



STARTING OVER

Annmarie McKenna

Loose Id

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ISBN 978-1-60737-428-2

Available in PDF, HTML, Microsoft Reader, and Mobi

Editor: Mary Harper

Cover Artist: Natalie Winters

Printed in the United States of America

Loose Id.

Published by

Loose Id LLC

870 Market St, Suite 1201

San Francisco CA 94102-2907

www.loose-id.com

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About this Title

Genre: LGBT Erotic Contemporary

Two years ago, Aaron lost his partner in a drowning accident. He's trying to move on, but letting go of the past, of the life they were building, is hard. One thing he knows he's *not* ready for is a new relationship, but Garrett and Dane are determined to change that.

Lifepartners Garrett and Dane, a cop and an ER doc, bring Aaron home after an accident. They're happy in their light Dom/sub relationship, fulfilled and in love, but they've been keeping their eyes open for a third. It doesn't take long for them to decide that wounded, pretty Aaron is exactly who they've been looking for.

The three get along great, but Garrett and Dane have their work cut out for them in convincing Aaron there's a time for starting over.

Publisher's Note: *This book contains explicit sexual content, graphic language, and situations that some readers may find objectionable: Anal play, BDSM (mild), male/male sexual practices, ménage (m/m/m).*

Chapter One

Garrett Renfro set his cruiser at sixty-five, slow enough to get everyone behind him to slow down, but fast enough that he wouldn't be given the finger by those brave enough to pass him. He usually liked to make drivers sweat, then chuckle to himself when he looked in the rearview to see a nervous Nellie shifting in their seat.

What'd they think he was going to do? Whip his car around and tell them to pull over for being nervous?

Traffic was thick with a heavy Labor Day weekend crowd headed to the beach. Garrett wished he had the same destination in mind. The water would feel fantastic. A hell of a lot better than the sweltering heat of the pavement. He felt damn sorry for the guys who'd been dealt pier patrol today. Riding those bikes in this sticky heat would suck.

Up ahead, brake lights flashed, indicating some congestion. Nothing new considering they were closing in on the public beaches. Probably half of Florida trying to get there all at once. At least the traffic didn't decelerate much.

Maybe he should move to Alaska. He'd bet they didn't have traffic like this. And they for damn sure didn't have the heat.

But then he'd have to leave behind Doc, and no way in hell would he do something stupid like that. Garrett grinned and adjusted his dick behind the fly of his pants. His ass still hurt from Doc's attention to it that morning. Dr. Dane Tripp knew how to handle a whip, not to mention Garrett's balls and cock.

Just as quickly as he thought of his cock in Doc's mouth, Garrett had to reposition himself on the seat. Fucking plug up his ass. Jesus. The things he didn't do for his lover.

As if he weren't accommodating enough for Doc's prick. As if Dane hadn't stretched him until Garrett swore he'd had the barrel end of a baseball bat shoved up inside him. But no, Doc had insisted Garrett go on patrol today with a plug. And he was supposed to change in the locker room at the precinct, same as always.

“Might as well have put a cage on my dick while he was at it.”

Sad truth was, Garrett would do it. He'd change in the locker room like he did every day. Wouldn't be the first time he'd gone to work with some torture device fitted somewhere on or in his body.

A cherry red Mustang Cobra flew by his cruiser doing at least eighty-five, passing Garrett as if he'd been standing still.

“Son of a bitch.” He flipped on his lights and siren and stomped on the gas. “Are you blind or just dumb?”

Not only was the ass going way too fast, he was also darting in and out of traffic, finding an opening only to be slowed up by a different car in front of him. By the time Garrett caught up a few minutes later, they were really into the congestion.

And one of Garrett's worst nightmares played like a movie in slow motion right before his eyes.

A motorcyclist changed lanes, unaware of the speeding car behind him. At the same time, the fucker in the Cobra flew up on the bike, too late to stop and nowhere to go as he found himself pinned between two cars. He slammed on his brakes, tires squealing and smoking as his car locked up. The front bumper clipped the motorcycle, spinning the machine.

In hindsight, Garrett thought the rider did a damn fine job of trying to compensate, but in the end he lost the battle. Cars scattered, trying to avoid hitting both bike and rider as one went left and the other right.

Garrett screeched to a stop, sideways across the three-lane highway, halting the already slowing traffic. The rider flipped head over heels twice before rolling on his side the rest of the way.

Again, Garrett credited the man doing his best to get out of the way rather than panicking. At least he'd succeeded in getting himself out of more possible harm.

The entire scene probably lasted less than a minute. A loud slam of metal on metal farther behind them, where cars were stopped on the highway, punctuated with the man's final roll. He came to rest on his back about three feet from the shoulder, completely motionless.

“Fuck, fuck, fuck.” Garrett jerked his seat belt off and jumped from the car, then ran to the downed rider, praying he was still alive.

The scream of tires told him the Cobra was pulling a hit-and-run. Stupid bastard. Garrett barked into his shoulder mike the multivehicle accident with injuries, his need for ambulances and possibly Life Flight, and the plate number for the cherry red Cobra. Shithead wouldn't get far. He'd just bought himself a nice little bout of jail time.

Garrett knelt next to what he could now see was a supine man, his leather jacket—thank shit he was wearing one in this heat—torn to shreds and his once-shiny black helmet cracked and scratched white from the concrete. He flipped the visor up to find the man's eyes closed, and put a hand on his chest.

At least he was breathing. Not a lot, but breathing all the same.

“Did you see that asshole, Officer? He hit this guy from behind.” The woman shouting came and stooped next to Garrett. “Can I help?” He was glad she was calm, because his heart was still beating a mile a minute.

“Happen to be medical personnel?” He was going to need someone to cope with the obviously broken shin bone in the man's right leg.

“No, but I saw the whole thing.”

Garrett nodded. “Good.” Not that he needed any witnesses; he'd seen the whole damn thing too.

“Anyone else hurt bad?” he asked, afraid to leave the rider.

“I don't think so. Lots of people walking around their cars. I think he took the worst of it.”

Garrett's thoughts exactly. The accident could have snowballed into something much worse. Other than a few fender benders that he could see, there wasn't the twenty-car pileup that could have happened.

“Maybe you should take his helmet off,” another woman suggested.

Garrett shook his head. “No. If he has a neck injury, I could make it worse. It stays on for now.”

Reaching for the rider's hand and carefully lifting it, Garrett took the man's pulse. Not nearly as quick as it should have been under the circumstances. Not a good sign. He wished to hell the guy would wake up and give him some encouraging signal. Garrett had no wish to talk to grieving relatives today.

His breath caught when the rider moaned, a soft sound barely audible over the buzz of excited onlookers gathered around them. The man's lips parted on the puff of air.

Garrett considered the small breath a thumbs-up of sorts.

Chapter Two

Aaron Gardner moaned and attempted to shift out of the damned uncomfortable position he was in where something sharp stabbed into his back.

Drunk out of his mind? Hungover? Really well fucked? What had he been doing?

Jesus, his head was fuzzy and tired. So damn tired. And he fucking hurt like crazy. Everywhere.

What the hell had happened? Aaron tried to open his eyes, but even that simple action hurt. Bells rang in his ears. No, sirens. Not bells. The noise reverberated through his brain, setting off a series of shock waves, making him want to curl into the fetal position.

His body didn't respond the way he wanted it to.

A shout sparked another explosion of pain behind his eyes. Someone groaned.

“Hey, buddy, hang in there. Ambulance is almost here.”

Ambulance? Aaron's heart thudded. Who needed an ambulance? Him? For what? Why couldn't he fucking think?

“You with me, man? Can you open your eyes?”

The deep voice soothed Aaron's nerves, despite its concern. If the guy wanted him to open his eyes, he was going to have to shut up, or his voice would lull Aaron to sleep.

“Come on, buddy, you wake up and I guarantee the EMTs'll be a whole lot nicer,” he cajoled. “They don't much like the nonresponsive ones. Makes 'em really nervous.”

Aaron's chest hurt, and still what the man said didn't sink in. Breathing was becoming an issue, making him even more light-headed, and the fantastic-smelling man next to him wanted him to open his eyes?

Fantastic-smelling?

Aaron lifted his head a fraction of an inch. Or tried to anyway. Something compressed his face, leaving it feeling squished and giving him a warped sense of hearing. He didn't remember his head being so heavy either.

“Whoa, whoa. I said open your eyes, not get up. Lay still.” A warm hand settled on Aaron's shoulder and gently pushed. Not that it mattered. Aaron wasn't going anywhere. Not with the streak of white-hot pain that shot down his spine.

Jesus Christ. His goddamned back and arms were on fire. A feeling of dread spread through him. He hadn't been fucked into the mattress; he was hurt. Badly, based on the agony he was in.

The sirens grew closer, and he began to hear other noises. Hushed voices, shouting, cars.

Cars?

“You got a name, buddy? EMTs also like it when I can tell 'em at least *some* info. They're kind of a picky-ass group. Ten bucks if you open up and show me what color your eyes are.”

Despite his confusion, Aaron snorted. “Blue,” he managed to murmur, then wondered if he'd spoken at all.

“Blue. Strange name, Blue, but hey, mommas aren't always with it when giving birth, are they?”

God, don't make him laugh.

“Eyes. Blue. Name. Aaron.” Talking hurt.

“Ah. Gotcha. All right, then, Aaron, the bus just pulled up, and if I don't see your baby blues before Tanning and Johnson get here, I'm going to have to leave you at their mercy.”

Aaron could swear by the tone of the man's voice that he was hitting on him.

He had to be dreaming, since he couldn't remember what had happened, but his head was clear enough to pick up a come-on in spite of the pain.

He blinked his eyes open and saw...nothing.

“There they are. You were right; they are blue.”

Aaron blinked again and pressed down the panic clawing its way from his stomach. Nothing but murky gray.

“Where are you?” he whispered. *Bad dream. Bad dream, Aaron, that's all.*

“Right here, Aaron. I'm right beside you.” Worry laced the words.

Aaron swallowed. “Can't see you.”

“Shit.” Aaron heard the curse despite the muffling of his helmet.

Helmet! Yes. That's what squished his face. He'd been riding his motorcycle. To where? Had he crashed? Done something stupid? Hurt someone else? His stomach rolled, making him nauseated. Ralping in his helmet would not be a good thing.

A hand grabbed his—at least he could still feel his hands, which meant he wasn't paralyzed. Not completely, anyway. He'd yet to test his feet. Aaron held on to his lifeline and wiggled his toes in the riding boots he wore, then cried out in both relief and shock. Moving his toes sent a lick of fire up his right leg all the way to his groin. More sweat beaded over his already sopping face.

The man holding his hand grunted. “For the love of God, if something hurts, don't move it, okay, Aaron?”

Aaron could tell the man was gritting his teeth the same way Aaron was. His fingers were gently pried from their death grip around the man's hand.

Aaron panicked again, his breath wheezing in and out of his lungs, but the only thing he could think about was not wanting to lose his anchor.

“Shh, relax. I've got you.” His fingers were resituated. “Bout broke my hand is all.”

“What do we have?” A new voice interrupted Aaron's thought process.

“Motorcycle accident at about sixty-five miles per hour. Hit hard. Bike's over there.”

A surreal feeling was implementing itself in Aaron's brain, and the exhaustion flooded back in.

“Unconscious for several minutes...” He listened to his anchor tell what had happened but didn't really hear him as he droned on.

Something tugged at his jacket, sending a shard of pain to his left shoulder. Aaron sucked in a breath and fought the wave of dizziness currently making him feel like he was on a carnival ride spinning around and around.

“He says he can't see.” The comment was soft, but Aaron heard anyway.

His ears perked, but what he wanted to say wouldn't come to his tongue. There was pressure on his forehead above one eye, and then the foggy gray cloud.

A prick in his arm, the murmur of voices, a touch on his right leg, and he screamed, arching back.

“Shit. Aaron.” Hands on his chest held him to the ground. “Calm down. Listen to me. Aaron.” His anchor snapped his name, but hell if Aaron could fathom why. Tears fell from his eyes. He felt as if they'd flayed his leg open and poured in lye.

He thought he heard mention of a fracture. Colored dots were swimming in the darkness of his vision. Aaron bit his lip. Hard. And tasted metal.

“...something for the pain?”

“Not with a head injury...”

“Life Flight's on its way...”

“...allergic to anything, Aaron?”

Were they asking him questions? He had no way to answer them. Aaron squeezed his anchor's hand, the only thing partially holding him together.

“You're going to be...”

Aaron didn't hear the rest of what his anchor said, because he was turned to the side and his leg was ripped from his body. He was going to bleed to death now.

Death looked pretty good at the moment.

Cool air shot through his mouth and nose, choking him and making his eyes water even more. His arms were brought to his sides, his left shoulder wrenched from its socket.

First his leg, now his arm. Fuck if he weren't being eaten by a pack of wolves instead of rescued from a bike accident.

“The copter's here, Aaron. They're going to take good care of you.”

Aaron tried to shake his head but couldn't move. They'd pinned him in somehow. The grip on his hand loosened.

“On three. One, two...” His body lifted, making Aaron groan, and then they were moving, drifting closer to the sound of a thumping *whir, whir, whir*.

His last insane thought before succumbing to the blackness threatening to drown him was that he'd never ridden in a helicopter before.

Chapter Three

Garrett leaned back against the wall beside the cubicle they'd taken Aaron in and waited for Doc to come out. At least Aaron was in good hands with Doc. Garrett still felt the grip on his hand where Aaron had held on to him as if his life depended on it.

Something about Aaron had stirred every protective instinct Garrett possessed, and he would bet his badge Dane would be similarly affected.

Dane spoke over his shoulder as he stepped out. "Have them prep the OR." He turned and faced Garrett, a serious tilt to his lips.

"Gar." Dane's hand came up to press on the wall next to Garrett's face. "You okay?"

"Yeah. How's Aaron?"

Dane's shoulders slumped. "He'll live. Not without a lot of pain for the next few weeks, but he should make it. Could have been worse."

"Yeah. I saw how worse it coulda been."

Dane's hand cupped Garrett's cheek in a tender touch. "Rough one, baby?"

"I watched the whole thing unfold before my eyes."

"I'm sorry."

Garrett knew Dane truly was sorry. They'd both encountered more than their share of the atrocities of life, and neither particularly wanted to see more.

"Make it up to you tonight?" Dane smiled and pressed himself against Garrett's chest, his lips finding Garrett's unerringly.

"Absolutely. You'll have to for this butt plug deal, you dick."

“Now, now, baby. You know you like the feel of being full all day. I bet you were hard just thinking about it, weren't you?”

“Asshole.” Garrett's breath heaved in and out of his lungs, his cock hardened to the point of pain. Doc knew exactly the effect the plug would have on Garrett.

“That's Mr. Asshole to you.”

Garrett snorted and shoved Doc off him. “You have a patient waiting.”

Dane cocked his head and regarded Garrett critically for a moment. “This guy's had some effect on you, huh?”

Garrett blew out a breath and leaned his head back on the wall. “Yeah.” He looked into Doc's eyes. “We ran a check. He has no family, and he's new to the area. There's no one to help him when he gets out.”

Dane hung his head. “That's a damn shame. Surely he has friends?”

“We have his previous address, and we're looking into employers, but until we find someone...”

“He won't have anyone to keep him company.”

Dane's intuition into Garrett's mind was one of the reasons Garrett loved the man so much. “I can't leave him alone. Not when he's hurting so bad.”

Doc smiled and nodded. “No, I don't suppose your find-a-stray-and-pick-him-up ass can.”

Garrett smiled and kissed his lover full on the mouth, thanking God and everyone else who cared that they'd decided to go public with their relationship eight months ago. Hiding it for the two years previous had been stressful as all hell.

Instead of the knee-jerk reactions they'd expected, both of them had been shocked when no one had really seemed surprised by their announcement. It's why they got away with affectionate touches at work nowadays.

“So can I bring him home? Can I, Dad? Can I?” Garrett couldn't help but tease. On the flip side, he wasn't all too sure he was teasing. He'd helped a lot

of people over the years, but none so far had affected him quite like Aaron had. At least, he'd never wanted to take one of them home.

Doc laughed. "Your exuberance is overwhelming, baby. And just what will you do if he doesn't want to go home with a couple of gay men?"

"Pout. Flash my puppy-dog eyes at him."

"And if he's involved with someone?"

Shit. Garrett really hadn't thought that far. "Of course he'll go home with her." He cleared his throat. "Or him."

One of Doc's eyebrows quirked. "Again, my question is..."

"Yeah, I know, I know," Garrett said, reading Doc's mind. Not all men were comfortable with the gay lifestyle. But damned if he hadn't seen something in Aaron's eyes while the younger man had looked blindly out the visor of his helmet.

Garrett wiped a hand down his face and sighed. Perhaps he'd been seeing what he wanted to see. Mostly what had been plentiful on Aaron's face was raw pain, confusion, and sheer fear. He clearly hadn't remembered what had happened. Probably a good thing.

"So how is he, really?"

"Stabilized for now. Going into surgery for the fractured tibia and fibula. Dislocated shoulder, nice little concussion, banged-up ribs. He's damned lucky, that's all, but he'll be a while recovering," Doc acknowledged, still looking at Garrett with a funny expression.

"And the blindness?"

"I suspect it has something to do with the head injury. Most likely temporary. The helmet probably saved his life."

The tension in Garrett's body eased a bit at the news. He'd hate to think Aaron would be blind on top of having to recover from all the other injuries. Aaron was obviously fit, by the looks of his body. Garrett had a feeling being

laid up for any amount of time would get to Aaron sooner rather than later. It would for Garrett anyway.

“Garrett?”

The soft question had Garrett straightening from his slouch against the wall, but they were interrupted.

“Dr. Tripp?” Dane looked over his shoulder at the nurse who'd poked her head out. “They're ready for transfer.”

Doc nodded, then turned back to Garrett and stuck a finger under his chin. “He's going up now. They'll fix what can be fixed and then help ease what they can't with rest and painkillers.” He paused and searched Garrett's face. Again Garrett wished the man couldn't read him so well. “You'll be all right? Going back to work?”

“Actually my shift ended about a half an hour ago. I think I'll hang around until he gets out of surgery.”

Dane gave him a half smile. “Does your interest in Aaron have anything to do with what we've been talking about the last several months?”

Christ. Did it? Was he seeing a possible third partner in their relationship? Doc and he had talked about such a thing several times. Both of them were happy being a couple, but at the same time, occasionally there was this feeling that something—or someone—was missing from their lives.

Neither had had the energy after working so many hours to go physically trolling for a third, but the scenario had always been there in the backs of their minds. If they should ever come upon someone who caught their eye...

“I can't say, Doc,” Garrett said truthfully.

Dane watched him a moment longer before clearing his throat. “Okay, then. I guess I'll have to meet this Aaron when he's not unconscious.” He smiled. “As for you, go home when he gets out of surgery. I expect you to be waiting for me, baby. Ready and willing.”

Garrett's cock surged to attention, and he snorted. "Have I ever been unwilling?" There wasn't much Doc could dish out that Garrett didn't love.

Doc leaned in close to Garrett's ear. "I want you on your hands and knees, naked, when I walk through the door, your hole still plugged and your cock ready to burst. But beware, if you come beforehand, you will be punished."

Garrett swallowed back a moan. His lover didn't want him to come beforehand, and he was about to climax right there in the hallway of the hospital's emergency room. Doc's lips landed on Garrett's for a quick, gentle kiss.

"Are we clear?"

"Crystal." He did moan when Doc reached an arm between Garrett's ass and the wall and tapped on the plug. Garrett sucked in a breath. "Fuck."

"Later, baby."

Two nurses—one male, one female—appeared and headed for Aaron's cubicle, ready to deliver him to a surgeon.

Chapter Four

Aaron moaned at the throbbing in his head, trying to remember where the hell he was. He could have sworn there was something about a helicopter, but why the shit would he have been in the vicinity of a helicopter?

“Hey, you're awake.”

Okay, so he did remember the voice. His anchor. Now if only he knew why he needed someone to ground him in reality.

“You've got a nasty broken leg. They fixed it in surgery. Probably hurt like a son of a bitch for a while, though.” Warm fingers touched his arm, comforted him.

Aaron swallowed. He wasn't too concerned about the leg. In fact, beyond a floating sensation, he wasn't feeling much of anything other than the headache. He wanted so badly to open his eyes and see the face of the man whose voice soothed his soul.

But the idea scared the hell out of him. Would he be able to see, or would the grayness from earlier still be there?

“Hey. Aaron. You in there?”

His hand was gripped, and he could have sworn a thumb traced over the back of it.

“Yeah.” Aaron cleared his throat and winced at the pain that shot through his head. Painkillers that numbed the body but not the head. Nice.

“Good. Now let me look at those baby blues again.”

Aaron's heart thumped erratically. The machine beeping behind him confirmed it, even if the pounding in his chest didn't.

“You'll never know if you don't try, man.”

Jesus, could the guy read his mind or what?

“Might have been the conk on the head that caused it earlier, ya know? Could be gone by now. If it's not, Doc says it might take a little bit for the swelling to go down, but he doesn't think it'll be permanent.”

It. Blindness. Might not be permanent. Like David *might* have woken up from the coma that drowning had put him in. His doctor had said the same words. “*Might take a little time, but I don't think it's permanent.*”

David, Aaron's lover and best friend in the world, had died without ever waking up. Dead was permanent any way you looked at it.

Aaron groaned at the renewed memory of his partner. Was there a reason he'd been saved instead of being allowed to join David?

“I'm waiting.”

“Pushy bastard.” The words were out of his mouth before he could think.

His anchor snorted. “You can call me all the names you want if you open your eyes. I promise I'm good-looking and won't scare you back into the dark.”

Aaron couldn't help but smile, despite his slip into the past. He sucked in a slow breath. The hand holding his squeezed encouragement. He almost preferred sliding into oblivion over opening his eyes. Shouldn't he be drowsier with whatever drugs were keeping the pain at bay?

“Come on, pussy.”

Aaron snapped his eyes open and stared incredulously at the man. “Did you just call me a pussy?” The words cracked out of his dry throat.

The man smiled. “Yep.”

Aaron blinked. The darkness was gone. His vision was still blurry, but not dark. He blinked several more times to clear the fog and finally had a face to go with the voice that poured like pure, melted, sweet chocolate over his skin. Dark brown hair, which appeared as though fingers had been rifled through it

a few too many times, eyes the same rich brown, strong cheekbones, a squarish chin, and a slightly crooked nose that looked like it'd been broken.

“Beautiful.” Christ. Had he spoken out loud? He'd chalk that one up to the drugs too. Must be a truth serum in there somewhere.

The smiled turned into a shit-eating grin. “Who, me?” He preened like a peacock.

Aaron laughed, then sucked in a breath when the pain, which had been suspiciously absent, reared its ugly head.

“Shh. Here. Have a drink of water. But not a lot, or you'll get me booted if you yak everywhere.”

A straw hit Aaron's lips, a drop of water wetting them. Suddenly he was parched and sucked like crazy on the straw, nearly choking on the flood of cool liquid going down his throat. The spasm of coughing brought on a fresh wave of hurt.

“Damn it. I said not a lot. I'm not even sure you're supposed to have anything with all they've got you hopped up on. Gonna make Doc punish me.” The last part was mumbled, but Aaron heard it clear enough.

He lifted an eyebrow. The man looked down at him, completely unashamed but with a funny expression, as if he wasn't sure about something.

“Is Doc your...wife?” Had he met any women doctors? His brain was clouded over. He couldn't have said much about anything that had happened. Hell, he couldn't even tell what day it was. And his ass was numb. Well, his whole body was, but his ass was starting to feel like it did when you lay on your back too long.

The man snorted. Again. “Doc hears you say that, he'll probably slip you a placebo instead of this morphine.” He held up a little stick thing attached to a cord with a red button on top.

Aaron licked his lips. “So...father?” His eyes were getting heavy. Why?

“That'll get you smacked upside the head.”

“Garrett. What the hell are you talking about with this poor patient?”

“Oh hey, Doc.” Garrett spun around, giving Aaron a nice view of a tight ass in light brown pants. In fact, the whole outfit was brown now that he looked closer. A tan shirt, a gun at the hip, handcuffs hanging at the small of his back. *Garrett* was a cop. His anchor was a cop.

“The man's been through the wringer, and you're going to smack him upside the head? I thought I taught you better.” *Doc* stepped farther into the room. Whereas Garrett was dark, the doctor was light. Pale skin, light blue eyes, blond hair more tamed than Garrett's. Both were well built, as if they spent time working out, and tall. Taller than his own five-eleven.

And both of them mouthwatering.

Had to be whatever drugs they'd given him. Made him loose-lipped, delusional, and horny. Ah fuck. He couldn't be, could he? Not fucking hard at a time like this. He'd check, but his one arm was pinned somehow, the other one was being held by Garrett, and if he lifted his head, he was sure it might roll off his shoulders.

“Dr. Dane Tripp. Nice to meet you. I'd shake your hand, but one, it'd probably hurt too much, and two”—he gestured to where Garrett gripped Aaron's hand—“I see you're already preoccupied.”

“Shit.” Aaron tried to retract his hand from Garrett's, but Garrett held firm and wouldn't let go. *What the hell?*

“Doc, this is Aaron.”

Dr. Tripp picked up a chart from the end of the bed. “Mmm-hmm. Aaron Gardner.” He flipped a page over. “They put a rod in your tibia, Aaron. Surgeon'll probably be here later to talk to you about it. Other than that, dislocated shoulder, bruised ribs, concussion. Have you met with your primary yet?”

“Primary?”

“Physician.”

“I thought you—”

“Nope. Only down in the ER.”

“Oh. Then no.” The last time he'd been to a doctor was a few years ago. Back when David still lived and he'd forced Aaron to go in for a raging case of flu. That doctor was two hours away. Aaron pushed his panic aside and swallowed. “When can I get out of here?”

Dr. Tripp smiled and hung the chart back up. “You've only just arrived. What's your hurry to leave?”

The fact that he hated hospitals? David had died in one. He wasn't about to stick around to be picked off next. Irrational maybe, but he'd spent so many days holding David's hand and willing him to come back, only to lose him in the end anyway.

Doc sighed and grasped the rail at the foot of the bed. “A few days, probably.” He paused and regarded Aaron suspiciously. Aaron was half afraid to hear what the man had to say. He wished he'd get it the hell over with and leave, so he could sleep. His eyelids were starting to feel like lead weights.

“Aaron?”

He snapped his eyes open, only realizing then that they'd closed. “Huh?”

Now the doctor crossed his arms over his chest and eyed Garrett for a moment. Something passed between them. A look Aaron had shared many times with David.

Love.

“Do you have somewhere to go when they release you? Family in the area? You're going to need quite a bit of help in recovering from this.”

Aaron glanced down at the sling holding his arm in place. David would have been the one to take care of him. “No,” he murmured. “I just moved down here.” The memories of their shared place had been too much to bear. It had taken him two years to let go, but he'd finally done it and gravitated to the

beach to try and deal with the shambles his life had become. So far he'd been unsuccessful.

"I see."

"Stay with us." Garrett's offer made Aaron jerk his attention to the man still holding his hand.

"What?" Aaron's heart thumped.

Garrett nodded. "Stay with us. The house is plenty big enough, there are two of us, and we usually work different shifts, so there'd always be one of us there to help you. I'm a cop, and he's a doctor. How much safer can you get?"

"You don't know anything about me." Aaron stared at the man as if he'd grown horns. His eyes narrowed. Had he grown horns? His vision wavered. "What if I'm a burglar or a Peeping Tom or, or...a serial killer?"

"The Peeping Tom I can handle. Bring it on. The other things? I'll slap my cuffs on you and read you your Mirandas," Garrett countered. "Wait, unless you don't want to stay with us because we're gay."

Well. How was that for laying it all out there? Aaron shifted uncomfortably. In more ways than one. What gay man wouldn't want to go home with two gorgeous men oozing sex? On the other hand, he was a wreck. Still not over the loss of his partner, and doing his best to gather his courage and get back into triathlon racing. Had David died in any other way, getting in the water again might not be so damn difficult.

"Of course, there's always the chance he'll slap cuffs on you for an entirely different reason," Tripp murmured, probably not meaning for Aaron to overhear, and rubbed at his wrist with a gleam in his eye.

Aaron felt like he'd been sucked into an alternate dimension.

"How 'bout we let the poor man sleep on it. Or take a few days, Gar. He isn't going anywhere, and I think you've succeeded in shocking the hell out of him. Besides, we're losing him to the pull of the morphine."

"I didn't take any."

“I did it for you.” Garrett held the plunger up triumphantly and pushed the red button with his thumb. Hadn't he already pushed that? Aaron remembered something about those things being on a timer, so he didn't think it would release any meds until a certain amount of time had passed, but now he knew why his eyelids were so heavy.

“Don't get too excited. You're on a very low dose because of the concussion. I'm afraid you're in for a long night. At least the nurses here are good-looking.”

Garrett snorted. “If you go for that sort of thing.”

“You.” Doc pointed at Garrett, then stabbed his thumb over his shoulder. “Get out. And remember what I said earlier.”

“Yes, Master.”

“Impudent little...” Doc glanced back at Aaron. “Be glad he's working tomorrow. He won't be around to make you more miserable than you already are.”

“Hey.” Garrett apparently took offense.

Doc ignored him. “Try and get some sleep. I'm on in the morning, so I'll come up and check on how you're doing.”

Aaron nodded, his eyes only open a slit, and wondered why he cared if they came back to see him. Garrett dropped Aaron's hand, and once again his eyes flew open, his panic returning at the loss of contact. For two years he hadn't wanted to be touched by anyone, and suddenly he craved this man's touch.

Definitely the drugs, he thought, the blackness pulling at him.

Then why had Garrett's voice soothed him so much *before* the drugs?

Chapter Five

Dane let himself in the door to his and Garrett's house, tired from the shift he'd just pulled, and even more tired thinking about following it up with tomorrow's shift. The only thing keeping him awake was the thought that Garrett should be on his hands and knees, naked, in their bedroom, waiting for him right now. From the way the lights were off in the front of the house, he at least knew Garrett was in the bedroom.

He dropped his keys on the entry table and strode down the hall, his cock gearing up for the night to come. If he saw anything other than tan, plugged ass when he opened the door...

"Hell yeah, baby. Weren't up for another round of punishment tonight?"

Garrett remained silent. Dane took the four steps to reach his lover and stroked a hand from the crack of Garrett's ass to his shoulder blades, then into his hair, massaging his scalp for a second. He reveled in the way Garrett's back arched at the caress.

"He okay?" Garrett asked to the floor.

Dane scooped a handful of slight curls and pulled them back to make Garrett look at him. "He's fine. I left him with competent nurses, who I'm sure are all fawning over his perfect body."

Garrett licked his lips. "It is nice, isn't it?"

"Stunning." Dane let go of Garrett's hair and stripped his scrubs from his body, leaving himself in his boxers. "Knees," he said softly and exhilarated in the way Garrett slowly complied, his eyes downcast.

“No hands.” Dane shucked the boxers, his cock bobbing a few inches in front of Garrett's face.

Garrett leaned in and went to work. Dane inhaled and held his breath. Garrett had an exquisite tongue and mouth, absolutely made for sucking dick. He thoroughly enjoyed doing it too, for which Dane was extremely grateful. 'Course, Garrett liked receiving as well, to which Dane was more than happy to comply.

He looked down. Garrett's tongue bathed Dane's length from root to tip, circled the head, teased the sensitive spot of nerves, traveled down again, and his mouth captured one of Dane's balls. He nibbled delicately and sucked. Dane widened his stance and grasped his lover's head with both hands. He should have sat down.

Garrett moved again, licking his way to the head once more. He took the mushroom-shaped head into his mouth and drew on it, using the flat of his tongue on the rim and pointing it to flick at the opening.

“More.” This always reduced Dane to monosyllables.

Garrett steadily proceeded to swallow Dane's cock inch by inch. The man was a deep throater, where Dane had to make up for his own gag reflex by using every trick in the book. He nudged the back of Garrett's throat, and Garrett resituated himself to get a better angle before forging on.

“Shiiit.” Sweat had beaded on Dane's upper lip, and his thighs started to quiver. There was nothing better than being sucked by Garrett. He almost wished he hadn't told him no hands. Right about now a finger or two up his ass would feel damned good.

The suction on his dick intensified. His balls tightened in anticipation. Any second now...

Garrett started to move. Up and down, slow then fast, strong then soft. It was enough to make Dane's eyes roll. He fisted his hands in Garrett's hair and flexed his hips, shoving his cock deeper when Garrett retreated.

“Almost.” He panted with the effort to stave off the coming orgasm. He never wanted it to end. Never wanted to pull out of Garrett's hot, wet mouth. He loved him. Every tanned morsel of his six-feet-two-inch frame. Every scar, every laugh line, every goddamned thing about him. And he wanted him to be happy.

“Fuck.”

Garrett knew the precise moment to go in for the kill. He drove downward on Dane's cock, burying his nose in Dane's pubic hair, and sucked hard.

Dane shattered, semen spurting down Garrett's throat while the man swallowed each and every drop Dane had to offer. Then, when the climax finally ended and Dane could barely stand, Garrett licked him clean, released his still-semihard cock, and sat back on his heels.

While trying to catch his breath, Dane stroked Garrett's head.

“Stand,” he finally said.

Garrett did, coming toe to toe with him. Since Dane stood at six-three, they were pretty much eye to eye. Dane pulled him close with a hand around the back of his neck and kissed him, savoring the taste of Garrett's mouth and the flavor of his own cock. They angled their heads in perfect rhythm, used to each other.

“Thank you,” Dane whispered, his forehead on Garrett's.

“Thank *you*.” Garrett wrapped his arms around Dane's back and hugged him tight, their cocks rubbing against each other and keeping Dane's from deflating entirely, even after the explosive climax.

“Shall we remove a certain toy now?”

“Please.” Garrett trembled in Dane's embrace.

“On the bed, then, ass up.”

Garrett whimpered.

“Did you change at the station, Gar?”

“Yes, asshole.”

Dane chuckled and definitely got the last laugh when he knelt behind Garrett and reached around to his lover's front to grasp his very hard cock in his fist. Garrett's earlier tremble turned into a deep shudder and a gasp as Dane pumped his length.

“Oh, Jesus.”

“I don't think Jesus can help you right now, baby.”

Garrett groaned into the mattress. “This is cruel and unusual punishment, Doc.”

“Yes. It is. And you love it.”

“Fuck you.”

“I think I'll let you.”

He groaned again and shifted on his knees, trying to push his cock through Dane's fist.

Dane used his free hand to twist the base of the plug in Garrett's ass.

“Shit, shit, shit.” Garrett's body tightened and bowed. As Dane tugged on the plug, Garrett scooted back, trying to follow.

Dane released Garrett's cock and pushed on his lower back. “Stay.”

“Damn it. Not fucking easy to do, you know? Oh, wait, you wouldn't, now would you? You don't wear one of these to work.”

Dane clucked his tongue. “Keep talking back to me and I'll leave it in.”

“Fuck.”

He tugged again, withdrawing the smooth rubber toy from his lover's opening, soothing the ring of muscle with his thumb. Dane pulled the plug completely free in slow motion, prolonging the sensation. Garrett slapped the mattress with his palm.

The rosy aperture puckered for a second, then opened nicely, begging for attention. Dane sprawled across the bed and retrieved the lube from the nightstand. After lubing his fingers, he slid two deep inside Garrett. They

weren't much smaller than the plug itself, but Garrett's ass held him snugly. He reached for Garrett's dick again and at the same time thrust his fingers in and out of his lover's hole, being sure to hit Garrett's prostate with each pass.

The cock in his hand was hard as steel, obviously ready to blow. Dane gripped the base tight until Garrett stopped undulating beneath him and started cursing him. He smiled and added a third finger to Garrett's asshole.

Garrett grunted at the added pressure and pushed back. Dane continued stroking the thick cock, bringing Garrett closer to the edge. Sweat glistened on Garrett's back, his shoulders were taut, his spine rigid. Only a couple more seconds.

Dane pushed his fingers inside and stroked the hidden bundle of nerves while he jerked his other hand on Garrett's prick with quick strokes until he reached the point of detonation. Garrett's belly heaved, back arched, and all the while Dane milked his lover's spurting cock until he'd drained him. They collapsed together on the bed, sweaty and breathing hard.

“I love you, Doc.”

“I love you too, baby.” Dane folded Garrett's body into his, spooning him. His last thought before allowing sleep to claim him was, what would it feel like if another man were here to share this with them?

Chapter Six

Sunlight streaming through the blinds woke Aaron, not that he'd been fully asleep. The nurses hadn't let him close his eyes before it seemed they were on him again, waking him up. He blinked back the blurriness and breathed a sigh of relief that he could still see. His back and ass ached from being immobile for so long, his ribs throbbed, and he wouldn't even think about the pain in his leg. He hoped to shit they upped his meds today, or else they were going to witness a grown man cry.

And what the hell time was it? The remote for the TV sat way out of reach, so he'd been in silence for however long he'd been a prisoner of the bed. At least prisoners got a toilet. Aaron had to pee so badly, he was sure his eyes were yellow.

"Knock, knock." The door opened, revealing the doctor from last night. The same one obviously living with Garrett. The same one who made Aaron's cock rise to the occasion.

Aaron had news for his dick. It wasn't going to be getting any for a while. Aaron's left arm was out of commission, and jerking himself off with his right just didn't cut it.

"You survived the night?"

"Barely." His throat was dry. As many times as the psycho nurses had checked on him, not one had offered him a drink. He looked longingly at the pink pitcher on the tray beside him. To tell the truth, he wasn't even sure there was anything in it.

"Need a drink?"

“Yes.” Finally, someone who would actually help. He felt his cheeks heat because of the issue he really needed help for.

Dr. Tripp poured a cupful and then held the straw in Aaron's mouth and let him sip the cool water.

“How's the belly? No nausea?”

Aaron released the straw and sighed. “No.”

“Good.” He replaced the cup on the tray. “Anything else I can help with?”

Aaron closed his eyes. God. Damn. It was either buck up and ask the man or beg him to send a nurse. Either way the doc would know what Aaron needed to do.

The doctor chuckled. “Let me guess.”

Aaron couldn't even look at the man. Christ, couldn't he have at least been an ogre? Not someone hot enough that Aaron's dick semitented the sheet. After he'd yanked off the damn gown that had pissed him off, he'd then pushed the sheet down to his stomach during one of his hot moments, leaving his chest bare and his nipples hard as rocks.

“Can you get—” Aaron started before getting cut off.

“I think I can handle this.”

The doctor opened a cabinet against the wall and pulled out a plastic urinal. Aaron wished the floor would open up and swallow him, bed and all. If he didn't have to go so bad...

“This isn't really a one-armed kind of operation. You okay with me? I can always go get Nurse Melody.”

“No. God no.” He didn't want that crotchety old woman anywhere near his equipment. He licked his lips and sucked in his pride. “Just...do it.”

“I've seen one before, if that's what you're worried about.”

Aaron glanced up to see Dr. Tripp smiling. “You haven't seen mine.”

“Actually you were brought through the ER. We cut off all your clothes. I've seen every inch of you.”

Jesus. Aaron wondered if it were possible for cheeks to spontaneously combust. And he had a feeling Tripp wasn't talking clinical speak. There was a measure of flirtation in his tone. Damn it, he had to pee.

“Do it.” He turned his head, refusing to look at the doctor while the other man held his dick for him to go.

The sheet pulled back, wafting a breeze over his abdomen and giving him a chill that raised goose bumps over his skin. He anticipated the touch on his cock and held his breath but only felt the plastic edge cupping him, then the sheet covering him again and giving him his dignity.

“You want me to leave and come back in a few?”

Sweat beaded on Aaron's upper lip. He nodded.

“I'll be right outside the door. Give me a yell when you're ready. No rush.” Tripp stepped out the door, leaving Aaron feeling oddly alone.

He closed his eyes and willed his body to do its business so he could get out of the situation. The quicker Tripp left, the quicker Aaron could go back to... What? Staring at a blank TV? What he really wanted was for the doctor to pull up a chair and talk. He liked listening to his voice almost as much as he liked listening to Garrett's.

“I'm ready,” he called, half wondering if he'd even spoken out loud. A second later Tripp appeared, smiling.

“Everything come out okay?”

Aaron groaned and laughed. “Shit. Don't make me laugh.” He gripped his ribs with his good arm and squeezed his eyes shut.

“Sorry.”

When the pain subsided, Aaron inhaled. “Damn that hurt.”

The doc quickly retrieved the urinal and took it to the tiny bathroom to empty. "Be glad you didn't break them," he said, returning. "Those hurt worse. Pain in the ass too."

"Right, because the broken-in-half tibia doesn't hurt at all."

"Well, there is that." Tripp smiled and straightened the sheet. "What happened to the gown?"

"I threw it over there," he said, pointing to the chair. "It pissed me off."

"Remind me never to piss you off."

"Don't give me a reason to." God, were they bantering? Flirting?

"So, you think about staying with us when you're released?"

What the hell else could he possibly have thought about? "Um, I don't want to get in your way or anything."

"You won't."

"Aren't you guys together? I've been in a heavy relationship. I sure the hell wouldn't have wanted a stranger hanging out in our home."

Tripp put his hands on the bed rail and leaned over. "I don't think that's something you need to worry about."

He smelled so fucking good. Aaron wanted nothing more than to lick his way up Tripp's throat to his delectable lips and push inside his mouth.

Aaron gave himself a mental shake. The last thing he needed was another relationship right now. Didn't matter anyway, since Tripp was obviously already fully engaged in a relationship with Garrett. So why did they want him to stay with them?

Tripp interrupted his thoughts with, "So if you've been in a relationship, is there a partner I can call? Someone else you can stay with?"

Aaron turned away and swallowed the painful lump that threatened to choke him. "No. He's...he died. Two years ago."

"Shit. I'm sorry, man."

Aaron shrugged, then winced at the pull in his dislocated shoulder. Tripp straightened.

“Stay with us. I think I can guarantee it'll be better than being holed up here. And you can't go to your apartment alone, not with the help you're going to need. If there's no one I can call, let us be your help.”

“Do you take in all the lonely men you save?”

Tripp barked out in laughter. “Never.”

“Then why me?” Damn it. His eyelids were getting heavy again.

“I think if you think about it, you'll know why.”

“Why do you guys keep drugging me?” The darkness was calling again. Tripp had to have pushed the plunger while he'd leaned over him.

“Because I can see the strain in your eyes, the pain glazing those beautiful baby blues.”

“Are you hitting on me?” Was he slurring? Aaron closed his eyes.

“Yep. Get some sleep. Think some more. I'll be back later to check in.”

Aaron thought Tripp said something else, but the morphine dragged him away before he could comprehend the words.

Chapter Seven

Standing outside Aaron's room, Garrett ran his fingers through his hair and sucked in a deep breath. He couldn't believe how nervous he felt. His stomach had been tied in knots all damn day, and his brain had only been focused on one thing.

Okay two, if he counted the thoughts about Doc. But then, he always thought about Doc. Hard not to when his ass still hummed from their morning lovemaking. Doc had the best cure for morning wood.

Regardless, Garrett was going to find himself shot in the line of duty if he couldn't stop thinking about Aaron on top of Doc.

He pulled open the door.

Aaron lay on the bed, his leg fat with its cast, his arm in a sling, his face...not so peaceful. Anguished, in pain, pissed off, resentful. Those might be more apt words.

"Sucks to be you, man."

Aaron slid an eye open and grimaced. "Fuck you."

"You haven't taken anything for the pain, have you?" Garrett stepped over to the bed and plucked the plunger up from its hiding spot between the bed and the rail. A fine sheen of sweat covered Aaron's chest and face. "Idiot."

"Shit makes me tired. But the heifers want me awake. They can't make up their fucking minds. 'Take the morphine, Mr. Gardner. Mr. Gardner, you need to wake up...'" Aaron mimicked in an old lady's voice.

Garrett bit his tongue and did his best not to laugh. He couldn't even begin to imagine what it might be like to be laid up this way.

“So...have you thought about what you're going to do when you get out of here?”

“What is it with you guys?”

Garrett raised an eyebrow. “Me and Doc?” He shrugged. “I don't know. Maybe we just can't stand to see a man down.”

“And I'll ask you the same question I asked him. Do you pick up all the strays you find?”

Garrett snorted. “Hell no. Only the ones who look like you.” Not an ounce of shame ran through him at the tease. He held the plunger up and waved his thumb above the red button.

“Do it and I'll rip your kneecaps off.”

“Dude. When did it become hip to lie around in pain all day? Besides, when you get out of here, you won't get any more of the good stuff. Oh, they'll give you something, but nothing nearly as strong as this. I say, if someone legally gives you the good shit, you take it till they take it away.”

“This coming from a cop?”

“Of course. I'm not telling you to rob the drugstore on the way home to get more, but if it's here, use it.” He pushed the button.

“Fucker.”

“Thank you.”

“Why do you want me to come home with you?” Aaron pressed.

What could Garrett possibly say to make him come? *We want your body? We want to see if you are to us what we think you might be?*

“Did you ask Doc?”

“Yes.”

“What did he say?”

“If I remember correctly, it had something to do with flirting. But then, he'd fucking drugged me, so I couldn't be too sure.”

Garrett grinned. "Doc's good at flirting."

"You don't mind him flirting with other men?"

"Oh, he doesn't flirt with other men. Only the ones he wants, like me." Garrett decided it was time to be honest. Especially since he wanted the same thing Doc did. "Must mean he wants you too."

Aaron's eyes narrowed to slits. "So you two aren't serious."

"Dead serious." A part of Garrett would die if Doc and him ever split. The man was one half of his soul. Or perhaps...one third.

Aaron yawned, and his eyelids grew heavy—sure signs the morphine was making good headway.

Garrett angled himself over Aaron again, noting the dilation of the man's pupils, the way he sucked in a breath, and that his nostrils flared. He wanted to lean in and kiss the worry and pain lines away from Aaron's forehead, make it all better. "I promise, Aaron, we're not fucking with you. And we never will." He shrugged. "There's just something about you. Doc and I both feel it. We want you to stay with us. I swear, you're the first man we've ever contemplated doing this with. We're not into dragging a third home and using him for kicks. Think about it. That's all we're asking for now."

Aaron poked his tongue out and licked his lips, focusing his gaze on Garrett's mouth, and Garrett nearly jumped for joy. He'd bet if he slid his hand down Aaron's torso, he'd find a nice hard-on. Hell, if he looked, he knew he'd see the sheet tented. Aaron squirmed under Garrett's scrutiny. He wondered what the man would do if he descended on said hard-on with his mouth and brought him to orgasm while he was helpless to do anything about it.

"You don't play fair." Aaron's breath puffed out on Garrett's face, he was so close.

"Never."

Aaron turned away, and Garrett straightened.

"I don't think you want me. You're better off finding another third."

“Your dick says different.” Garrett had been right. The sheet was nicely tented, and his fingers ached to reach out and relieve the pressure for Aaron.

“My dick doesn't have a brain. It doesn't care who makes it hard, so long as it gets to play.”

“Ah yes, but your head does have a brain, and the only way for your dick to get the way it is, is for your head to send the message that you want something. I think you want me,” he pushed, coming in close again. This time he allowed his lips to graze Aaron's temple.

Aaron stayed stock-still, the fingers of his good hand in a tight fist. “I'm an emotional mess, man,” he whispered, scaring Garrett a little with his quiet intensity.

“Then let Doc and I help you heal.” He had no idea what he was offering or why, only that he knew deep down the three of them were meant to be together.

“I'm not sure anyone has that ability.”

“Give us a chance.”

Aaron sighed, his eyes closing. “Fine. You win.”

Garrett mentally pumped his fist in the air and did an internal victory dance. He wondered if the nightmares plaguing Aaron's life had something to do with losing his partner, like Doc had mentioned to him earlier. But he did know unequivocally that he wanted to be a part of slaying them for him.

This time when he leaned over, he put his lips on Aaron's and gently kissed him. He didn't expect a response and didn't get one.

Aaron was already under the morphine's spell.

Chapter Eight

Aaron gingerly sat in a wheelchair four days later, the one leg stretched out in front of him, waiting for Garrett to pull his car around, still not believing he was going home with two strangers. Beautiful strangers, sure, but strangers all the same. Never mind that they'd checked in on him like crazy, not once giving him a reason to say no. What would David think of his decision? He snorted. David would probably tell him to make sure he at least got a good fuck out of the situation.

David was—had been—the most laid-back man in the world. Nothing had bothered him. Unless it bothered Aaron; then all bets were off. David was no doubt cursing Aaron from up above, shaking his fist at him and telling him to get on with his life already.

“What's that sly little smile for?” Garrett squatted next to his chair. Aaron hadn't seen him come in.

“Thinking about David.”

“David, huh?”

Aaron laughed at the jealousy he heard in Garrett's voice. Although he'd talked very briefly about losing his lover with Tripp and Garrett, he hadn't gone into any kind of detail. He lifted his gaze right into Garrett's.

“David drowned two years ago.”

“Drowned? Jesus, man, I'm sorry.” Garrett looked sheepish.

Aaron shrugged his good shoulder. “Me too.” Surprisingly, the lump that invariably choked him whenever he thought of David didn't form this time.

“Well. Are you ready to blow this Popsicle stand or what?”

Aaron silently thanked Garrett for knowing when to change the subject. "Absolutely."

"Great. I'm off today, and Doc's off tonight, so one of us at least will be with you. I think we're kind of staggered that way the next few days. And I think Doc's gonna stop by your apartment and grab some stuff for you. He said you made a list?"

Aaron nodded, feeling like a baby. "You don't need to babysit me."

"How else you gonna take a leak? Or scratch an itch you can't reach? Or...other things." Garrett's eyebrows wiggled up and down, and Aaron laughed.

"You don't think I can handle the *other* things on my own?"

"Sure, if you suddenly become right-handed, but where's the fun in going it alone?" Garrett got behind the chair and pushed, and Aaron was glad for the baggy shorts they'd given him to wear home, because they hid his erection.

No way in hell he'd make it through the first day in Tripp's and Garrett's presence without having to *go it alone*. Right-handed or not.

Getting into the car was no small task. It took a lot of wiggling in backward, pain, and almost tears to maneuver into the backseat without further injury to his leg or shoulder, not to mention the ribs that still felt like mush.

"For someone so lean, it feels like you weigh three hundred pounds," Garrett grumbled.

"Asshole." Sweat beaded on his forehead and trickled down his back. He laid his head sideways against the back of the seat. "I'm a professional triathlete who can no longer get in a fucking car without breaking a sweat."

"Triathlete? Really? That's awesome. No wonder you've got that body."

"Yeah, well, this body's gone to shit since I haven't raced for so long."

"Why not?"

Aaron clenched his hands into fists and swallowed.

“Hold that thought. Let's get on the road first.” Garrett shut the door where Aaron's feet rested, and climbed behind the wheel. When he'd gotten them out of the parking lot, he spoke again.

“Now, where were we?”

“Not racing.”

“Right, right. So why aren't you racing anymore?”

“It's taking me a while to get back on the horse.” A long fucking while. He was a coward; that's all there was to it.

“Oh. I guess I can understand.”

Good, because Aaron didn't want to go into it.

“So is that why you're down here? Trying to get back on the horse?”

“I was.” Aaron looked down at his leg. Maybe he'd just blown any chance in hell of ever getting back to racing form. Who knew how long it would take to recover from this.

“Any luck?”

Aside from standing at the edge of the surf and wondering why he couldn't be one of the hundreds of people laughing and playing and swimming in the warm waters of the ocean? “No.”

“Doc and I go to the beach quite a bit. Perhaps we can be of some help.”

Only if they shoved him in, then jumped in to save his floundering ass. Hell, he hadn't even gotten close to a *pool*, let alone actually into the ocean, in the two years since the accident.

“Perhaps.”

“That sounded confident as all shit, man. I can't wait to help you out. Besides, I love a man in a Speedo.”

Aaron snorted and stared at Garrett in the rearview mirror. “You would.”

“Those suckers showcase a package so nicely.”

“Then it's a good thing I don't wear one.”

“Well, damn. Don't tell me you wear one of those rubber things. Makes you look like you're covered in a giant condom.” Garrett shivered, and Aaron smiled. He'd never thought of a wet suit in quite those terms. “Be a shame to cover up such a fine body.”

“Sometimes, yeah. Water can be fucking cold on the skin. Hypothermia sets in, shivering, numbness, nausea. Then you start turning blue, your heart goes wacko. It's not pretty.”

“You sound like you know about that shit firsthand.”

“Yep.” Aaron closed his eyes on the memory of becoming hypothermic in a race up in Michigan. He hadn't been the only racer to succumb that day. They'd kept the guards in the water and medics on the land hopping. It had cost him the race because it had taken him so long to recover from the swim.

“Why in the hell do you it? The whole thing looks downright agonizing if you ask me.”

“It's a rush. The change from exiting the water, stripping a wetsuit on the run, racing against your own time as well as everyone else's. Hopping on your bike, locking your feet on the pedals, the pavement humming beneath your tires. Getting off the bike, getting your running legs on, pounding the pavement. David and I did it because we could. We were good. Had a few endorsers behind us. Even competed in Hawaii. Talk about a rush.” Aaron lost himself in the memories of that time. They'd done it together and loved it.

“I give you credit. It's not something I could do.”

“I won't hold it against you.” Fatigue set in, making Aaron drowsy. “D'you drug me again?”

“Nah. Probably the stress of getting in the car. Take a nap. We'll be about twenty minutes or so.”

He felt like he'd only closed his eyes for a minute when Garrett tugged on his hair and whispered in his ear, his lips touching skin, sending a shiver

straight down Aaron's spine to his dick. Staying here was going to be one of the worst decisions he'd ever made.

"Let's get you inside."

Thinking about the move he'd have to make made his head spin. "I think I'll just hang out in the car."

Garrett chuckled. "No can do. Doc would flay me alive if I left you in this sweatbox. Florida heat and all. Besides, as a cop, I'd have to arrest me for endangering a life."

"Fine."

It took less effort getting out of the car than it did to get in, and soon Aaron found himself sitting in the wheelchair Garrett had stowed in the trunk. Then they went up the walkway to a modest bungalow with, surprisingly, no steps.

"Nice house," Aaron commented. So different from the apartment he and David had shared, and one hundred and eighty degrees from the bare-walled place he had now. This house had nice landscaping, looked well cared for. In a word, loved.

"We like it. Far enough away from work yet still close by. Good neighborhood, good schools, if you need that kind of thing."

"I'm past needing a school, but thanks."

"I *was* wondering. How old are you anyway?"

"You mean you didn't look me up before inviting me into your home?"

"Of course. You're not a serial killer or a rapist, but even if you were, it'll be some time before you're up to those activities again. I figure I got a good month before you can try and take any kind of advantage of me or Doc. Until then, I think we can deal." Garrett unlocked the door and pushed Aaron in, revealing to him a wide-open living area with cozy, manly, bachelor-type furniture, a big screen, and a wet bar. Through the opposite doorway, Aaron saw a round table and chairs in a sort of nook.

“Deal? And how do you know I'm not killing under an assumed name?”

“I don't. But your fingerprints and DNA don't match any on file. Care to fill me in on your secret life? Are you a Wetsuit Killer?”

“Not yet. There's always the possibility.”

“Duly noted. So. Sofa or bed? We cleared out the guest bedroom for you. Didn't think you'd be quite ready for sleeping between us yet.”

“Hey, thanks for giving me time, though.”

“We aim to please.”

Aaron wondered just how far their pleasing would go. The way his dick felt right now, he could use a little pleasing. Jesus. He had to focus. His leg burned fire from ankle to knee and throbbed the rest of the way to his hip; his shoulder added to the burden, making his eyes water, and yet here he sat wanting nothing more than for Garrett to get on his knees in front of him and suck him off.

“Sofa,” Garrett decided and strode toward the soft brown haven. It appeared comfortable, but then the backseat of the car had been preferable to the hospital bed he'd been cooped up in the last four days.

Once he was settled on the couch, Garrett handed him the remote. “Watch anything you like. What do you want to drink? Eat?”

“Water, please.” Lord, he felt like an imbecile since he couldn't even get his own drink. Made him feel even more like the complete stranger he was.

“Sure thing.” Garrett laid a hand on Aaron's head, lightly rubbing his scalp, and Aaron's dick twitched again. He hoped to hell Garrett and Tripp were having the same issue. Hell, he knew they were. Every time they got the chance they touched him. A brush there, a rub there. Garrett had even given him a kiss or two or three. More of a passing of lips, actually. Aaron couldn't decide if they were both obnoxiously touchy-feely with everyone or if it was just him.

A bit of both, he supposed.

“Here's the water.” Garrett started to set the glass on the TV table, only to glance between the space and Aaron. “That ain't gonna work.”

Aaron was stretched out, his bad leg against the back of the couch, which left his bad arm facing out. He wouldn't be able to reach for the water.

Garrett snapped his fingers in revelation and disappeared. A few seconds later he returned with a TV tray. He put the tray behind the couch, right about where Aaron's arm could reach over the top and get to the glass.

“Voilà.”

“You are a god. I knew there was good reason for me to come home with you.”

“If that makes me a god, wait'll I...” He cleared his throat, but Aaron knew exactly what the man wanted to say based on the direction of Garrett's gaze to Aaron's lap. “I'm gonna grab a shower and get ready for my shift.”

Aaron hid his smile. “You do that.”

“Right. Doc'll probably be here soon, so don't go ballistic when someone tries to get in the door.”

“Got it. No ballisticness allowed.”

“Anything else you need?”

A blowjob would be nice, since you so nicely brought up being a god at it.
“Can't think of anything.”

“Okay then. Be right back.”

“I won't move a muscle.”

“Better not. You'll fall on your face if you try,” Garrett muttered, walking away.

Chapter Nine

Dane stretched the kinks from his neck and pushed through the front door. He wanted Garrett in the worst way. Wanted someone to remind him that life was good. What he got when he entered his house made him even more horny. Aaron. He had his head laid back on the arm of the couch and looked, for a moment, peaceful. Dane knew otherwise. Poor guy probably hurt like a son of a bitch.

He left his keys on the table, rattling them enough to alert Aaron of his presence without scaring the shit out of him.

“He's in the shower,” Aaron said without lifting his head or opening his eyes.

“I love Garrett wet.”

Aaron snorted but otherwise remained motionless, until he shifted ever so carefully with a grimace. “Then he should be nice and wet right about now.”

“Yum. You don't mind, do you?”

“That you're going to go fuck your lover in the shower while I lay out here on the couch, in pain and knowing what you're doing not thirty feet away? Why should I mind?”

Dane chuckled. “Did you take something for the pain?”

Even though Aaron's eyes were still closed, Dane saw him wince. “You two hardly allow me to go five minutes past whenever my next dose is due. What do you think?”

“I'll take that as a yes.”

“Hm.”

“Then I'm going to take a shower.”

“Right.”

Dane smiled and avoided clapping his hands. “Be back soon.”

“I'll still be here. Try not to make too much noise. I might get jealous.”

Dane's cock hardened beneath his scrubs. He stepped closer to his new guest and stood over the man. “Jealous? Now why would you be jealous?”
Please say because you want us both the way we both want you.

One eye peeked at him. “You are kidding, right? I'm stuck on this couch while two hot men fuck each other in a shower?”

“Just thought I'd ask.” *Thank you, God!*

“Get out of here. Water's probably cold by now. I'm sure Garrett timed this knowing you were going to be here any minute, and you're wasting time chatting with me.”

“Yes, sir.” Never one to look a gift horse in the mouth, Dane stripped his shirt off and threw it in the general vicinity of the kitchen. He'd pick it up later and stuff it in the laundry room. He headed for the bedroom and his waiting lover. Aaron had been right. On days like these, Garrett always waited to get in the shower until the moment he knew Dane would get home. He might have even showered at the station, but the shower was inevitably where Dane would find him at home as they passed each other between shifts.

He opened the bathroom door to find a steamy mist and his lover facing away with his forehead on the cool tiles. Garrett's left hand pressed against the wall, his right hand wasn't visible from behind. Dane toed off his shoes and then yanked his pants, underwear, and socks off before quietly opening the glass door. Garrett didn't move, though he must have known Dane had entered behind him.

Dane stroked Garret's beautiful flank, sluicing the warm water from Garrett's hip and thigh.

“Mmm...”

Placing his lips on the base of Garrett's neck, he murmured, "I know you're not jerking yourself off."

"Nope. Just wasting time till you got home."

"Put your hand on the wall."

Garrett complied, moaning when he had to release the erection Dane knew would be impressive. It always was. The act stretched Garrett's torso long and pushed his ass closer to Dane's erection. Dane obliged by pressing his length into the accepting crack.

"I had to wait today." Dane heard the pout in Garrett's words.

"Had to stop and talk to our guest."

"Oh, yeah. Right. He okay?"

"Hasn't moved since you put him there, I'm sure. Did seem jealous though."

Garrett squirmed when Dane pushed a warm, wet finger into his already lubed hole, twisting and turning the digit until Garrett stood on his tiptoes.

"I need more, Doc."

"Relax, Gar." Dane added a second finger and placed his other hand between Garrett's shoulder blades, soothing his lover with a gentle caress.

He glanced down to where his fingers vanished into Garrett's body and wondered how tight Aaron's hole would be. The thought made his cock jump. He imagined standing there with two men at his disposal, and suddenly he needed to be buried in Garrett's ass.

"Are you good?"

"Hell yes."

Dane removed his finger, lingering to pet Garrett's tight pucker before taking his cock in hand and pressing the bulbous head against Garrett's entrance. Fuck going slow and easy. He needed more right now.

He thrust, burying himself inside Garrett, who leaned his chest into the wall with a shout.

“Sorry, baby. Hard and fast this time.”

“Uh-huh.” Garrett's fingers curled on the tile.

Normally Dane didn't allow Garrett to touch himself while he fucked him, because he wanted to be the one to make his lover come. He liked to watch Garrett's cock explode or taste it on his tongue, but today he wanted them to come at the same time.

“Stroke yourself, baby,” he whispered in Garrett's ear.

Garrett sucked in a breath and turned his head to look over his shoulder at Dane.

“Doc?” Garrett knew something was different because of Dane's request, but he did what he'd been asked and wrapped his hand around his flesh.

Dane would have done so himself, but he had a feeling he would need his hands on Garrett's hips to keep them both grounded. Garrett's slippery skin made the holding a tad difficult, and he hoped he didn't bruise Garrett too badly.

Sweat beaded his skin. Sweat that formed not from the heat of the water, but from pure adrenaline. Garrett's body tightening on his cock felt like heaven. He pounded into Garrett's channel. His balls drew up in preparation for release.

“Jesus, Doc.” Garrett panted, his chin tilted down, his arm working furiously on his cock. “I'm gonna go.”

“Me too. Come with me.”

Somehow, Garrett's anus tightened even more, making Dane's eyes cross. When was the last time they both had come so fast? Dane knew the reason behind their frenzied mating was sitting on their couch at that precise moment, probably listening to them bang each other into the wall and trying like hell to either: a) relieve himself, or b) not think about it at all.

“Shit.” Garrett's head fell back on Dane's shoulder, his teeth grinding together.

“You close, baby?”

“Yesss.”

A tingle grew at the base of Dane's spine. “Now,” he shouted, slamming deep and holding himself there while he climaxed.

“Fuuuck.”

Dane slipped his hand around Garrett's body to join his partner's where it slowly smoothed up and down a turgid length. He felt each spurt of cum and watched as it splattered on the tiles and dripped down the wall.

“Jesus.” Garrett's panting moments later made Dane smile. “I think that gives new meaning to *quickie*. What the hell got into you?”

Dane kissed Garrett's shoulder and pulled his softening cock free. “I think it was the image of you and Aaron standing here next to each other while I fucked you both.”

Garrett spun around so fast, Dane had to take a step back. Hard hands came up to stabilize him.

“Don't say shit like that if you don't mean it.”

Dane rolled his eyes. “As if I could have felt any different. You knew that before I got in this shower with you, baby.”

Garrett shivered and wrapped his arms around Dane, kissing him full on the mouth. They both came up breathing hard.

“You think he's trying to get himself off out there?” Garrett slapped at the handle and turned the now-cold water off, then reached around Dane to push the door open.

“Probably.”

“Should we offer to do something for him?”

"Maybe we shouldn't push." Dane wrapped his hips in the towel Garrett handed him, and they left the bathroom. "Not to mention he's not quite in shape to get off at the moment."

"Hm. You may be right. Poor guy."

"Yeah." Dane watched his lover retrieve his uniform from the chair where he'd stacked it and start to dress. "It's a shame you have to cover such a fine body with all that brown."

"Yet you find it quite appealing to remove it."

"Hell yeah. I'd have you go naked if you could."

Garrett smirked and swatted Dane's bare back. "Then it's a good thing I can't. Might offend the baddies."

"Speaking of baddies...you guys ever catch the runaway Mustang?"

"That man's an idiot. Wasn't hard when I had his license plate number."

"You tell Aaron?"

"Not yet. He seemed to have enough on his mind."

"You do know the door is open and I can hear everything you're saying, right?" Aaron called from the living room.

Dane and Garrett grinned at each other. Dane winked at him. "Maybe we should give him something more interesting to listen to."

"Too late," Aaron added.

Garrett stepped into his pants and zipped them, then shrugged into his white T-shirt. Dane never could get over Garrett's quirky dressing habit. Pants up, zip. T-shirt on, uniform shirt on. Socks on. Pants unzipped, dropped down to thighs, shirt tucked in. Pants up, zipped, buttoned. Belt on. Shoes on.

The same, day in and day out. Dane loved watching him. Maybe it was the play of skin over muscle, or just the simple OCD-edness of the whole routine. No matter. Dane loved him for the behavior.

“Will you be nice to our guest while I'm gone, Doc? And quit staring at my ass.”

“Maybe I'm trying to decide if I should add a toy to your uniform.”

“Not today, my love.”

“Stop talking toys, assholes,” came another round from the living room.

They looked toward the door. “On second thought,” Dane murmured, “perhaps I *will* try and help our friend out.”

“Shut up or I'm going to have to call in sick.” Garrett grabbed his gun from the nightstand where he kept it, and holstered it at his hip. “Just don't run him off, all right?”

“I promise I won't let him get too far.” Dane preceded Garrett out of the room to find Aaron hadn't moved, but that a fine sheen of sweat covered his forehead.

“Is it too hot in here? I can turn the air up a little.”

Aaron's eyes popped open and he glared at Dane, who tried not to laugh. He knew damn good and well Aaron's sweating issue had nothing to do with the heat.

“You two suck,” Aaron spat out.

“Yes, and marginally well if I do say so myself.” Garrett tossed into the air the keys he'd picked up and caught them with his other hand.

Aaron moaned at the bad pun and Dane added his own two cents. “There's no marginally about it.”

Garrett leaned over and kissed the top of Aaron's head.

Despite getting off not fifteen minutes before, Dane's cock took interest at the simple gesture.

“Don't let Doc scare you. Trust me; he's in it for the pleasure.” Garrett looked at Dane and winked.

“Get out of here,” Doc growled, swatting Garrett's ass hard enough that he was sure he left a handprint.

“Ow, you sadistic bastard.”

“You know you liked it.”

“I can't stay here. I knew this was a bad idea.”

Dane and Garrett both swiveled to meet Aaron's gaze. “Why the hell not?” Dane demanded, despite seeing the want and need in Aaron's eyes.

“Because you guys don't need anyone horning in on what you've got. I'm going to be in the way.”

“Maybe you'll be right in the middle of it,” Garrett suggested, and Dane's mouth watered at the prospect of Aaron's lean body between theirs.

“Now who's scaring him off?” Dane shoved Garrett to the door, smiling when Aaron let out a frustrated sigh.

Before Garrett could leave, Dane grabbed him by the back of the neck and kissed him, hard. “Be safe.”

“Yes, sir.”

“I gotta go in before you get back, so Aaron'll be here alone for about an hour.”

Garrett nodded. “Make sure he has the phone and some water he can reach. I put that tray behind the couch. Or you can put in on the night—”

“Doctor's degree, remember? I think I can handle our patient.”

“Yeah, well, your bedside manner could use a little help.” Garrett skipped back out of Dane's reach.

“Just wait till we're together again,” he yelled after Garrett's retreating form. “I'll show you bedside manner.”

Chapter Ten

Hanging around Dane and Garrett was enough to make Aaron's head spin. The two never stopped touching. Ever. His own skin was starting to itch, and he'd nearly rubbed his cock raw trying to relieve the constant hard-on they gave him. They kissed each other in passing, they groped, they practically fucked in front of him.

And they asked him to join them. Repeatedly. Why did they want him when they so obviously loved each other?

It didn't matter. He wasn't ready for another relationship. Not when seeing them made him think of how it had been the same between him and David. The nonstop touching and kissing and simple love. He wouldn't tarnish the memories of his lover just to get his rocks off.

Guilt chewed at his gut. He wouldn't do it, but God, he wanted to. Would David have if he were in this situation? If Aaron had died instead?

The TV droned on, some inane drama about cops and lawyers. Something he would have snuggled on the couch with David to watch while they made out. He glanced to his right to find Dane and Garrett in the same position he and David liked to share.

Aaron swallowed the bile rushing to his throat and squeezed his eyes shut. He missed him so fucking much. It should be David helping him piss. It should be David fetching his water or his books or doing what-the-fuck-ever he needed help with.

“Hey, man, you okay? You look like you've seen a ghost.” Garrett straightened away from Dane's tangle of arms and legs.

Aaron had to clear his throat before he could speak. "Yeah. Tired, I guess," he lied and pretended to wipe his hands over his face like he was weary, instead of wiping the moisture from his eyes.

"You need a pain pill?" Garrett was up before Aaron could tell him to shut the hell up.

He ground his teeth together. Screaming at his hosts wouldn't do him a damn bit of good, nor would it be cathartic, like some people said. Punching a pillow wouldn't help either. Nor would screwing one's brains out.

"I don't need a pill," he said through his teeth, then sighed. "I'm sorry. I don't mean to ruin your night together." They weren't often home at the same time for long. Why was he begrudging them their touches when they didn't get much time alone?

He blew out a breath. Dane sat with his elbows on his knees, his hands clasped and hanging in front of him while Garrett stood, his hands on his hips. Both wore similar looks of concern.

"Look, this really isn't working out. I'm in the way."

"Who the fuck said that?" Garrett growled, surprising Aaron with his vehemence. "You say that, Doc?"

"Hell no."

"No one said it." Aaron dropped his shoulders in defeat. It wasn't the first time they'd had this argument. "You guys don't get to be together alone anymore. I'm always here, like some goddamned voyeur."

Garrett's eyebrows rose. "And that's a problem how?"

Jesus. They just didn't get it.

"I don't fucking have what you do anymore, and it sucks, all right?" he shouted, despite his earlier decision that shouting wouldn't do shit.

Dane stood and came to kneel between Aaron's outstretched legs and put his hands on Aaron's thighs. The warmth of Dane's touch traveled straight to Aaron's groin.

“No one said you weren't allowed to love again.” Dane spoke softly, cutting into Aaron's soul.

“I can't. I won't.” Christ. Would David have moved on? he thought for the millionth time.

Dane licked his lips. “What Garrett and I have is special. And I imagine what you and David shared was similar. As a doctor, I see people lose loved ones all the time. The grief, the sorrow, the anger. It hangs on for a long time. Years. It doesn't ever fully go away, but it does get easier.” He cocked his head to the side. “I promise.”

Aaron rolled his eyes. “You only see the death. How can you know?” Dane had never held his lover's hand while they pulled the plug, and waited until he'd taken his last breath. He'd never not gotten to tell his lover one last time that he loved him forever and then let half his soul go with his when his heart didn't beat again.

“Because Garrett isn't my first lover.”

Garrett put a hand on Dane's shoulder and gripped it.

Aaron looked at Dane, then Garrett, then back to Dane.

“Clint died of a brain tumor when we were in residency. We'd been together for five years, and I could never have imagined being with anyone else. But then one day about a year later, this cop came in bellyaching and moaning like he'd been shot through the gut.”

Aaron glanced at Garrett, who grinned like a buffoon. “You got shot?”

Dane snorted. “Hell no. He got punched in the nose by a perp he'd chased down.”

“Hey.” Garrett scrunched his face and wiggled his nose. “That hurt like a son of a bitch.”

“Pussy.”

“Whatever.”

“The point is,” Dane added, ignoring Garrett, “that you *will* heal, and it does get easier. And it's okay to open up that heart again and let someone else in.” He put his hand on Aaron's chest, right above his heart, which pounded.

Aaron didn't know what to say. Two years later the wound was still raw and burned like hell.

On the other hand, how many other men had turned him on the way Dane and Garrett did? None.

Love? No. But lust? Definitely. No one could ever take David's place, but perhaps Dane was right. Maybe he could find someone who wouldn't mind sharing a space with David.

“Think about it,” Dane urged and got to his feet. “We'll be here to listen if you need to talk.”

“Why?”

“Why what?”

“Why would you want to set yourself up for losing another man? Not only that, but you've both insinuated wanting me to be a part of what you've got, so why add yet another person to possible disappointment.”

“Because life and living it and being happy beat the hell out of wallowing in self-misery any day.”

Is that what Aaron was doing? Wallowing in self-misery?

“Garrett and I love each other, yes, but we also both realize something is missing. Some part of our relationship. Perhaps it's the hours we work, our lack of time together... Maybe if we had a third, someone to bind us all together... Don't get me wrong”—he threaded his fingers through Garrett's—“I will never leave this man for another, and I don't think he would either—”

“Damn skippy.”

“But neither of us would object to adding a third. We've been looking, actually. For a while. Nobody's caught our eye.”

“Until you,” Garrett interjected.

Aaron's eyes widened. He didn't know what to say, could hardly breathe.

“You don't have to say anything. We're only being honest with you, and we understand it's a really big step. We're all for being gradual, testing the waters, so to speak. And we'd never do anything you didn't want.”

“Um, excuse me? I didn't *want* to go to work with a plug up my ass, Doc,” Garrett interjected.

“Baby, you may not want it, but you love it. Don't tell me you don't.”

Garrett harrumphed.

Dane turned back to Aaron. “If we're totally wrong about you, all you have to do is say so.”

Aaron felt a vise clamp down on his heart. They were offering a new world, but he couldn't take it. Not now.

“I...can't.” He swallowed the lump in his throat. “It's too soon.”

“Nough said.”

Garrett wrapped his arms around Dane's chest and propped his chin on his lover's shoulder. “Doesn't mean we won't keep trying,” he said, smiling so big all his teeth showed.

“I'm not sure it's even possible for us to not touch.” Dane bent and put an arm behind Aaron's back to help him from his chair. “Now, how about we get you settled in bed before we start making out again? Wouldn't want to put any added pressure on you tonight.”

“Jesus. How does telling me you're going to put me to bed so you can fuck equate to no pressure?”

Dane wiggled his eyebrows. “It doesn't. It equates to us doing our damndest to get you to change your mind.”

Chapter Eleven

Curled up in the guest bed that he'd spent the better part of the last three weeks in, Aaron groaned. From the sound of the front door slamming, he knew Dane was home. Sweat formed on his upper lip. He'd only gotten an hour's worth of peace. One solid hour without a raging hard-on. His dick stirred. Three weeks was a long time for weak-armed jerk-offs, and Aaron was about to lose his mind. The amount of touching that went on in this house was insane. They hadn't lied to him. They'd said they weren't going to let up, and they hadn't.

And damned if they weren't breaking down his defenses.

Today he was leaving the house no matter what. His leg didn't hurt anymore—a damned itchy nuisance, yes, but it at least it didn't throb the way it had—he had a much better range of motion in his shoulder, and his ribs were healed. If he had to beg Dane to take him out, he'd do it.

“Hey, you.” The man himself appeared in Aaron's doorway, stripping his scrub shirt off to reveal taut, tanned abs.

“Motherfucker,” Aaron whispered. Precum leaked from his dick.

“What was that?”

Aaron cleared his throat. “I said, I gotta get out of here.”

“Sweet. Let's go to the beach.”

Well, son of a bitch, that was one way of deflating his eternal woody. The mere idea of the ocean made his stomach turn over. They may have done well in getting him to stop feeling 100 percent guilty over David's death, but they'd never get him over his fear of returning to the scene of the crime. Even if it

wasn't the same scene. Water was water, didn't matter where it came from or how it tasted. He turned his head into his pillow and prayed he didn't vomit all over the place.

“Come on, man, breathe.”

The bed dipped beside him, and a warm hand landed on his arm. Aaron hadn't even realized he was holding his breath. Spots swam behind his eyelids. He felt like he had the last time he'd stood at the ocean's edge watching the waves roll in. The panic attack gripped him in its icy claws, raked at him.

“Aaron,” Dane snapped. “Breathe. Slow. In through your nose, out through your mouth.”

Aaron tried. He squeezed his eyes shut. His heart pounded in his chest, the sound of it loud in his ears.

Dane pushed on his arm, rolling him onto his back. Suddenly he found himself face-to-face with the doctor, their noses nearly touching.

Then their lips touched, their mouths melded, Dane's tongue swept inside Aaron's mouth and rubbed against his.

Aaron tilted his head, opened to allow better access, and returned the kiss like a drowning man grasping a lifesaver. He wrapped his arms around Dane and held him tight. They were skin to skin, and Dane felt so fucking good against him.

Why hadn't he done this sooner?

Dane, panting now, lifted his head and stared at Aaron. His lips were red and puffy and well kissed. Aaron pulled Dane's head back down and kissed him again. His dick hardened. A tiny part of his brain yelled, This is wrong, this is wrong, but Aaron ignored it. Dane and Garrett had made enough outright innuendos about their desire to include Aaron in their loving that he wasn't about to stop this time.

“Jesus, Aaron,” Dane said, breaking off once more. “If you don't want this, you better say so right now.”

“I want.” For three fucking weeks he'd wanted. “I want.”

Dane smiled and started to stand.

“Where you going?” He'd hobble his broken self after the asshole if he left him hanging like this.

“Gotta get the pants off, Aaron. Kinda hard to fuck clothed.”

“Oh.” His eyes widened as Dane exposed his cock inch by inch and stripped off the pants. Aaron licked his lips and reached for his own cock.

“Don't touch.”

Aaron jerked his hand back and raised a brow. “Excuse me?” All this time and he wasn't allowed to touch himself?

“Don't. Touch.” The doctor naked was a beautiful thing. All hard muscle and smooth skin. Aaron ached to take himself in hand and stroke.

“Mine.” Dane's possessive tone made something break inside Aaron. The link holding him back from being with other men after losing David popped, leaving him needy and wanting in a major way.

Dane's fingers went inside the waistband of Aaron's shorts and tugged them over his hips, releasing his erection.

“Nice.” After wiggling the shorts over Aaron's cast, he tossed them over his shoulder. Then he situated himself carefully between Aaron's legs, pushing the good one to the side to make more room.

He glanced at Aaron, a serious look on his face, before curling his fingers around Aaron's length. “How long has it been?”

Aaron bit his lip. Having another person's hand on his dick was heaven. “A little over two years,” he croaked, his head going back when Dane pumped him slowly.

“That's a lot of pent-up energy.”

Aaron snorted. “Two years since I've fucked. Maybe a couple hours since I jacked off.”

“I knew we were having a profound effect on you.”

“Does Garrett know you're cheating on him right now?”

“He will when I call him later and tell him how good you taste.” Dane leaned over and swallowed Aaron's cock.

“Fuck.” Aaron fisted the sheets and arched his back. Dane's mouth was moist and hot, his tongue flicking at the heavy vein underneath his dick, then swirling around the head. The last mouth on his dick had been David's, who tended to be a more tender lover. Dane was aggressive and appeared to have no inhibitions when it came to giving head. One hand cupped his balls and massaged them.

Aaron shifted, spreading his legs even farther apart, bending his knee and pushing against the mattress with his heel. His dick hit the back of Dane's throat with very little resistance.

“Shit, shit, shit.” His sac was pulled down, away from his body, and a finger teased his entrance. Dane's mouth bobbed up and down, sucking hard, then backing off. His tongue licked and prodded the slit at the top, tickled the bundle of nerves under the head, swept down to the root and back up before sucking him deep again.

Dane hummed, and the vibration shot straight to Aaron's balls. A tingle gathered at the base of his spine, and his toes curled. Fingers tugged at a hard nipple, adding to the sensations engulfing him. For a second Dane disappeared, allowing Aaron to breathe, and then he returned, his mouth ravishing Aaron's dick once more. Aaron realized why he'd gone away when a wet finger probed his anus and pressed inside.

He bore down at the indefinable feeling, the twisting and turning finger that found and stroked his prostate.

“I'm going to come,” Aaron shouted, trying to pull out of Dane's mouth, not sure the other man wanted him to shoot down his throat.

Dane followed, pushing Aaron backward on the bed until his head hit the wooden headboard and there was no further retreat possible. A second finger joined the first, and Aaron saw stars.

He sucked in a breath as spurt after spurt of cum shot into Dane's warm mouth.

Dane licked him clean while Aaron fought to breathe normally, and then Dane's body moved over his, their dicks lining up as well as their mouths. Dane kissed him, sharing his own flavor, and Aaron returned the kiss.

"Can you take me?" This was whispered against his lips.

Aaron swallowed and nodded. Hell yes he could take him.

"I'm clean, and so is Garrett. Hell, we both get tested regularly, especially him with his job. And I think you can probably tell by now that we're exclusive, but let me get a condom."

"Okay."

Aaron missed Dane's weight when he moved. He followed the sweet backside out of the guest room. Now that Dane wasn't around, Aaron's conscience kicked into high gear. What the hell was he doing?

Dane returned, the phone stuck between his ear and shoulder while he waved a tube of lube and a condom in one hand. "He's fine, Gar. In fact, I've just sucked him dry, and now I'm about to fuck him senseless."

Aaron's eyes widened, and he rose up on his elbows. Jesus Christ.

Dane turned the phone around, pushed a button, and suddenly Garrett's pissed-off voice filled the room.

"You bastard. You couldn't wait for me to fucking get home?"

"Well, he had a mild panic attack, and kissing him was the only thing I could think of to distract him. One thing led to another."

"Asshole," Garrett ground out. "Don't use him to the point of exhaustion, Doc. I want a piece too. We've waited three goddamned weeks for him to come around."

Aaron dropped his head back and groaned. They weren't just totally insane exhibitionists, they were trying their damndest to make him crazy for them. He had news for them. Sex he could handle, but a relationship? Was he ready to go in with them? To try and see if it worked out or if he'd just bring the party down?

Is that why you've been slowly moving your stuff from your apartment to their place?

Was he subconsciously moving in?

Aaron eyed the urn on the dresser across from him. He hadn't talked about the ashes inside to Dane and Garrett, but they had to both know what it was. The pottery mocked him, and Aaron could have sworn a tiny mouth moved near the bottom. *Move on, Aaron. Live.*

Aaron blinked.

"Aaron can't believe you just said that." Dane's voice broke the spell of the urn.

"You have me on goddamned speaker? Hey, Aaron. He's got a great mouth, doesn't he? Doc, just wait till I get home."

"Are you threatening me, Gar?" Dane tossed the condom and lube on the bed. "Because I think you know what'll happen if you are."

"I am."

"Then be prepared."

"Oh, I will be, Doc. Can Aaron watch?"

"Wouldn't have it any other way."

"Shit, Doc. I've got another eight hours to go here." Garrett groaned.

Dane crawled onto the bed between Aaron's legs, his thick cock bobbing. Aaron's belly took a dive. It had been a long time since he'd been taken by anyone. He half wondered if it would fit.

"Gotta go now, Garrett. Don't touch yourself today."

“Asshole.”

“That's Mr. Asshole to you. Bye.”

He ended the call and threw the phone on the floor next to the bed. “Now, where were we?”

Dane eyed the way Aaron sprawled out on the bed, and if anything, his cock grew harder. There was something sickeningly appealing about a man in a cast. All his. All at his mercy. Damn. He was one lucky son of a bitch. Two men to love and two to love him back, if everything went the way he and Garrett wanted it to.

Aaron's cock stood proud, not overly long, but nice and thick and oh so tasty. But what he really wanted was located a little bit south of the pole of flesh. The tight pucker he'd had two fingers in a few minutes ago was his goal, and he intended to claim it in the names of Dane and Garrett.

He bent and pressed a small kiss to Aaron's smooth belly and watched as the muscles rippled in response. Aaron's head was thrown back, his eyes closed. Dane kissed the tip of the penis he'd just drained, then moved lower, lapping at Aaron's balls and sucking one into his mouth to nibble it softly. What he wanted most he couldn't quite reach, with Aaron's position and the nonuse of his broken leg.

Dane grabbed the two pillows from the other side of the bed and helped place them under Aaron's hips. “Good?”

“Uh-huh.”

Propped up this way, Aaron was wide open, his tight little opening exposed and begging for attention.

“Fucking stop looking at it already.”

Dane ignored him and licked his thumb before pressing it against the hole and entering it. Damn thing would suck his cock in and squeeze it to death. He wondered briefly if he'd shoot off before he even got all the way in.

“All in good time, Aaron.”

“Fuck.” Those fists dug into the sheets again as Dane played with his ring of muscles.

Hell, he couldn't wait either. After retracting his thumb, he grabbed the condom, tore into it with his teeth, and rolled the rubber on. Using the lube, he prepared them both and, without second-guessing, brought his cock to Aaron's hole.

“Two years?”

“Do it.” Aaron's breath came hard out of his mouth, and the muscles of his neck corded.

“Yeah?”

“Yes,” he hissed, thrusting his hips as best he could and lodging the head of Dane's cock inside him.

“Christ. Stay still.”

“Hell no. You've been getting it on like rabbits around me for the last three weeks. Now it's my turn.”

“Well, well. So glad you finally came around to our way of thinking.”

“What the fuck are you talking about?” Aaron panted, his fingers twisting and untwisting in the sheets.

“Why the hell do you think we've been getting it on so much, you idiot? Trying to get you worked up is like pulling goddamned teeth. I thought we'd never get you horny.”

“I've been—” Aaron's eyes rolled as Dane pushed in and smiled. “Son of a bitch you're big.”

“Too much?”

“Fuck no,” he spat out. “Keep going.”

“Finish your thought,” Dane prodded, interested in whatever Aaron had to say.

“Thought?”

“Horny?”

“Always...hard...around you...two.”

Dane pulled back and thrust back in. Aaron's hole was incredibly tight, squeezing Dane's cock until his eyes crossed. “All you had to do was ask, Aaron. One, or both, of us would have taken care of you.”

Aaron jerked his head up and glared at him. “Shut up already and fuck me.”

“Gladly.” He took hold of Aaron's cock and pumped him in time with his rhythm. Both of them were sweating in no time, their bodies quivering or rigid in sync.

Dane took hold of Aaron's hip, his climax coming quick. He wished they were skin to skin instead of separated by latex. He wanted to feel the heat of Aaron's tunnel against his length with no barrier.

“I'm gonna come again.”

“Good.” Dane grinned down at Aaron's face, his racer's lean body, his nipples hardened in passion. “Me too.” A few more strokes...

A drop of sweat dripped from his brow to land on Aaron's abdomen, and something inside him detonated. He shoved deep one last time, and his orgasm rushed through him, filling the condom. At the same moment, Aaron climaxed, sticky white cum spurting out over Dane's hand to land on Aaron's stomach.

Jesus it had been a long time since Dane had come so quickly. He was usually much more controlled. Just went to show how much he wanted Aaron.

“Oh Christ.” Aaron's spine arched, his good thigh straightened and jerked against Dane. “Cramp. Cramp.”

“Shit.” Dane pulled out of Aaron's exquisite ass. “Where?”

“Hip,” Aaron cried, his face contorted as he groped for the space above his bad leg.

Dane pushed his hand away and massaged the area, immediately finding the knot of muscle and gently working it out.

“How's that for loserdom?” Aaron's teeth were grinding.

Dane laughed. “More like lack of use. Your body's not used to such rigorous activity.”

“Jesus. From Ironman to incapable of getting through sex. I feel like I'm eighty.”

Dane leaned over and kissed him. “If you still look like this when you're eighty, I will be one happy man.”

Both of them caught their breath, then stared at each other for an immeasurable amount of time.

Finally Dane spoke. “Yes, I said that out loud.”

“Kay. Just making sure.”

“Think that made my intentions more than clear?”

“Yep.”

“Hip better?”

“Yep.”

“Great.” Dane kissed him. Buried a hand in his scruffy hair and held him, took what he wanted, and delighted when Aaron's hands came up to link behind Dane's neck.

Chapter Twelve

Garrett pushed Aaron's head down and rubbed his shoulders. "It's just water, man. Waves, surf, salt, a few jellyfish, maybe a shark, some sand."

"And death."

"Nah. Not here. Hasn't been anyone eaten in a few decades, I don't think."

"Not...talking...about sharks." Aaron's gasps of breath were starting to scare Garrett.

He had shoved Aaron in the car and driven to his and Dane's favorite beach spot, not giving him any choice in the matter. When he'd gotten home the night before, he'd found Dane spooned around Aaron's slimmer form, both of them dead asleep. Instead of feeling the jealous rage any other guy might have felt at finding his lover in bed with another man, he only felt sadness at having missed all the action. He'd stripped down and carefully maneuvered himself into bed next to Aaron, avoiding his bad leg.

They'd woken up face-to-face, with Dane already up and out for his jog. With a bit of awkwardness, they'd managed to suck each other off in a sixty-nine position. Dane had been right. Aaron tasted mighty fine. And had left him needing more than a quickie BJ.

"Gotta get your feet wet again, right? That's what you came here for? I've never met David"—now *there* was the jealousy, because Garrett hadn't even met the man, but he knew David still held a big part of Aaron's heart, a part Garrett was positive would never belong to anyone else—"but do you honestly think he'd want you never to race again?"

"Asshole," Aaron snarled.

“Yep, that's me.” Garrett kneaded the back of Aaron's neck. “You came down here to exorcize a demon. You came alone. Maybe the accident was a sign.”

Aaron looked up at him, one eyebrow raised. His panic seemed to abate.

Garrett shrugged. “It brought you to us, right?”

“Yeah. I guess it did. Fucked up my bike, though. Now I gotta buy a new one.”

Garrett's face drained of blood. No way was he going to let Aaron back on one of those crotch rockets.

“Perhaps you can use the insurance money to buy something more...practical.” *Like an SUV.*

Aaron snorted and hung his head. “I loved that bike.”

“Yes, well, I hate it. Seeing you tumble across the highway again at sixty-five miles per hour is something I could go the rest of my life without.”

Aaron was quiet for a moment, and Dane wondered what he was thinking.

“It's so stupid, isn't it? Being a fucking pussy, afraid of the water.”

Garrett crouched in front of Aaron and grabbed his face with both hands. “There is nothing pussy about watching your partner drown and later holding his hand while the life drained out of his body. It would bring the toughest man to his knees.”

“Would you feel the same if it happened to Dane?”

“Unquestionably. A very large part of my soul would die with him, as I'm sure part of yours did. There isn't a goddamned thing to be ashamed of, Aaron. Except, maybe, not trying again. Trying to live without a part of yourself. Trying to rebuild your life. Trying to be happy again. Isn't that what David would say?”

Aaron swallowed and nodded. “Yes. He'd smack me upside my head too.”

“Okay then. So let's get out of this car and walk down to the water. You can't get in yet anyway, with the cast still on, but we can get close, get your toes wet, go in slowly.”

Garrett pulled Aaron to his feet and handed him his crutches, watching as Aaron stared half longingly, half scared to death, at the surf. He sucked in a deep breath, and Garrett was glad he'd at least gotten past the initial panic.

“Fine. Let's go.” Aaron turned and picked his way carefully down the boardwalk to the sand beach.

The day was hot, but here at his and Dane's favorite beach spot there were only a handful of people. The crash of the waves sounded in their ears, along with the cries of the gulls foraging for food. The air was heavy with humidity and salt, leaving their skin sticky before they even made it halfway. More so for Aaron, who trudged along on his crutches in the sand.

Garrett's heart broke for Aaron, who moved stoically as if he had something to prove. He guessed he did. Mostly to himself. Forcing yourself to face your fears was never easy.

“Help me get my shoes off. I want to feel the sand.”

Garrett did as asked, keeping quiet. Aaron seemed deep in thought, contemplating the ocean.

“I can see him out there.”

For a second Garrett wondered who Aaron was talking about. He didn't see anyone. Then he worried Aaron was having a breakdown or something. Delusions.

“He's waving to me and yelling for me to get my ass back in the water.” Aaron smiled. “Always was a pushy bastard.”

“So maybe you should go join him. I mean, for a swim, not on the other side or anything like that. Jesus, that didn't come out right.”

Aaron laughed. “I know what you meant. I can't. Not today anyway, David,” he yelled into the breeze.

“How many weeks you got left with that cast?” Garrett scooped up a handful of sand and let it sift through his fingers.

“Two, I think. And then who knows how many weeks of physical therapy.” Aaron turned sharply and faced Garrett. “Thank you.”

“For what?”

He looked back at the ocean. “Saving my life, for starters. Dragging my ass out here today, making me see it's not as bad as I remember it. The last time I came to the beach was the day of the accident. I got as far as where the sand gets wet and puked. Ran like hell away from all the prying eyes and puked again in a trash can.”

“You...aren't going to do that right now are you?” Garrett backed up a step. “Cuz, I gotta warn you, if you puke, I will too. Puke and I don't get along. Ask Dane about the time he had the stomach flu.”

Aaron leaned his head back like he was soaking in the sun's rays and closed his eyes. “Nope. Not this time.” He looked at Garrett. “It's much easier when there's someone here next to me.”

Garrett held his hand and kissed the knuckles. “Dane wishes he could have been here too.”

“He'll be off tonight.”

“Yes. I think he mentioned something about barbecuing.” Garrett tucked Aaron's hand into the crook of his arm, standing close enough to keep the crutch pinned between Aaron's arm and body.

“Sounds good.” Aaron took another long drag of sea air. “I've been trying to do this for two years now. This is the closest I've gotten without turning tail and running immediately.”

“Then you're making progress.”

“Still think it has something to do with having a friend.”

“More than a friend, I hope.” Garrett wasn't above grasping for straws. His heart pounded as he waited for Aaron to speak. The silence went on for a few minutes, and he found himself holding his breath. Finally Aaron spoke.

“I definitely think you are *both* more than just friends.” Aaron turned to him. “I don't know how you did it, and I'm not ready to commit to more than friends, but I'm getting there.”

“And that's all we can ask.” Garrett pressed his lips to Aaron's, shifting his stance so they faced one another, and kissed the man who'd skidded to a stop in front of his cruiser the month before. He put his forehead on Aaron's and smiled. “Should we go give the doc some meat?”

“Ooh. Sounds kinky.”

“Food first, cock later.”

“I like that plan.”

Chapter Thirteen

Dinner was a casual, comfortable affair. Something Aaron was quickly growing used to. Dane barbecued two racks of baby backs, while Garrett prepared a salad and microwaved a few potatoes, and Aaron did about the only thing he could do without having to stand. He set the table from his chair, reaching across the worn wooden top to pass out plates and silverware.

“The Marlins are on tonight. We could eat in there,” Dane pointed out.

Aaron stuck out his tongue. “Too bad. Already got it set up here. Moving it would mean my job was wasted.”

“Wouldn't want that, now would we?” Garrett popped a tomato into his mouth and chewed.

“Nope. Did you make dessert too? I can't do barbecue without cheesecake.” Aaron polished his knife on his shirt for something to do. It had been so long since he'd sat around and teased.

“Then I guess you'll be awfully hungry later tonight, won't you?” Dane's eyes said there was something else he'd rather feed Aaron than cheesecake.

Aaron held his gaze. “Damn.”

Dane laughed and broke the heated contact. “Imp.” He strode over to where Aaron sat and rubbed his knuckles over his head.

“Hey, no fair. I can't get away.”

“Huh.” Garrett put the salad bowl on the table. “All this time we've been trying to get in his pants, and we never thought about him not being able to get away.”

Dane cocked his head. "All those years in medical school... You'd have thought I could have caught on quicker." He went out the door with a smirk and returned a few minutes later with the gooey ribs.

Aaron's mouth watered.

They ate with gusto, polishing off the delicate ribs and potatoes and making a good dent in the salad.

"You got a little sauce on your cheek there, Aaron." Dane leaned over just as Aaron brought his napkin up to wipe it away.

Dane was quicker. He grabbed Aaron's wrist and held firm. "Let me." His lips touched the corner of Aaron's mouth, then slowly moved to the barbecue spot. His tongue took a slow, steady swipe, licking the area clean and making Aaron's dick jump to attention.

"Mmm..." Dane retreated, a heat in his eyes Aaron often saw turned in Garrett's direction. Then Dane tilted his head and kissed Aaron on the mouth. The tender peck reminded Aaron that Dane and Garrett were into him for more than just sex.

Aaron felt a sense of peace settle over him. The normal weight of guilt, which seemed to crush his chest whenever he thought about giving a new relationship a try, didn't come. "I could do that about a million more times," Aaron admitted when he could speak again. Shit. Had he said that out loud?

Dead silence filled the room for several long moments.

"Does that mean—" Dane started, only to have Garrett finish.

"What we think it does?"

Aaron shrugged and licked his lips, tasting Dane while trying to downplay his excitement. "I...think I'd like to try. We'll see how it works out."

A smile blossomed on Dane's face. "Want me to show you how it'll work out tonight?"

The two men looking at him, anticipation rampant on their faces, wanted him. Something inside, the part he'd been clinging to like a lifeline for two long years, broke just a little.

Dane and Garrett made him feel like he might indeed have a different future. Hell, he'd gotten closer to the ocean with Garrett today than he had in a long time. And he could almost see himself being a part of the relationship Dane and Garrett offered. He no longer felt lost in a world without David.

He felt comforted.

Safe.

Loved.

The way David had made him feel. Somehow David had passed on his love to the two men. Aaron finally saw that, somehow, Dane and Garrett would be his keys to healing once and for all.

“Yes. I want you both to show me how it'll work out.” Aaron kissed Dane again, this time opening not just his mouth but his soul, allowing more than just Dane's tongue to enter but his love too. For the first time, he didn't feel the guilt invade.

“You know that is so mean, Doc.” Garrett's hand, Aaron noticed when he looked over, was suspiciously active beneath the tabletop.

Dane winked at Garrett. “We got this far because of the sauce. Want me to smear some on your cheek and lick it off so you won't feel left out?”

“No, but I'll let you smear it on my cock and lick it off.”

“You will, will you?” Dane got up, crossed to his lover, and ruffled his dark hair.

“We've got dishes to do before any sucking happens. Why don't you go find out what's on TV, Aaron?”

“I don't wanna do the dishes.” Garrett stamped his foot and pouted.

“Too bad.”

Aaron snorted. He was getting used to them. Life in their house was getting easier. More relaxed, he guessed. Now instead of feeling awkward about being around their sexual play all the time, he wanted to be part of it.

He thought about the urn sitting up on his dresser and the mocking mouth he sometimes saw there, the one that kept telling Aaron to get the hell on with it. To be happy.

He hadn't let himself totally go yet, despite the fact that he'd partaken in intimate acts with the both of them.

Using his crutches, he wandered into the living room and lowered himself onto the couch. He laid a hand on his full belly and listened to Dane and Garrett arguing about who would clean up.

"I did it last time," Garrett complained.

Aaron chuckled. Whiny baby.

The smile stuck on his face, Aaron sucked in a breath. His heart jumped, his stomach took a little dive, and he suddenly realized he *was* happy. Simply being there and listening to the everyday squabbles of a couple and seeing their love made him happy. And if he were being totally honest with himself, he wanted in. He wanted back what he'd shared with David.

In a spark of revelation, Aaron decided to put them both out of their misery. They'd given him a new outlook on life and the possibility of a future with them. This was his chance to start over. He had a lot of room in his heart for both David and these men.

Could he do this? He licked his lips, closed his eyes, and took a deep, fortifying breath. Then he took the leap. "My dick is hard in here."

A pan clattered to the floor, a glass broke, and then dead silence reigned. Heavy footsteps approached, making no attempt at being quiet. Aaron smiled.

"I thought that might get your attention."

His two men stared at him. Dane still held a barbecue sauce-covered plate in one hand and a scraper in the other. Garrett's hands were full with two glasses. Must have been the third one he heard bite the dust.

“So...what do you want us to do about it?” Dane tried for nonchalant, but the way the plate shook in his hand, Aaron was sure he was rattled.

“What the hell do you think I want you to do about it? Get over here and suck it.”

Dane straightened and turned to Garrett. “Did he just dominate me?”

“I believe he did, Doc. How does it feel?”

Dane shrugged. “I kinda like it.” He dropped his plate, which thudded on the carpeted floor. The scraper followed it, splattering barbecue sauce on the cream-colored fibers. Dane dropped to his knees in front of Aaron and proceeded to tug Aaron's shorts off.

Aaron's heart sped up, his pulse roared in his ears. He lifted his hips and helped Dane rid him of his shorts. A second later his dick sprang free. Dane wasted no time in lowering his mouth and surrounding Aaron's cock in warm velvet.

“Shit.” He dropped his head back to the couch and dug his fingers into the cushion.

“Damn, Doc. I don't believe I've ever seen you suck another man off. It's hot.”

Aaron crooked a finger at Garrett. “Come here.” His voice was gravelly since Dane worked his dick to the back of his throat.

“Coming.” Garrett set his glasses on the coffee table and knelt on the couch where Aaron pointed.

“Take them off.”

Garrett complied, shoving his shorts to his knees. All eight inches of Garrett's cock beckoned Aaron closer. He leaned in that direction and kissed the soft head, licking a bead of precum from its perch.

Dane moved down Aaron's dick, licking and nipping the length and taking in his musky scent. His lips settled on his balls. Aaron groaned, the sound vibrating against Garrett's cock, making him moan as well.

Aaron pushed on Dane's head. "Take yourself in hand. I want us all to come together."

"Bossy."

"This time, yes. Do it."

Dane stood and shed the shorts, and Aaron suddenly wanted that pretty cock up his ass. Later. Dane sank to his knees again and wrapped his lips around Aaron's dick once more.

"Hey, hey. Me too." Garrett pulled Aaron's head closer and pressed his cock to Aaron's mouth.

Aaron sucked the head in, licking with the point of his tongue at the bundle of nerves at the base of the broad mushroom shape. His eyes rolled back when Dane sucked him deep, and for a moment he couldn't concentrate on the dick in his mouth.

"No quitty." Garrett panted above him, his own composure in balance.

Jesus, he was going to blow. Aaron sucked Garrett deep and built a nice rhythm of bobbing his head and using his lips, his tongue, and his teeth to draw Garrett closer to climax. A tingle worked its way up from the base of his spine. Dane suddenly growled, sending a wild sensation up Aaron's dick, which caused Aaron to impale his mouth on Garrett's cock and almost choke.

"I'm close," Dane said, his mouth still full of Aaron's erection.

"Me too," Garrett agreed, thrusting his cock in and out of Aaron's mouth, one hand tangled in Aaron's hair to hold him close.

"Mmm-hmm..." was all Aaron could manage. Sweat lined his brow. His balls drew up.

The buildup of a sensual dinner conversation, the decision he'd finally made to join this pair of lovers, and the sweet friction on his dick added to the

depth of his explosion. Dane took it all, swallowing his cum and licking him clean.

A second later, Garrett shouted and tangy cum flooded over Aaron's tongue.

Dane followed, arching his back and shooting cum onto Aaron's thigh.

God did they ever look a sight. Three men, all with their shirts on, all naked from the waist down, their cocks softening in the cool air-conditioning, and each of them gasping in exertion.

Suddenly Aaron wanted more of what they'd just shared. His heart thumped and he realized he was stroking Garrett's hip with his thumb. He was tired of fighting himself and his feelings. The thought of staying with them forever made him smile.

He guessed they'd done what they set out to do. They'd wormed their way into his heart.

Chapter Fourteen

Aaron stared into the surf. The waves lapped at his feet, soaking the plastic of his walking cast to the ankle, but he couldn't summon the energy to care. Dane stood to his left, Garrett to his right, both with a hand on the small of his back, supportive.

"He would want this. More than anything in the world, this is where he'd want to be."

Aaron felt a gigantic weight lift off his chest.

"You okay, Aar?" Dane's fingers squeezed the back of Aaron's neck in a reassuring gesture.

"Yep," Aaron whispered, choking back the lump in his throat. He secretly hadn't wanted this to be easy. Hadn't wanted to say good-bye to David and lose him forever, but for the first time, Aaron realized he was doing the right thing.

"I think he'd like you both."

"Somehow he brought you to us, so I know we would have liked him too. Might have had to fight him to get you, but hey."

Aaron laughed at Dane's attempt to lighten the mood. Then he swallowed and took another step forward, carrying the gift in his arms protectively.

"You don't have to do this, you know." Dane gripped Aaron's elbow, keeping him steady on his feet in the waves.

Aaron looked over his shoulder first at Dane, then at Garrett. They made him feel good again.

"Yes. I do. You guys were right. It's time to move on, and now that I can feel David is okay, I'm ready. With you." Aaron twisted the cork top and pulled

it free. He looked down into the urn at what was left of David's body and realized that his lover's soul wasn't there. His soul was part of Aaron and always would be. A space that he'd share with Dane and Garrett also.

Hopefully everyone would get along.

"I love you, David. I always will." The wind chose that moment to pick up, twirling warmly against his face. "But I've grown to love these yahoos too, and I know, it was quick, right? But then I think back to when you and I met and I know I felt this same way the day I saw you jump naked off that pier into that fucking cold water of Lake Michigan and bob back to the surface with lips the color of a blue Slurpee."

"Naked?" Aaron heard Garrett mumble.

"See, everyone thinks you're an idiot, not just me." The wind blew again. Aaron sniffled. "So this is it. I'm moving on to a new part of life. I just want you to know that I'll never forget you." He turned the urn over and let the fine dust sift over the lip to scatter on the waves. Two hands touched his back between his shoulder blades.

"We'll take good care of him, David." Dane's fingers moved up to cradle Aaron's scalp, and Garrett's went around his waist.

"Yeah. We won't let anything happen to him."

The gust of wind blew harder as Aaron watched the last of the ashes float to the water.

Letting go didn't hurt nearly as much as he'd anticipated.

"I don't think I could have done this without you here."

"We wouldn't have let you." Dane pulled Aaron closer with an arm around his head and kissed his temple.

"Nope." Garrett moved to Aaron's front and wrapped his arms around both of them. They'd picked a secluded beach in which to dispose of the ashes because they hadn't wanted anyone protesting, but now Aaron wished there were hundreds of people around to witness the three of them in a group hug.

He wanted to shout that he was home again at last.

And loved. By two men, when he never thought he'd ever love again.

Two warm sets of lips brushed over his cheeks, two noses nuzzled his, two foreheads rubbed against his. Aaron dropped the urn into the water surrounded by their circle of feet and put his arms around Dane's and Garrett's shoulders.

Two lonely years were gone with the wash of sea.

“I love you both.”

☪ THE END ☪

Annmarie McKenna

Annmarie McKenna lives just outside St. Louis, MO with her husband and four crazy kids that keep her hopping with all their various activities. Add to them two dogs, one cat, one guinea pig, one bird and two fish and you've got utter...chaos! She enjoys reading, usually when she needs to be writing, and traveling, though she insanely does this with the four small, squabbling kids in tow. She loves hearing from readers! Feel free to send Annmarie an email at annmarmck@yahoo.com or join her Yahoogroup and stay caught up with all her latest news at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Annmarie_McKenna/