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WICKED

Zoe Nichols



Just a
Game

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By

Zoe Nichols

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Dedication

For Jen
'Cause she's one of the cool kids.

"And fuck you very much," Charlie growled, tossing his cell on the coffee table and missing Sidney's bare feet by a scant few inches.

Sidney shifted his feet over and crossed them at the ankles as he leaned further into the couch.

"Guessing that was a 'no' too?" Having long discarded his suit jacket and shirt, Sid was down to his white undershirt and suit pants. He'd rolled up the sleeves and pants legs in concession to the sticky Florida humidity that managed to permeate the room even with the windows shut tight and the A/C on high.

"Yeah." Charlie ran an agitated hand through his hair. He'd dropped his jacket as well, but remained buttoned up. Uncomfortable, yes, but he was determined to get out of this state before things grew worse. "Nobody's willing to fly with the hurricane threat, which is ridiculous; these people have hurricane threats all the damn time."

Sid twirled the remote in his hand. "No, they fly knowing that a hurricane could happen at any time. When there's an actual alarm going on and fifty mile an hour winds, it becomes more than a threat." He pointed the remote at the TV, muted, and turned to the weather channel. A long red line rode the top and bottom of the screen with the words "Hurricane Alert" continuously scrolling across it.

"Face it, buddy, you're not getting us out of here tonight." Sid had accepted that fact long before Charlie did. But that fit. Sid was the moneyman for their advertising company, and the ruthless logic of a man who handled money all day long and knew exactly how far a dollar could stretch tended to rule his life. Charlie, however, was the promo man. He

pushed, twisted, and manipulated until he got what he wanted, which was usually whatever client he was sweet-talking. Together, they usually managed to bag the majority of their accounts, allowing them to have a bit of playtime wherever they happened to be. Which was what they'd done tonight in celebration of their new client.

Then the hurricane alert sounded, and Charlie wanted fucking out of Miami.

He grunted at Sid, unwilling to give up, and swung around to face the balcony window. With blinds left open, he could see straight out to the beach that was only five minutes away. It'd cost a little more—okay, a lot more—to get so close, but up until then it'd been worth it. Now, he could see the ocean's angry tossing, the bruised black hue of the sky, and the wind that bent the palm trees to damn near ninety-degree angles.

He swore, stalking over to the glass and pounding his fist against it. "Damn it, *no*."

"What's so wrong with getting a flight tomorrow again?" There was a quiet...*something* in Sid's voice that made Charlie's spine shudder.

Charlie thumped his head against the glass and almost jumped out of his skin when lightning zigzagged across the sky, illuminating the gray world outside. "Shit," he hissed, blinking away the edge of white dancing around his vision. "I just have a schedule." Charlie tossed the words in Sid's general direction. "We handle the surfboard people out here, get home tonight, and then start wearing down that ditzzy heiress-turned-fashion designer tomorrow."

Charlie didn't need to see Sid's face to know his mouth had twisted in that familiar smirk.

Sid's voice rang with barely leashed mockery. "For someone who makes a living pulling ideas out of his ass, you're awfully worried about something so easily adjusted."

Charlie's shoulders went tight no matter how hard he tried to keep them from doing so. "Don't do this, Sid."

"Don't do what?"

The sound of feet thumping carpet should not have been so loud. Charlie stared hard out the window as Sid's heat eased closer. This time,

he didn't jump when lightning flashed, but that could have been because Sid's mouth was dangerously close to his ear and Charlie had gone blind to the chaos outside. Instead, he watched Sid's reflection close in. The room's light threw them into a slight shadow, but he knew that face well enough without illumination.

"Don't follow your little rules anymore? This self-imposed fucking distance? Guess what, Charlie boy. You can't run away in a hotel room." There was a nasty smile wrapped in Sid's words as he drove in the fact that Charlie had been so desperate to ignore. "You can't run away at all anymore."

Fuck.

* * * * *

The first time they'd crossed that fellow employee-slash-friend line, they'd been drunk off their asses with the sweet taste of success and faint bitterness of beer on their breath. They'd also been in Vegas and, if there was a more oversexed city in the country, Charlie had yet to see it. Still, when they'd fallen bonelessly into their hotel room, play fighting and laughing too loudly, it hadn't been about sex.

And then, when a wrestling match over the remote—he could still hear Sid's breathless, taunting chuckle. "*C'mon, it's just porn.*"—resulted in clumsy petting, clumsier kisses, and still clumsier but so-damn-hot fucking...well, Charlie liked to blame the atmosphere. Walking down the Strip could get a guy hard if he paid enough attention to the sights.

In the morning, hung-over and avoiding gazes, they'd flown back to California with a hotelier added to their clientele. But when they'd ended up in Chicago to woo a snooty restaurateur three weeks later—Charlie knew a guy who knew a guy who drove limos and Sid had been tossed along to make sure Charlie didn't blow his budget—they hadn't been drunk. And it'd been another wrestling match because they were friends, damn it. Business partners, yes, but buddies since college. Which wasn't as far away as they had to pretend it was when they were trying to impress the big dogs. But that meant when a guy grabbed for the

popcorn bowl before the other was done sampling the wares, then a battle royal was justified, even expected.

He'd fucked Sid over the couch with slacks trapped around their ankles and shirts rucked up high. And several floors below them, a wild and rowdy Chicago had been drowned out by Sid's shout as he'd shot right onto the damn popcorn bowl, left overturned on the couch cushions with kernels spread out everywhere like tiny, buttery snowflakes. They'd gone home without the restaurateur in their pocket, but the game had sprung to fully acknowledged but deliberately—if not desperately—unspoken life.

Now, Charlie stood with Sid like a line of heat down his back, and he could barely breathe from the excitement and almost tortured anger. "I haven't been running." No, damn it, he hadn't been. Just desperate.

"Liar."

That one word sent a shudder down Charlie's spine.

"No..." His voice choked off when Sid eased closer, until his chest brushed Charlie's back.

"Then tell me why, through this entire trip, you haven't stayed near me for longer than a second." Lightning flashed, and this time, Charlie actually caught the rumble of thunder somewhere close. The crackling burst of white light threw Sid's face into sharp relief. Dark eyes, messy blond hair that couldn't look professional no matter what Sid did with it, the firm mouth with the surprisingly plump lower lip. Angles and edges; square jaw, straight nose.

Gorgeous bastard.

"Charlie." Sid's mouth flickered up, but the smile wasn't happy. "Pay attention."

"I..." He was. Shit, he always was. And wasn't that the problem? "What do you want from me, Sidney?"

Sid's mouth twisted. "Using my whole name. Nice distance there. Running again?"

Charlie turned, sick of being accused and feeling like a coward with his back turned. If they were going to have this damn fight, it was going to be face to face. "How many times do I have to tell you that I'm not fucking

running?"

"Prove it." Before Charlie could shoot back a snide retort, Sid backed him against the glass, slapped a hand on it, and had his mouth inches from Charlie's. Warm breath puffed on his mouth, smelling like the tang of the beer they'd had just a few short hours ago. "Kiss me."

Charlie swallowed. Fear, need, want, desire, terror...it all wracked up his spine and shoved through his skin to spear his heart. "Sid..."

* * * * *

"Yeah, I like that," Sid said over him, halfway to naked. Slacks unbuttoned, unzipped, hanging on his lean hips. Lips moistened by an eager tongue hovered over Charlie's. "Say my name like that again."

Charlie gulped hard and thought he could hear the echo in the room. He grabbed Sid's biceps, dug his fingers in. "Sid...no."

Those dark eyes—puppy brown in the sunlight—were nearly pitch-black now. "Don't like it when you say it that way."

"I'm serious."

Sid leaned down, and his lips were almost there. Almost. "So am I." His eyes flickered, hot and determined. "Kiss me."

Irrational panic rose to choke him off. "Fucking hell, I said no." He shoved, and Sid lost his grip on the bed, slipping backwards. They were the same height, two-hundred-something each. Charlie got him to move, but Sid only went so far.

Strong hands, hands that had stripped him and left him more bare than he'd ever wanted to be, clung to the mattress at the last minute, keeping him from taking a spill. Sid's face was hard, frustrated. "I can shove my dick in your mouth but not my tongue?"

Charlie shoved up until his back was against the headboard. He couldn't do this battle lying down. "You know what this is, and kissing is not part of it."

"Kissing is part of sex unless we haven't been really fucking and this is all some long-lasting wet dream of mine."

Charlie ignored the sarcasm, barely. In his head, this made sense. It did. He just had to make the words match it. "I'm not your boyfriend or your lover, Sid." The words knocked whatever Sid was about to say right out of him, and he

stared at Charlie with a tightly drawn face. "This...this is a game, a sex game. Thrills and come."

Sid's jaw worked hard from side to side, the scrape of teeth audible. "So lemme see if I got this right." The slow drag of Sid's voice worked its way down Charlie's nerves but not in the sharp, needy way it normally did. He felt as if needles were stabbing into his skin. "We fuck only. Because mouth to mouth contact will taint what we have here. Which is...?"

"Sex," Charlie confirmed. He tried for a smile because he had to. Otherwise, this might begin to sound really fucking stupid. "Really good sex."

Sid's face was like stone. "Really good sex," he mimicked, silky soft.

"D'you get it?" Charlie bit back the pleading. Because Sid had to get it, had to understand why. Well, no, he didn't need to understand. He didn't even need to know why Charlie was so damn insistent on it. As long as he did it, accepted it.

Then Charlie wouldn't have to worry about falling in love anymore.

* * * * *

Charlie cleared his throat and the memory. Had it been only a month ago? It felt fresh, sticking to him like a web just woven. His own fear of falling in love, of losing himself to the ultimate con game, had put him on edge. He'd thrown out sticky bit of webbing after sticky bit until he was trapped in his own doing. "Sid, I don't want to. Haven't you accepted that by now?"

"No." Sid's voice was as cold as his face had been the day Charlie slapped down the boundaries. "I can't accept something so fucking stupid. Not anymore."

Then, he'd found a way to coax Sid into a warmer mood. It had taken hours and a trip to a glitzy New York bar with expensive beer that had tasted like sand in Charlie's desert-dry mouth, but Sid had finally agreed. And Charlie got to keep his cowardice all to himself, like an invisible ulcer that grew every day he was in Sid's company.

But now, everything he'd built, the walls he'd thrown up, were beginning to crack...because Sid didn't want to play anymore. Charlie had

to try to salvage it even as the sound of crashing exploded like a bomb in his ears. Or like thunder. The glass behind him rattled with it, making him flinch. He swung from it on instinct, pushing Sid back and ducking away. Sid's snort was as bitter as his words had been.

"I'm not running, damn it." Charlie spun at the couch. "In case you hadn't noticed, there's a hurricane coming, and I'm not keen on being impaled by glass."

Sid snorted again, but he moved closer. A foot from Charlie, he stopped and crossed his arms. Muscles swelled, nearly distracting Charlie. Nearly. Sid's stance kept him from sinking into forgiving, blinding lust. The braced feet and tense shoulders clearly said *Hands Off*.

Charlie dug his fingers into his pockets to keep from trying to touch anyway. "Look, I...I'm not comfortable with kissing. Or hugging. Or even cuddling."

There was no way Sid couldn't dispute that. Charlie had rolled away every time, avoiding the urge to sink into the inviting warmth of Sid's post-coital embrace. If he had, Charlie wasn't sure he'd ever leave it.

"And I could deal with that."

"So the problem is...?"

Sid's mouth jacked up in a twisted parody of his usual charming smile. Stupid how it still made Charlie's heart zoom. "Funny thing occurred to me. While I let you slam all these rules in place and followed them, it sank in that you were the only one who couldn't seem to abide by them." Bare feet whispered on the carpet as Sid crept forward.

Heart knocking hard against his ribs, Charlie eased back. "Yes, I did. They were *my* rules. I obeyed them to the letter." No matter how much he'd ached to sink into Sid and never leave.

"But you said it was a game." Sid was almost gliding now, and for a big man, it was damn near spooky how soundlessly he moved. "A sex game, isn't that what you said? 'Thrills and come?'" Dark humor roiled through Sid's voice. "I might be getting the coming part, but fuck knows I'm not getting any thrills."

Charlie hit the countertop that broke the line of the living room and started the kitchen. He jolted in his surprise. Too late to move though. Sid

was on him, hands braced on the counter on either side of Charlie's hips. Eye to eye, nose to nose, it was hard to avoid the direct gaze trying to see into Charlie's head. He tried anyway, staring at Sid's hair to avoid eye contact.

"I'm not thrilling enough for you?" Charlie tried to keep his voice from shaking. "So sorry."

"Don't worry." The words were crooned but were in no way soothing. "I'm gonna fix that."

Charlie jerked his head down at Sid's words, then jerked again when Sid wrapped a hand in his shirt and pulled him forward, a sideways push, and a foot swiping the feet right from under him. He twisted, hit the floor with a thump that sang through his hands and knees. The ache worsened when Sid draped himself over him, weighing him down until he grunted.

"The fuck?"

"Shh..." The touch of familiar fingers singed him even through his clothes. Sid peeled Charlie's shirt from his pants. The buttons were ignored, the undershirt bypassed, and then Sid's fingers were on his skin, hotter than he remembered and all too familiar. Charlie's stomach spasmed against his will as those fingers swiped over him then dived for the waistband of his slacks.

Charlie had to work for the words, pathetic when Sid had only touched his damn stomach. "What're you...ah... What're you doing?" The belt loosened, the button slackened, the zipper groaned. Chilled air made him twitch and shudder.

He should stop Sid. He should, he knew he should...but Sid's touch was his Achilles' heel. It had been since the first time. Still. "Sid?" He grabbed one of the working hands, squeezed.

"Tell me why you run," Sid said after a minute.

Charlie dropped the hand as if it burned. "Sonuvabitch. I *don't*." But he didn't stop the hands that stripped him. His pants slipped down, and a hand found him through his briefs, embarrassingly hard and already slick.

Sid folded his fingers into the material, smoothing over the outline.

"Not now." He squeezed, stroked. Charlie saw stars, lightning, and tasted euphoria. "You never run from this."

Charlie groaned, eyes slamming shut. "Sid, c'mon. This isn't *Oprah*. I just like the fucking part of sex." He talked fast, lest the grip on his dick push out more than pre-cum. Like a confession. "Nothing wrong with it; there's nothing *wrong*." *Except the fact that I love you, and love's the biggest con in the fucking business.*

Charlie knew how easy it was to twist the truth and make it prettier than it really was. It was called salesmanship and promotion. He was brilliant at it.

Sid's hand stilled. The frigid air was nothing like the chill that saturated Charlie's heart when Sid's fingers slowly withdrew. When he grabbed Sid's wrist this time, it was with more desperation than he could ever remember feeling.

"Sid? Sidney?" He twisted to look over his shoulder, and Sid's face was stark in its utter blankness. "Fuck, Sid, what's—"

"Can't do it anymore, Charlie. I tried, but I can't." The words drove in so deep that Charlie thought he'd feel them, trapped and festering in his heart, until the day he died.

Sid's hand slipped free, and this time, Charlie let him go. He stared blindly at the spot where Sid had been long after Sid's bedroom door had quietly shut.

* * * * *

When the lights went out, Charlie could hear the wind like a banshee's howl. He'd pulled himself over and onto the couch, but that was all the energy he had. The TV's dead stare matched the way he felt on the inside, down to the empty hole in his chest where his heart used to be. He'd rescued a half-finished pack of Pepsi from the fridge along the way when the clawing his stomach bordered on sadistic, and the still-cool can cradled in his palm just made him wish for a beer.

That way, he figured, he'd find some oblivion. Because it'd be a long time before he had some type of peace. Another swig of Pepsi that

should have been beer, and Charlie sank back into the cushions, watching as Mother Nature beat the life out of mankind's creations. The wind had picked up, trees swung wildly to and fro. The furniture bolted to the balcony whined from the pressure, and things whipped across the sky; magazines, boxes, and all the miscellaneous garbage found in a major city.

Worse, it had begun to rain. It was the perfect crescendo to a night where Charlie had managed to destroy his life by sheer stubbornness. He lifted his Pepsi in a mock toast to himself.

"At least he doesn't know."

"Doesn't know what?"

It should have surprised him. But the truth was that Charlie was working on not feeling anything ever again. "Nothing important."

This time he caught the whisper of Sid's feet on the carpet. The dark sky against a grayed-out everything else let in an unnatural type of light. So he could see when Sid passed in front of him. Charlie made note of the lack of regular clothes and the appearance of loose pajama bottoms. Pajama bottoms that he hadn't needed for the last two weeks. Charlie finished his soda, set the empty can on the carpet, and snagged two more, handing one to Sid before popping the tab on the other.

A minute of quiet sipping and swallowing, then Charlie, staring at nothing, said very quietly, "I'm a con man. I spin beautiful, faultless tales for people to fall in love with. They adore whatever I tell them. They're enchanted with the pictures I paint with an insincere smile on my face." Soda bubbled from the can, and he realized he'd begun to crush it. He relaxed his grip and drank, ignoring the way the can's newly sharpened edges bit into his fingers. "And when it's all over and the new product is out in the world, that love is a faint and distant memory, forgotten in the thrill of something new."

He didn't have to look to know Sid was staring at him. "But you always deliver. There's not a thing you've promised that the company hasn't made a reality. A con would be if you didn't deliver something at all."

Charlie watched the rain fall for a long minute. "And what if I didn't? What if, after all that work, all that teasing and plying of promises

fell through? What's to love about a failure?"

Sid shifted next to him, and Charlie finally looked. Sid stretched on the couch, back against the armrest, one leg bent on the couch and the other braced on the floor. He was painted in the odd gray-white light and reminded Charlie of a painfully modern photograph made yet starker by muted tones of black and white.

"I'm not exactly an expert, but it strikes me that love's kind of a forever deal. If someone loves something or someone, they're probably in it for the long haul. Even if something or someone new catches their attention, or if the something or someone they love fails to always be what they want when they want it." Sid shrugged, just a line of muscled shoulder jerking up and down. "That's my take anyway."

Charlie stared down at his soda. "I love you, you know." Hardly the way he'd ever thought of saying it, but then he'd avoided even thinking about it. So it really didn't matter.

He could hear Sid's smile in the warm rumble of his voice. "I kinda hoped. It's better when this isn't one-sided or one-handed."

Charlie snorted. "Classy."

"I'm an A-plus guy." Sid edged closer. "If I touch you, you gonna freak?"

Charlie put his soda on the table and kicked his shoes and socks off to give his mind a minute. When he settled back on the couch, his heart was doing jumping jacks in his chest. "No," he managed evenly. "But only if you don't kiss me."

Sid inched a little closer. His heat stretched out and warmed Charlie from the inside out. "But I want to. Give me that, Charlie. I have everything but that, and I want it all."

Charlie shook his head, trying to ignore the tremble building the closer Sid came. "No." He took a deep breath, feeling a lot like he was throwing himself out of plane without a parachute or a helmet. "A kiss is like...it's like a promise. Sometimes it's a test drive, and if it's good, it's a promise that things are gonna get better." He looked down at his hands. "If I kiss you, a guy that I'm head-over-ass for, then I'm promising you something else entirely."

"What?" Sid was pressed against him now, warm cotton and warmer skin.

"That I'm not gonna fail. That I'm not gonna make you want someone better." Charlie blinked as a hard, wrenching panic threatened to rip his heart into bloody shreds. "It's the greatest con ever: convincing you that I'm good enough."

A hand caught his neck and turned him. Sid's eyes were endless in the dark, and the curve of his mouth was even more starkly masculine in the shadows. "Part of a con is convincing someone to take a chance. Let me take a chance on you, Charlie."

Charlie wasn't sure what he was going to say back when he opened his mouth. But he lost it when Sid's lips bumped the corner of his and found him, his tongue slipping through Charlie's defenses. Charlie resisted, trying to ignore the bold stroke of Sid's tongue over his. Sid slipped back, and Charlie started to relax, disappointed against his will that Sid had given up so quick.

Then he grunted in shock when Sid folded himself onto Charlie's lap, knees opened on either side of Charlie's thighs and crotch warm against him.

"Ah, Sid." He sounded as dazed as he felt, and it took everything in him not to rub against that hard warmth.

"Persuading you now. Shut up." Sid found his mouth without qualm this time. With this second more determined stroking, Charlie's defenses went crumbling. He kept his hands at his sides, but Sid didn't let that stop him. His hands caught Charlie's cheeks, scraping over the stubble already making an appearance, and kept him still. Sid kissed him slowly, his tongue doing shallow dips inside. Lips coaxed Charlie's open against his will, and he made a noise that was damn embarrassing as the kiss trailed along a lazy, meandering path.

His hands hooked on Sid's thighs for anchor when his body went terribly light on the inside, threatening to send him floating away. Eyes squeezed shut, Charlie tumbled headfirst into the need curling through his veins in smoky tendrils. His lungs protested when he pulled away, but whether it was because he lacked air or needed Sid was completely

beyond his knowledge. Slitting his eyes open, he found Sid smiling.

“Not so bad.” Rough, Sid’s voice was like silk catching on splinters.
“Some more practice and you might even be good at this.”

Tension simply vanished when Charlie laughed. Shaken to the core, feeling as if he’d swallowed a fucking cloud, and Sid was making him smile. Was it any wonder why he loved the schmuck?

“Fuck you.”

The spark in Sid’s eyes killed the laughter and kicked his heart up twenty or thirty beats above the norm.

“You making an offer?”

Charlie moved his grip from strong thighs to a flimsy waistband. When he dipped his fingers in and found only skin, he hissed out a stream of blue-colored praise. “Making a vow.”

It was Sid’s turn to curse, the words so soft they barely disturbed the air. “All right then.”

* * * * *

They had to break up to get the essentials. Outside, the wind had gone from a howl to a piercing, high-pitched scream, and the rain was an endless, damn near horizontal, onslaught. More than one tree looked in danger of snapping in two. An emergency call from the front desk on a separate line delivered good news and bad. The good news: the hurricane was supposed to arrive on the other side of town. The bad news: it was definitely coming, and they were ground zero for the resulting storm. Maybe not a window-breaker like Charlie had thought, but nasty enough.

Still, in concession to it, they moved the couch as far away from the window as they could and draped bare-assed on top of it. The same lazy, floating seduction overtook them, and Charlie found out everything about Sid’s body all over again. The ticklish spot beneath his left nipple, the way a sharp jab of tongue in navel made him jerk, the tension that snapped his body rigid when Charlie bit the tender flesh high on the inside of his

thigh. He filled himself on Sid's scent, spicy-hot beneath the musky aroma of sex.

Mouthing the thick vein beneath Sid's cock, Charlie rubbed lube-slick fingers over Sid's hole, his thumb idly stroking the skin in between. Sid's groan mimicked the thunder, and the leg braced on Charlie's shoulder twitched. Charlie kept hold of Sid's thigh and squeezed in response.

"Feel like I'm...being tortured here," Sid garbled the words around another louder noise when Charlie stroked tightly wrinkled flesh. "Fuck, don't tease me."

Charlie smoothed on a little more, working his fingertips in. When he was satisfied, he gave Sid's cock a final, sucking kiss and straightened up. "So damn bossy." He threw Sid a smirk, dumping lube on the condom already rolled on him. "I forgot that."

"In a day? Geezer." Sid laughing at him. Yeah, he could get used to that.

"Barely twenty-seven." He lined up, wrapping a hand around the thigh by his face. Sid grabbed onto the couch back and braced on an elbow to watch.

"Senile." Sid mumbled the word on a breath as Charlie worked in, smooth and slow. "You're twenty-eight."

Halfway in, Charlie stopped and leaned over Sid, grinning despite the way his body trembled at the stall. "Hey, Sid?"

"Huh." Sid was concentrating on something—Charlie couldn't begin to figure out what. He waited though, until Sid's eyes, glazed even in the dark, met his.

"Shut up." He shoved in, Sid's slackened muscles giving way without protest. In, shit *yeah*, he was in. Sid groaned a mess of words and noises that danced like sparks of fresh lightning down Charlie's spine. Charlie started moving, and the sparks went a little crazy, promising to turn into pure electric need.

He could deal with that.

Then Sid rolled his hips, bearing down, and Charlie had to stop when pleasure washed up in a black wave, blinding him for a moment.

"Motherfuckin' sonuvabitch, will you *move already?*" Pissed off Sid was a dangerously hot Sid. Charlie choked on a laugh, shifted, and started rocking. Still slow, so slow, but the tug of back and forth made thick, hoarse sounds pour from Sid's mouth, and that was too damn hot to resist. He fucked his way back in, found Sid open and inviting, and couldn't keep from picking up the pace. Sid twisted under him, a hand on his dick and his back flat on the cushions again.

Lightning flashed, thunder roared, and low in his hips, Charlie was unbearably needy. The burst of rampant star-bright want brought him low to suck bruises into Sid's flesh wherever he could.

"Fuck, fuck, fuck," Sid chanted, and a hand buried in Charlie's hair, tugged and twisted.

The pain started the race. Hips slamming home and grinding, hands digging in the cushions, Charlie stopped playing and fucked. His stomach crushed Sid's fingers against his own dick, and the sensation of knuckles and hot, wet skin rubbing against him drove him on. Speaking didn't happen; he lost his words in grunts, half-swallowed curses, and the smell of Sid's warmed-up skin.

When the storm hit full on, Charlie rolled them right off the couch. His skin burned, pain burst through his limbs and his dick, but worst of all he wasn't in Sid anymore. But there Sid was again, looking pissed off and horny on top of him.

"Don't ever fucking do that again," he hissed as he sank back down on Charlie's cock. "This isn't porn, dumbass."

"Sir, yes, ah fu..." Charlie lost the rest of the remark when Sid picked up where they left off, grinding down on Charlie's dick in a dirty roll that blew Charlie's mind somewhere to China. Bending his knees, feet braced, Charlie fucked up while Sid fucked down.

Heat built up in his hips, and Charlie caught Sid by the neck, jerking him down. "Damn, I love you." He put the words on Sid's tongue and forced them back with his own until Sid swallowed them down and echoed them with a moan...right before he tightened up around Charlie's dick and blew across Charlie's stomach as though he'd been waiting just for that. His eyes were wide and filled up with enough words, need, and

love to drown out everything else.

Falling into that endless gaze, Charlie shot until the world went dark and blissful, and he had the feeling he was smiling the whole way.

* * * * *

He awoke to a cleaner gray light. Sid was collapsed beside him, and outside the world was a mess. But inside with the air smelling like sex and a bone-deep satisfaction melting every muscle in his body, Charlie was more at peace than he could ever remember being. He might have made a contented noise or something, because Sid stirred a minute later, eyes opening slowly.

Deep brown eyes brightened once they focused on Charlie's face. "Hi." Even just awake with a voice fucked-out hoarse, there was a hint of that smirk.

"Hey." Unwilling to move much, Charlie flicked his gaze upward in the general direction of the window, but Sid didn't move to look. Oh, well. "Storm's over."

"Still alive, too." Sid's smirk crept out a little more.

Charlie couldn't resist a small, smug smile back. "Imagine that."

Mellow silence reigned, luring Charlie back to sleep. He shifted into Sid's warmth instinctively and couldn't stop a rumble of approval when Sid rolled in closer. He was an inch from oblivion when Sid's poke brought him back.

"Mmm." He cracked an eye open and found Sid smiling. No smirk. Huh.

"Guess what?"

Charlie lifted a brow, the most he could manage with sleep pulling at him. Sid leaned in until that smile was Charlie's whole world and everything he'd ever wanted. He could get real used to that smile.

"Delivered."

It took him a moment, with the afterglow and melted brain cells and all, but when he got it, Charlie couldn't stop laughing. "Dumbass."

"You like it." And *there* was the smirk.

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Charlie rolled in and kissed it. “ It’s growing on me.”

The End

Author Bio

Zoe Nichols is a writer of manlove and homoerotica. That's the current life. Background wise? At some point in time, she realized that she liked writing. That's when she discovered romance and the almighty Happily Ever After ending. Then she discovered alternative lifestyles and the much more entertaining Happy For Now ending. Which means now she writes gay and lesbian erotic fiction, and those boys and girls are happy as can be when she gives them what they want. She graduated high school, dodged college, moved out to Vegas, discovered that rent, bills *and* tourists do not mix, and moved back to California. Now, Zoe is reconsidering the call of higher education while she writes happily for hours on end and pretends that the Day Job doesn't exist (at least until pay day).

www.zoe-nichols.com