.”

Brandon watched as his handsome lover walked toward him. Brandon’s feet seemed cemented in place. His mind begged him to escape, but his body simply refused to react. The warmth of Daniel’s hands as they took his made him shudder as the warmth moved slowly up his arms. It gradually worked its way up his shoulders and finally settled in his chest. A burning sense of familiarity settled in his heart as he watched Daniel looking deeply into his eyes. The deep brown eyes of his lover now seemed almost black with their intensity. They sparkled wildly as Brandon questioned Daniel’s eyes silently. *What is he up to?*

Daniel stood for a moment holding his hands before he spoke to him. “Brandon, I know how hard it is for you that your family...well, I know you feel lost

because you don't really have the connection to your family name. For a long time now, you have been my family, Brandon. My life, my love, my happiness, they all revolve around you. I want you to be as proud of who you are as I am."

Brandon looked puzzled at the handsome Marine now holding his hand and looking deeply into his eyes. Brandon shivered a bit as it felt as though Daniel was looking past his eyes and piercing somehow deeply into his soul. The loss of his name had been a terrible blow for him. His connection to his brother, his mother, seemed tied to that name. It broke his heart that he felt he had no connection to the two people who loved him more than anyone on the planet...before Daniel at least. *That was odd; I guess he really does love me.*

The feeling of warmth in his chest swelled. A smile couldn't be held back. He sniffed a little, holding back the emotion of the moment. He did love Daniel. In a sudden, dramatic move, Daniel knelt on one knee at the bottom of the stairs. He handed him a small black velvet box. "I'd be honored if you'd take my name and be my partner...if you'd have me...forever..."

The room seemed to become blindingly bright. Brandon opened the box. The most beautiful diamond band he'd ever seen rested in the small black box he held tightly in his grasp. "What does this mean, Daniel?"

"I know Georgia doesn't *allow* gay men to marry, but I'd like to make our commitment official. Go somewhere exotic; just us and a few friends. David, my

mom maybe.”

“Did you say marry?” Brandon asked dumbfounded.

“Yeah, I guess that’s what I said.” Daniel seemed nervous, probably unsure due to the flat reaction from his lover.

“*Are you insane? Have you just completely lost your mind?* Your mother would have a stroke! Do you want to kill that poor woman? She just now is okay with your being gay and now you’re going to tell her you’re going to... I can’t even say the word...to me? A nut case...an ugly pitiful excuse for a... Damn, Daniel. Why would you do that?”

“*Stop it!* I know you have issues; we all do. But you are the most caring, most handsome, most special man I’ve ever met. I want to make sure no other lucky guy steals you away from me. While I’m at it, I never want to share you with anyone again. I hope you’re okay with that. I can’t bear thinking about you with anyone else. It breaks my heart.”

“You’re really serious?” Brandon slumped slowly onto the stairs behind him. He sat rubbing his eyes, looking carefully at the ring. “Did you buy this ring just for me?” The lump in his throat grew larger as he contemplated actually accepting the unbelievable proposal. Married. The word seemed to pound in his brain.

“I’m not suggesting that we’d have a traditional marriage, Brandon. I just want you to know that just because we’re not a traditional couple, my feelings are



no less genuine, I'm no less committed. I want to make you my life partner forever. I want to make sure we grow old with each other. And to answer your question, my mother..."

Brandon saw Daniel's eyes well with tears. He choked back the tears as he tried to continue with his explanation. Brandon leaned in and gave his lover a reassuring kiss.

"My mother had her wedding set made into a pair of matching bands for us..." Daniel sniffed again, stifling the flood of emotions that threatened his stoic façade.

Brandon sat, running his fingers lovingly over the band. He tried desperately to comprehend the events as they unfolded. He stiffened his spine. Daniel was a mess enough. Brandon knew how strained things had been before his father had died. His mother had always been more understanding of his lifestyle, but still had always hoped for the American dream for him. Brandon thought to himself that if *his* mother were alive, he didn't think she'd think a lot different. He smiled internally at the memory of his mother. He knew though that his mother would love Daniel. She'd have been his biggest fan. She loved Brandon, and Daniel was the best thing that had ever happened to him. His mind reeled. How could he do this to Daniel? Drag him into his madness. He deserved better. He loved Daniel. That was it. He had to let him find someone worthy of him.

“Yes.” Brandon heard his mouth speak in complete disagreement with his mind. His heart had overruled all common sense in his head.

“Yes?” Daniel smiled, his face revealed his pleasure with the answer.

“Yes. If you really mean it.”

“Of course I mean it. I wish I could take you upstairs right now and show you how much I mean it,” Daniel beamed. “You keep that until we make definite plans. I want to make an honest man of you yet!”

“Well for now, we should go have dinner with your mother.” Brandon smiled as he pulled his keys out of his pocket “We’ll take the Lincoln, okay? Brandon Deveraux...kind of has a ring to it huh?” Brandon said hopefully. He hadn’t considered whether Daniel had meant that literally.

“Music to my ears,” Daniel smiled broadly.

The two men laughed nervously as they headed toward the downtown area of Atlanta and the meeting that Brandon hoped would be the beginning of a good relationship between him and Daniel’s mother.

## Chapter Twenty

Daniel breathed in the intoxicating scent of the Dolce & Gabbana cologne radiating from the tanned body of his handsome lover now lounging lazily beside him. Darkness made the room seem romantic and inviting. A thin white sheet draped precariously across the inviting area resting below Brandon's finely chiseled stomach.

Smiling broadly, Daniel watched Brandon nervously chatting on the phone with Quinton. He knew his best efforts wouldn't be close to whatever Quinton and Brandon would arrange. He knew that his mother had been instrumental in making the ceremony one that the two men could cherish. Daniel had no idea what exactly to expect, except that he would love it. Anything that Brandon had planned would be perfect. Of course Quinton wouldn't allow anything less than perfection.

"It's settled. Friday is the flight." Brandon smiled broadly.

"Is Mother okay with that?" Daniel asked cautiously.

"It was her idea, actually."

He was thrilled at the fact that Chloe and Brandon had been so well matched. The evening they'd officially met, Daniel had barely gotten a word in.

Brandon gushed on at what an amazing woman she was. His mother had truly shocked him when she'd told him to grab up this hunk of a man before she lunged on him herself. She ranted about what an unbelievable stud he was. Brandon almost seemed to believe her. There were many things his mother could be accused of, being a liar was not amongst them

She and Quinton had a fair amount in common. He'd never thought about it before. The primary difference being that his mother had the uncommon knack of being able to get her point across without ever having ruffled a single feather.

Daniel had avoided the conversation concerning Brandon's family. He seemed to be in an exceptional mood tonight. Several weeks had passed since the men had decided to make their commitment official, and no discussion had been made concerning Brandon's family. The specific absence of the conversation made Daniel very nervous. He felt he should at least mention it.

"Have you spoken to David?" Daniel felt his heart sink. His single conversation with the major had been cordial; he seemed to accept his brother for who he was. Daniel had great respect for David. He did fear, however, that because of his high-profile position and the tenuous situation with Brandon's father, attending his brother's wedding would be a problem for him.

"Of course, he's coming. You're okay with that, right?" Brandon paused nervously.

“Okay with it? I’m fantastic with it. I just wasn’t sure.”

“He loves you, Daniel. I love you, and that’s that.”

“I’m glad to hear it. I know it will be wonderful. I don’t have to wear a monkey suit do I?” Daniel queried.

“Of course not! Chloe already has something in mind for you. It’s going to be casual no matter what. I mean, it is on a beach.”

Daniel thought for a moment. His mother was not in the best of health. He wondered if any of this was a good idea for her. Maybe something private and at home would be better. Of course that wouldn’t be up to him. He couldn’t argue with all the forces at play here. Quinton, for one, had spent weeks obsessing over all the details. Brandon had carefully planned the logistics, and Daniel simply accepted that his lover would make it a memorable event for all.

The sight of Brandon, who’d spent weeks tanning nude by the pool in anticipation of the event, naked, happy and draped carefully to allow him a glimpse of the magnificent cock he so badly wanted, made his heart ache. Daniel’s mouth began watering as he watched Brandon doze, lazily satisfied he’d completed his task. He thought carefully on his next move. Should he disturb his sleeping lover?

Daniel carefully lay down beside Brandon, taking his hand and slowly tracing his fingers across the spectacular terrain that made up his lover’s body.

Each ridge in his muscular form made Daniel's body ache with desire. The heat radiating from the tanned skin was sultry and soft, almost like velvet.

Daniel found his fingers tracing the deep furrows of muscle that made the plateau of his lover's stomach. The scent of cologne that earlier tempted him now recalled many fond memories of the happy moments spent together. A warm flow of salty moisture fell precariously onto the body below him. A large lump rested deep in his throat.

An intense rush of emotion caused his heart to soar. His tears flowed despite his deep and enduring feelings of love, happiness, and contentment. He knew nothing in his life could ever replace the feeling he had for this man, this magnificent creature he found himself in awe of daily.

Feeling his body rising with anticipation, his cock rose with each movement of his fingers. Finally, when he could no longer resist, his lips grazed the warm inviting flesh before him. He moved the sheet from his lover's lap to reveal a semi-erect reminder that his touch, even in sleep, was a welcome friend.

Daniel slowly worked his mouth across Brandon's smooth, hard chest. He paused at the mountainous range of abdominal muscles. He carefully ran his tongue toward the object of his lust, pausing right before brushing the fine blond hairs crowning Brandon's substantial cock. He smiled as he saw his lover's cock rising to full erection.

“If you don’t stop that, I might have to have to do something about it.”

Brandon rubbed his eyes, stretching his arms lazily over his head.

“Really?” Daniel smiled coyly and defiantly swallowed his lover’s cock.

Brandon gasped as he involuntarily grabbed Daniel’s head, forcing him deeper onto his cock.

Moaning, Daniel smiled, breathing in the heady musk of his lover’s lust. It was an unfamiliar experience for Daniel, actually finding himself wildly aroused by pleasuring his lover. It made him pause momentarily from his cock sucking, feeling a little guilty for his years of self-indulgence.

Brandon whimpered loudly as Daniel’s self-reflection resulted in a conspicuous pause in the momentum. Daniel apologetically smiled as he swallowed Brandon’s cock deep into his throat. A momentary devilish thought had Daniel take his hands, cupping them under his lover’s ass. His cock strained against the covers as he felt the tanned flesh melt in his fingers.

Brandon moaned loudly at his advances. Daniel took some moisture from his vigorous dick sucking and inserting first one, then two fingers deep into the amazing ass now spread under his grasp. Daniel felt Brandon’s cock swell with an anxious jolt. He knew his lover hovered on the verge of an explosive ending.

Daniel released the throbbing cock from his mouth and ran his tongue sloppily up Brandon’s stomach. He heard his lover’s disappointed sighs. Daniel

slowly kissed his way upward. “Baby, I want you. I want you in me. I want to you to fuck me. Treat me like your whore. I want it; please, give it to me.” Daniel found himself desperate, begging.

Feeling uncharacteristically vulnerable, Daniel found his body aching for the unfamiliar feeling of being penetrated. He needed his lover to use him, to need him. He began to realize how powerful Brandon felt when he was being fucked. It was perhaps the most powerful sexual tool he had. To be needed like that was beyond intoxicating; it was like winning the lottery every day of the week.

Brandon pushed Daniel onto his stomach. He could feel his lover’s tanned, warm flesh pressing against his as Brandon kneaded his back. His lover luxuriously kissed his back and ran his fingers deeply, almost painfully into his shoulders. Daniel moaned with pleasure; he felt as if the two men were in each other’s minds. Somehow Brandon sensed that he needed a powerful lover tonight. Daniel needed to be needed. He needed to be led to the height of passion. He needed to be fucked, hard, long, and by the man he loved.

While his mind raced around the pleasure of his lover’s firm grasp, he felt a warm moist feeling part him as he lay. Suddenly he felt his body violated by his lover’s superbly talented tongue. Brandon’s tongue drove deep inside him. The familiar sound of lubricant as it left the bottle made Daniel’s cock jump to attention in anticipation of the pleasure to come.



Suddenly, without warning, the pleasure of his tongue stopped. Daniel moaned, begging, "Please, baby, don't stop. I'll do anything, just don't stop. Oh, fuck!"

Brandon pushed his cock hard against the moistened hole of Daniel's ass. He growled lustily into Daniel's ear as he pushed his cock harder against his willing body.

"What does my man want?" Brandon asked coyly.

*"I want your cock!"* Daniel begged.

"That's not a very polite way of asking for what you want," Brandon purred softly as he pulled his lover's face out of the pillows by the curly locks of hair, now damp with sweat.

*"Fuck me, please!"* Daniel begged again, now even more desperately. He felt Brandon's cock push past his hole and press hard between his muscular cheeks.

"Nope...not the magic word," Brandon said, now licking the back of Daniel's neck. His cock throbbed wildly from the obvious pleasure of keeping Daniel waiting.

Daniel lay facedown, drenched with his own lust. The sheets lay tangled around his body. His lover's weight pressed hard against him. The love of Brandon's kisses warmed his body. The raging cock pressing against him made his body ache with need. What did Brandon want from him? Finally, in a moment of

desperation, Daniel whispered, “Sir.”

“Excuse me?” Brandon purred again even softer.

“Sir, *please fuck me, sir!*” Daniel shouted.

Daniel felt his lover’s burning erection push past the outer ring of muscles that had become drawn tight with anticipation. A loud yelp escaped before he buried his face in the pillows. He had no intention of allowing his momentary discomfort to stop the fucking he so badly needed.

The warm burning of pain began to wash away, allowing his body to fully accept the engorged cock now pounding, filling him completely. The feeling of pleasure so fully engulfed him he gasped as he began grinding back and forth against Brandon’s cock and his own cock against the dampened sheets. He screamed loudly, “*Fuck your bitch, sir!*”

Brandon laughed lustily as he drove one final time into Daniel’s ass, pushing him fully down onto the bed, causing his cock to press hard between his stomach and the sheets. He felt his lover pump hot squirts of his love deep inside him.

“Like that, baby?” Brandon fully relaxed on Daniel’s back.

Brandon withdrew from his body and flipped him onto his side. Daniel drew in his breath as he pressed hard against Brandon’s still-erect cock. His mouth willingly accepted his lover’s kisses. His tongue bathed wildly in the warmth of the man he loved. He moaned as his cock began involuntarily pulsing his cum

everywhere between the two men.

“I’ll take that as a yes?” Brandon smiled broadly.

“Fuck, yeah.” It was the only response Daniel could muster.

## Chapter Twenty One

Daniel waited anxiously as the large jet carrying the guests for the ceremony touched down on the tiny Montego Bay runway. The airport, under perpetual construction, was less than impressive, but the resort that Brandon had chosen proved amazing. Brandon paced madly as Daniel began to hum.

“I should have flown them in on a private plane. What if some luggage gets lost? What if your mother is uncomfortable? What if...? I mean Christ, I can afford it now, why didn’t I just...” Brandon obsessed out loud.

Daniel took his lover by the hand. “Brandon, everything is perfect. You and Quinton have this thing planned to the last detail. So fucking *relax!*” He laughed as he watched Brandon’s face. An expression like a child being taken to a doctor’s office filled his being. Brandon’s eyes seemed to plead for some sort of reassurance.

“I’m sorry, Brandon. Everyone and everything will be on the ground soon, so we can all relax, okay?”

“Are you sure?”

Fearing the hysteria that would ensue if he were wrong, Daniel lied. “Of course I am.”

Brandon laid his head thankfully on Daniel’s shoulder. “Do you love me?” he

asked without looking up.

“Are you serious?”

“Do you love me?” Brandon asked again, this time more anxiously.

“Of course!” Daniel sensed the inadvisability of dissecting the question.

Daniel smiled as he saw the procession now exiting the small door into the humid air of the airport. He wiped a bead of sweat from his brow. He cursed the failing air conditioning as he headed toward the smiling faces.

“You look like shit!” Quinton grinned as he tousled Daniel’s matted mane of black hair. “I’m going to have to do *something* about this!”

“I sincerely hope so.” His smiling mother eyed the pair.

“Mother!” Daniel exclaimed.

“Quinton, sweetheart, please make my son presentable.”

“This is a conspiracy!” Daniel laughed.

Brandon grabbed Daniel quickly by the hand. “Look at that.” He smiled broadly.

Charles exited the plane, accompanied by Joseph, his arm locked securely around Charles’ waist. The two men were beaming. Charles looked at Brandon with a naughty grin. Brandon grabbed Quinton and pulled him to the side nearly toppling him as he dragged him away from the group.

“Spill!”

Daniel listened as the two gossiped, “They’ve been like a couple of teenagers since you left. Joseph stayed over, presumably so Charles wouldn’t have to be *alone* while the two of you were gone, and basically he hasn’t left. I think that Joseph has found himself a young stud boy.” Quinton’s voice sounded catty.

“Don’t be a bitch. Charles is sweet and Joseph will be good to him. So no more bitchy comments or I’ll spill some of what I know about you!” Brandon warned.

“You don’t have to be mean.” Quinton laughed. “I’m happy for them too. I was just being sarcastic.”

“I’m just glad they both came.”

Ben sauntered up to the pair. “Is there something I should know about here?” He laughed heartily.

“Of course, Quinton is being a bitch that’s all.” Brandon smiled.

“What else is new?” Ben quipped.

“Remember who shares your bed, big man,” Quinton warned.

The weary group continued on to the front of the airport, thankful that the air conditioning was operational in some part of the building. Daniel smiled as he waved the attractive Jamaican men carrying the mountain of luggage toward the waiting limousine. Brandon insisted that Chloe not ride in a van to the resort.

Joseph leaned in cautiously and whispered into Daniel’s ear, making a point

of avoiding Brandon's notice, "Where is David? If Brandon's brother doesn't come I swear it will kill him. You know that, Daniel." His voice shook with nervous fear.

"He's arriving in a couple of hours and will meet us at the resort. He's taking a military flight, partly so as to not potentially link the others in the group with Brandon. I know it seems overly cautious, but Brandon insisted."

"If it makes Brandon more comfortable, go with it. I need to warn you, Daniel. Brandon has been extremely anxious about all this. You need to keep in mind what's important here. You love him, that's what's important; not the trip, not the people. Brandon needs you to be understanding for him." Joseph reverted to his role as Brandon's therapist.

Daniel brushed the warning off, realizing his lover had been obsessively meticulous about every detail. What could go wrong? A momentary pause reminded him of the curious question earlier. *Do you love me?* Why would Brandon have asked him that?

"Hey, in formation, Marine!" Brandon ordered as Daniel found himself alone standing outside the limousine, all the other guests lined in the huge stretch Hummer. *A nice touch.* Daniel paused as he climbed into the military-style limo.

"I'm glad someone can get my son to hop to." Chloe grinned.

The group chatted nervously as the limousine sped down the littered streets of the Jamaican town. The trip to the resort took an hour, one which seemed

rather lengthy to Daniel, now free to ponder Joseph's warning. A deep furrow fell in his brow as he worried his lip. His mind raced. What had he overlooked? Had he been so absorbed he'd forgotten how much this meant to his lover?

Once again he found himself prodded as the group exited the limousine, now parting company to go to their respective rooms. Daniel smiled, watching Joseph kiss Charles passionately, tucked in a corner of the airport waiting area where they thought they'd go unnoticed. Joseph was, of all things, not interested in being a spectacle. A warm feeling of satisfaction filled Daniel as he saw the two men exit toward what he was sure was an evening of newfound pleasures.

A deep, intense kiss shook him from his thoughts. Brandon stood patiently in front of him, now deeply probing his mouth with his tongue. Daniel melted a bit in the depth of his lover's grasp.

"Thank you. I needed that," Brandon said, thankfully.

Daniel sighed. "No, baby, I needed that! Now let's get some rest. We have a big day tomorrow." The two men walked arm in arm toward the room that awaited them.

Daniel took the card and swiped it, opening the door. The waft of cool, scented air poured over him as the door stood agape. Brandon's cologne mixed with the scent of the massive flower arrangement the staff had placed in the center of the suite. The room was immaculate. The staff had done wonders while they'd



been gone. They'd left it in a mess, busy trying to make sure they'd not miss the plane.

Daniel watched Brandon undress quickly. His lover walked naked onto the private deck, breathing in the sea air. Daniel quickly showered and dried off. He towed his hair dry as he joined his partner on the patio. He enjoyed the softness of the thick terry robes the staff laid out for him and Brandon.

He walked up beside Brandon and put his hand across his back, kissing his neck. Daniel breathed in the scent of his body. The heat from the day had caused his body to permeate a masculine musk which mingled flawlessly with the expensive cologne that now made Daniel's cock jump to attention.

Brandon reached up and ran his arm across under his nose in a childlike effort of subduing his tears. Daniel realized Brandon was crying as he looked out at the serene scene before them.

"What's up?" Daniel kissed his lover again reassuringly.

"I'm afraid David hasn't made it or maybe he changed his mind. Or I don't know. I want my brother; I know it's stupid, I'm being a baby." Brandon sniffed as he pulled his composure together.

"Don't worry. He'll be here." Daniel smiled and tossed a robe toward Brandon. "You might want to wear this, or if my mother decides to take a walk on the beach tonight you might give her more information than she needs. She already

thinks you are the hottest man alive, no need to confirm that fact.”

Brandon laughed nervously and belted the thick white robe around his waist. Daniel returned to the room as Brandon lounged on the patio, sipping a glass of wine.

Daniel dialed the front desk, giving them specific orders to make sure he was aware the moment David arrived. He decided a good stiff drink might do Brandon some good.

“I’m going to make a quick trip to the bar, okay?” Daniel cheerfully called out as he pulled a pair of shorts over his semi-erect cock. Brandon’s body never failed to arouse him. He smiled as he draped a linen shirt over his shoulders leaving it open in the front. The dark fine hairs of his chest brushed sexily against the thin fabric. *Damn cock.* He grimaced, pressing his erection into subjection to remain decent for the public bar.

“No problem.” Brandon waved absently as he closed the door behind himself.



Daniel stood patiently waiting at the bar for his drinks, absently worrying about his lover now alone in their room. He felt an unfamiliar hand run slowly up his stomach and come to rest on his chest. The fingers slowly caressed his nipples through the open linen shirt.

“Waiting on someone?” A tall man with a carefully manicured hand, gleaming white teeth and the body of a fitness model asked sexily.

“Excuse me, but yes I am, and second, how the fuck do you know I’m even gay?” He forcefully grasped the handsome man’s muscled arm. His fingers dug deeply into his flesh, hopefully conveying the point that he was not amused.

“Shit, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to offend you.” The man’s reddened face grew hot as he stammered to reply.

“I’m here to marry my boyfriend. Get the picture, asshole? Fuck off!” Daniel’s patience with the forward man grew thin.

As Daniel watched the vanquished suitor retreat, he heard a man’s deep voice say, “Glad to see you aren’t subject to the demon Temptation. That was a rather handsome man you just turned down there.”

Agitated at again being the subject of unwanted attention, he angrily turned to see a uniformed officer greeting him.

“*David!*” Daniel ran, nearly knocking the large Marine off his feet. He forgot his usual desire for formality as he gave the man a huge bear hug. “I’m so fucking glad you’re here, man! Goddamn, I’m glad you’re here.”

“Wow. What a reception.” David smiled. “I am impressed though. I’m not gay or anything, but I know a handsome man when I see one, and not every man would turn down an offer from that fellow.”

“I love your brother, you know that.” Daniel took his drinks and led the uniformed man up to his room. “You have to see Brandon tonight. He’s a mess. He’s afraid you’re going to... Well, he was just afraid you might not show.”

Daniel pushed on the door to the suite and motioned for David to remain silent as he entered the room. Brandon stood quietly staring out the open patio doors as the two men silently entered. David put his military-issue duffle bag down silently as Daniel said nonchalantly, “I have what you were waiting for.”

“Just put it down on the table. I’ll get it later.” Brandon motioned, obviously referring to the drink Daniel had promised.

“Well I’m afraid I’m a bit large for that. I might break it,” David quipped in an authoritative tone.

Brandon whipped around, the robe now tightly wrapped around his body, obviously an effort to comfort himself. His eyes wildly flashed with excitement. He stood motionless for more than fifteen seconds before reacting.

“Are you sure you *want* me here?” David teased.

Brandon took a run toward his brother and grabbed him with all the strength in his body. He began rattling on incoherently: “I didn’t think you were coming. I didn’t think you’d really come. You’re really here. You’re really here.” He chanted over and over.

“Brandon, I wouldn’t miss your wedding for anything. Fuck what anybody

else wants; I'm here for you. You're my baby brother. Nothing tops that. That's what's important."

Daniel watched the large, stoic officer with Brandon in his grasp. He looked into David's eyes and saw the reddened evidence that his military formality meant nothing in the face of the undying devotion he felt for his brother. The two men embraced for what seemed like an eternity.

"Thank you." Brandon finally broke the embrace.

"No, Brandon. Thank you for having me be a part of *your* special day. I want you to make this the most memorable day of your life. It's about the two of you." David grabbed Daniel by the hand. "The two of you belong together."

Daniel felt the large calloused hand of the officer put his hand inside Brandon's.

"You let my brother get some rest tonight." David winked as he gathered his jacket and bags to find his room.

Daniel sighed deeply as he locked the door behind David. "Let's get some sleep."

Brandon dropped his robe, turned off the lamp and pulled the sheets back on the bed. Daniel breathed in the scent of his lover. His cock began to swell as he saw Brandon's athletic tanned body stretched lazily across the sheets. He lay down, covering his cock before Brandon noticed. Tonight he wanted to comfort

and reassure his lover. He didn't need to feel the pressure of sex on him tonight.

Brandon turned over, kissing Daniel lustily. "If you want me, baby, I'm yours." His hand reached down and pulled on Daniel's growing cock.

"Brandon, I want you to hold me. I don't want your body tonight, I want your spirit. I want your heart. Is that okay with you? You won't be disappointed?"

"I love you more than anything." Brandon smiled as he fell lifelessly into the sheets, obviously relieved that he simply had Daniel's love and support. The two men lay together and both fell slowly into a fitful sleep.

## Chapter Twenty Two

Daniel lay silently watching Brandon sleep. The sun began to rise in an amazing, colorful show over the ocean. The crashing of the Caribbean lulled the anxiety of the day away as Daniel kissed his lover reassuringly on the forehead.

A salty taste filled his mouth as he rose from the kiss. He looked in the morning light at his lover's hair. Sweat dripped like dew off the handsome man's furrowed brow.

Daniel realized the young man was obviously not sleeping as restfully as Daniel had. A loud click announced the lamp's light as he tried in vain to silently assess the situation.

Brandon's chest heaved wearily as if he were running a race; his body seemed paralyzed as his face contorted in an array of pained expressions. Daniel panicked, wondering what to do. Should he wake Brandon and risk having him relive the nightmare that so obviously had him in its grasp? Or should he hope that he'd simply wake on his own and forget the nightmare?

Remembering Joseph's admonition concerning Brandon's condition and stability, Daniel silently rose. He took his cellular phone to the bathroom to try to reach the therapist. His chest tightened to the point that he feared his heart might

explode. He quietly dialed the number.

A sleepy voice on the phone answered, "Yeah?"

"Charles, I need to speak to Joe right now. It's very important," Daniel ordered.

Daniel heard a sleepy Charles turn over and shake Joseph. "Get up, Daniel says it's important."

A much more frightened voice sounded as Joseph picked up the phone. "What's the matter?" The doctor's voice rose with each word.

"It's Brandon. He's having a horrible nightmare and I don't know what to do. Should I wake him or should I let him just sleep? I know it's awful, Joe. He's drenched with sweat, he's been crying, and he keeps begging in his sleep, 'I'll do better, please.' What should I do?"

"For Christ's sake get back in the room with him. Whatever you do, don't let him wake up alone!"

A sudden shriek sent a shiver down Daniel's spine and made him drop the phone.

Daniel rushed to the bedside where his lover sat, drenched with sweat, bolt upright in bed. "I can't do this!" Brandon gasped and pushed Daniel's hands away from him. He rose quickly and ran toward the door, still naked. Brandon seemed oblivious to his condition as he wildly tried to escape the confines of the room.



Daniel ran, trying to stop him as he opened the door to escape.

Brandon ran headlong into Joseph in the corridor. The collision seemed to jolt Brandon back to some sense of reality as he nervously looked for his robe. Joseph tossed Daniel a robe also, nodding for him to allow Brandon and him to talk alone.

Daniel felt his heart sink deep in his chest as he pleaded without words for Joseph to allow him to stay and comfort his lover. Joseph finally ordered him, “Daniel, *out!*”

Daniel was not fond of being put out. He shut the door behind him, standing anxiously in the hall trying to avoid eavesdropping. He heard a latch open and a sleepy man open the door to his room.

“Is everything okay, man?” David asked.

Daniel walked toward the man, but before he made it to the door he felt his knees leave him and he fell forcefully to the ground. His body refused to react. He began to weep like a child.

David ran toward Daniel, now in a heap on the ground, sobbing uncontrollably into his hands. “I want to make him happy, I swear. I just can’t take away the pain. I don’t know how to make him forget his horrible past.”

David sat down next to Daniel. Daniel began to compose himself, realizing the sight of an oversized Marine sobbing on the ground was not one David would

be particularly proud of. He was supposed to be Brandon's hero; now here he was, a hysterical mess. His lover was in pain and there was nothing he could do to comfort him.

"Daniel, stop feeling sorry for yourself. I know that's harsh, but you signed up for this tour of duty, soldier, now do what a goddamn Marine does! I want you to let Joseph help Brandon, then you get your ass back in there and make sure he knows no matter how crazy he might feel, *you* aren't going anywhere. You know that's what he is afraid of, right?"

"He knows I'm not going anywhere." Daniel grew agitated at the inference that he wasn't there for the duration.

"You just don't get it do you? My brother lost our mother when he was eight. He lost his best friend when he was killed by a drunk driver at twelve. He lost my other brother when he was sixteen. He was killed by friendly fire in Bosnia. Then his first love... Well, I know you know the rest. Finally, Otis, the one man my brother felt understood him, died, followed by my father's execution of my brother's memory with a public farce of a funeral. *You* do the math. Everybody my brother has loved except for me and you has left him, one way or the other. I'm his blood and he's afraid I'm going to leave him. Fuck, my father did. So why would he think I'd be any different? What makes you so special that he'd just assume you're exempt?"

Daniel's mind raced, attempting to take in the barrage of information. His heart sank as he realized the depth of his lover's pain. He fell hard against the wall. The walls began to sway as he stared at the ceiling. "How could I be such a dumb fuck?"

"Daniel, the only thing that would make you a dumb fuck is if you gave up on my brother now. That man has more love to give than you or I will ever understand. It makes me ashamed that I will never know the depth of love that man feels. You are the lucky recipient of that love. Don't squander it."

A loud click from down the hall made him jump as he heard a voice call, "Daniel?" Joseph leaned out from the room.

Daniel thanked David and rose to greet Joseph at the entrance of the suite. "Is he okay?"

Joseph silently pulled Daniel into the room. "Go to him."

Brandon sat stiff as a board on the edge of the bed. He had obviously showered and then dressed in a pair of Daniel's favorite silk lounging pants. Daniel caught a whiff of his favorite cologne as he slowly approached. He took a moment to lovingly adjust Brandon's matted hair. He kissed his lover very softly on the lips. Brandon sat staring painfully forward. "You think I'm nuts don't you?"

"I think I love you, and I want you to be my partner for life. I want you to be my family forever. If you'll have me, I want us to be Daniel and Brandon Deveraux

till you bury me. That's what I think." Daniel smiled hopefully.

"You still want me to be... Even after that?" Brandon gazed up, disbelieving.

"Nothing you will ever do or say could change the way I feel. If you don't want me, I'd understand that. That still wouldn't change the fact that I will never love anyone the way that I love you. That is a fact that time itself couldn't change."

Brandon smiled. He climbed into Daniel's lap. "Thank you for loving me. I'm just so scared, that's all."

Daniel fought the urge to argue. "I couldn't stop loving you if I wanted to, baby."

"I'd like to show my appreciation, big man, if you are willing." Brandon reached down, cupping Daniel's cock from underneath his robe.

"Like I could stop you!"

Joseph smiled, closing the door to the suite as the two men retired to the bed.

## Chapter Twenty Three

Joseph stood barefoot, like all the guests at the wedding, and took in the amazing array of flowers and the small gazebo perched flawlessly amongst the white sands of the Jamaican beach. The doctor smiled as he saw the handsome man in a clergyman's robe. As many times as he'd considered it, he never would be able to grasp the many sides of Brandon's friend Quinton.

Quinton struck an impressive presence in front of the congregation. His normal flighty persona and flamboyant mannerisms replaced by a reverence that befit the seriousness of the ceremony. He was the embodiment of dignity, truly a special man. Quinton had left his church to save them the trouble of removing him because he chose to accept his homosexuality as fact. Somehow though, he'd managed to keep his focus on the ministry he knew he'd been called to, rescuing the unloved. Brandon was perhaps the most precious and fragile of those.

Joseph surveyed the remaining guests, each one beaming. They all looked exceptional in their own way. Joseph watched the two men who faced one another in front of Quinton. Daniel looked like he would burst with pride.

Brandon was amazing to behold. The night before Joseph had breached a number of ethical boundaries, since he and Brandon were now working together

toward the goal of opening the center that would realize the vision of helping troubled young men find their way. But Joseph simply couldn't turn his back on a friend in crisis. Brandon had been through more in his life than Joseph could comprehend, much less explain away to him. He simply tried to give his friend the reassurance that he should learn to trust his heart. Obviously he'd decided to do that.

Brandon stood smiling in a white gauze shirt, un-tucked of course, and white linen pants. His blond hair glistened in the sunlight and his tanned skin glowed with love as he held Daniel's hand.

Quinton reached toward David, standing confidently next to his brother, who offered the two diamond bands the men exchanged.

Charles stood next to Joseph, his long blond hair blowing in the sea breeze. Joseph felt a lump in his throat as he considered his own feelings for the young man he'd only recently began to allow into his fractured heart.

Jolted by a cheer, Joseph realized that the ceremony was over and Daniel had taken the opportunity to embrace Brandon tightly and kiss him. It was a public display of what the doctor had come to recognize as a deep and real love.

The entire group cheered loudly, descending upon the men standing in the gazebo. Joseph smiled as Charles ran headlong toward the two men.

It was a good day. Joseph smiled.

“Think you’ll ever do it?” Ben whispered, leaning over to him.

The doctor smiled at Charles, the handsome young man now brushing his long blond hair out of his face as he grabbed Brandon and wildly jumped up and down. His excitement for his friend was touching. Brandon beamed as he showed the excited Charles the diamond band on his left hand.

“I never thought I would, but things can change quickly.” He smiled as he worked his way up, hoping to share in his newfound lover’s excitement.

*The End*

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Author Bio:

I know alot of you readers, assume that the person writing the books you read is really some soccer mom or a relusive hermit.... I'm sure some are, but as for me, I'm a real guy with a real life. I'm a fun guy who loves his job! I have been writing for many years, but only recently with the prodding of my partner of many years decided to take a dive into the romance/erotic novel field. I hope that my readers enjoy my books, I have been accepted on redrosepublishing.com as a new author.

My books have an edge that most erotic books in the “gay” genre generally don't have. For one they are actually written by a man. I genuinely enjoy other authors as well but felt that there was something missing from the work. My partner basically told me “either shut up or put up!” so I did. Soon my first book will be available titled "Dangerous Obsessions" I have submitted a follow up book “Dangerous Liasons” I hope that it will follow shortly. My books are not all romance and flowers. There is definetly a “hard” edge to them, but they do I think



reveal that even with an edge, men do love, and love deeply. I hope you will enjoy my work as much as I enjoyed writing it!

Red Rose Publishing

Dangerous Obsession- Now available in ebook and print

Dangerous Liasons

Dillon's Prayer- Coming Soon