



# *Lust Bites*

**GAY DIVORCEE**

**Kim Dare**

A Total-E-Bound Publication



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Gay Divorcee

ISBN #978-1-907280-68-9

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Edited by Christine Riley

Total-E-Bound Publishing

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Published in 2009 by Total-E-Bound Publishing 1 The Corner, Faldingworth Road, Spredlington, Market Rasen, Lincolnshire, LN8 2DE, UK.

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

**G-A-Y**

# **GAY DIVORCEE**

**Kim Dare**

## *Dedication*

To everyone who believes, be it in marriage, Christmas or in forever.

## Chapter One

“Bloody pointless!”

R. S. Jones turned his attention from his friend Bernard to the dominant sitting next to him. “Sir?”

The older man tossed back another shot of whisky. “Dragging yourself halfway around the world to volunteer on a campaign for gay marriage is pointless.” He lifted a hand in an idle gesture, and one of the submissives serving in the club refilled his glass.

Jones adjusted the cushion he knelt on, playing for time as he tried to work out what exactly what the dominant was objecting to. Looking up a moment later, he met the other man’s gaze. Vivid green eyes locked with his, unblinking and damn near heart stopping.

Jones quickly dropped his gaze. “I know there’s still a lot of opposition to any form of gay marriage in some parts of the US, sir,” he began, quite ready to explain why that was no reason to give up.

“And so there should be.”

Jones stuttered. One glance up and he got caught in those green eyes again. He tried to pick up his train of thought and failed. “Sir?”

The dominant pushed shaggy strands of blond hair back off his face as he leant forward in his chair, his eyes sparkling with intensity.

“The reason so many people oppose gay marriage is because gay men shouldn’t get married,” he announced. “We don’t need to help the US legalise marriage, we need to turn the clock back to when civil-commitment was illegal in Britain too. Gay men and marriage don’t mix.”

“But, sir,” Jones began. “That’s not true! Being gay doesn’t—”

The dominant tossed back his shot and dismissed everything Jones was about to say with a sweep of his hand as he ordered his glass to be refilled again. “Nonsense!”

Jones’ frown deepened. Fascinating green eyes were very nice. Hair so blond it made references to golden corn sound logical was great too. On a man who radiated dominance, they were even better. But dominant or not, a jerk was still a jerk.

Before Jones could say anything more, the dominant seemed to decide the conversation was over. He stepped past Jones and walked through to the corridor leading to the gents' room without another word.

Jones turned his attention back to Bernard, the man he'd been telling about the volunteer work that occupied his last holiday.

Bernard offered him a rueful smile. "All of which translates to—he walked in on his husband getting screwed by another dominant and barely escaped from the resulting divorce with his shirt."

Jones closed his eyes as he mentally ran over everything he'd said in front of the other man. "I'm sorry, sir—I should have..."

"Read his mind?" Bernard asked. He shook his head. "Claude was a silly little slut who Grayson should never have screwed let alone married—I'd assumed he was over him a long time ago. And, for the record, he had more than enough to say about why civil commitment should be law, back before he realised gay marriage can lead to gay divorce."

Jones nodded, but he still wished he could have clawed back some of the words he'd babbled about just how great gay marriage would be.

"I supposed we'd best start sobering him up," Bernard muttered. "Whisky always did make him melancholy. If you ask at the bar, I'm sure they'll be able to find a few cups of coffee for us—black, no sugar for Grayson."

Jones fulfilled the order on rote, happy to have some simple task to occupy the front of his mind while the rest of his brain whirled with thoughts of Grayson. On the way back to Bernard's table with the tray of coffees, he stopped short.

Only Grayson was there.

Jones hesitated as he met the other man's eyes. He saw the pain there, the regret. There was a trace of anger too, but most of it seemed to have faded into resignation.

"Bernard had to take a phone call. He's looking for somewhere with better reception," Grayson informed him.

Jones still wasn't sure what to do with the tray of drinks or with himself. Steeling his resolve, he approached Grayson and offered him one of the coffees.

Grayson took a mug. "Thank you."

Jones hesitated for a moment. Bernard had morphed from a dominant he'd dated a few times into an old friend. He could comfortably kneel at his feet and know Bernard wouldn't get the wrong idea.

Grayson represented an unknown quantity. The seat was the sensible option. He'd given Grayson no reason to expect even platonic signs of submission from him. Somehow Jones still found himself kneeling on the cushion at his feet. He glanced up at Grayson, not sure what to say now.

"I'm not going to apologise for telling you the truth," Grayson informed him.

"May I apologise, sir?" Jones asked, cautiously.

Grayson raised an eyebrow. "For?"

"If I'd known about..." he cleared his throat, unable to find the right word. "Then I wouldn't have said the things I did in front of you, sir."

"Which is nothing like saying you realise I am right," Grayson observed.

Jones looked down at Bernard's coffee, still on the tray in his hands. "It was unkind to say such things in front of you, sir," he offered.

Grayson's lips twitched into an unexpectedly amused smile as he seemed to realise that was the best he was going to get from him. He nodded to the other mug. "You might as well drink up, Bernard gossips like an old woman—it will be cold by the time he comes back."

"Thank you, sir." Jones set the tray to one side and wrapped his hands around the hot mug—not quite willing to spoil the possible offer of a truce by explaining he'd only brought back two cups of coffee because he couldn't stand the taste of the stuff himself.

"How long have you belonged to him?" Grayson asked.

Jones blinked. "Bernard? I don't, sir. We dated for a little while, but I never belonged to him."

"You don't belong to anyone?" Grayson asked.

Jones shook his head.

Grayson cleared his throat. "Smart boy. Keep your freedom and screw around."

Jones decided silence was probably the best answer to that. He pretended to take a sip of the coffee.

The music playing discreetly in the background switched to a Christmas favourite. Someone behind the bar turned the volume up.

"What self-respecting leather bar lets that rubbish play through their speakers?" Grayson asked the world in general as he rolled his eyes and slouched down a little further down in his chair.

*You don't like Christmas?* Jones bit the words back just in time. It was probably the first Christmas he'd be spending on his own since his divorce. "Do you have plans for the holidays?" Jones asked, when he couldn't think of anything else to say.

"Certainly – they involve peace, goodwill to anyone who doesn't annoy me and a very large bottle of whisky."

Jones looked up at him. That couldn't happen.

The thought appeared in his head one moment. The next moment his lips were moving.

"Come and spend Christmas with me, sir?"

\* \* \* \*

Several hours later, Jones squirmed in his bed, still unable to find a comfortable position. His erection rubbed against the blankets, making him moan his frustration against his pillow.

He was not going to jack off thinking about Grayson. He wasn't going to do that, because he wasn't some creepy stalker who invited a very depressed stranger to his house with ulterior motives.

Pushing back the blankets in the vain hope lack of friction would convince his cock to go to sleep so the rest of him could follow suit, Jones stared up at the ceiling. They were going to spend a nice quiet Christmas together, that was all. A nice traditional... Jones pushed his hand through his hair and sighed.

He shouldn't be thinking about sex. He should be worrying about the fact he had no real idea of what a traditional family Christmas actually entailed. He should be worried about the fact it was probably impossible to create that Christmas from scratch before the guy turned up tomorrow evening.



He shouldn't be wondering if Grayson had been divorced for long enough to want to have sex with someone else. He shouldn't be wondering if his long standing objections to one night stands were all that important after all. And he shouldn't be wondering if Grayson was as fantastic a master as he was sure he would be.

Jones looked down at his still flourishing erection and sighed. His fingers tapped against the bed sheet next to him.

Talk about something being bloody pointless. He knew he'd have to give in to his body's demands sooner or later — it might as well be before he drove himself insane with insomnia. Jones wrapped his hand around his shaft.

As his eyes dropped closed, he immediately found himself staring into those startling green eyes again. His gaze dropped submissively away, but only as far as a firm pair of lips. Jones found himself licking his own lips in response.

*"How may I serve you, sir?"*

*"You may start by explaining what the hell you think you're doing."*

*"Sir?"*

*"That's no way to use your master, is it?" Grayson's eyes dropped to the fist wrapped around his cock.*

*Jones snatched his hand away.*

*"I didn't give my pet permission to touch himself, did I?" Grayson growled.*

*Jones shook his head, risking a glance up to meet his master's eyes. He saw the humour in them, the love in them, and the worry inside him melted away.*

*Sitting on the bed next to him, Grayson trailed a fingertip over Jones' erection. "From now on, if you want to come, you wait for your master's permission."*

*"Yes, sir."*

*"If you don't, your master will have to punish you."*

*"Yes, sir," Jones whispered.*

*"Would you like that?"*

*Jones shook his head, quick to deny any inclination to displease his master.*

*"What if it wasn't a punishment?" his master asked, his voice soft and teasing now. "Would you like to be spanked if your master just wanted to play with his pet?"*

*Jones nodded, his breath catching in his throat.*

*Without ever remembering moving, Jones found himself turned over his master's knee, his hands cuffed tight behind his back.*

*His master's hand caressed his bare backside, teasing him with what was to come until Jones thought he would lose his mind.*

*"Please, s – ?"*

*A hand landed sharply on his backside, cutting him short. He whimpered his pleasure, pushing his buttocks out for more. His master's hand came down again on the other cheek. Then it stroked gently over the flushed skin, soothing and teasing before he allowed him a little more of what he craved.*

*The hand came down again and again. His master's erection pressed against his stomach as he rocked with the force of the spanks. His own throbbing cock rubbed against his master's thigh until all Jones could think about was the hand on his backside and the friction on his shaft.*

*He cried out as the hand came down harder. Bucking helplessly against his master's leg, he came over Grayson's lap.*

*A moment later, a hand stroked through his hair, gentling him down from the high while he remained turned over his master's lap. "Hush, love. That's right. Your master's got you."*

Jones blinked his eyes open and stared down at the semen splattered across his stomach and chest. He sighed and dropped his hand away from his cock.

Dragging a deep breath into his lungs, he forced himself to repeat over and over inside his head – fantasy not reality – fantasy not reality.

He could survive Grayson finding out he had no idea what a traditional family Christmas really entailed if he had to. But he couldn't let himself forget that he was spending Christmas with a man he barely knew. Grayson wasn't his master. Fantasy not reality...

\* \* \* \*

"It is not a stupid idea," Jones said, for what felt like the millionth time as he wedged the cordless phone a little more firmly under his ear. "I couldn't let him spend Christmas on his own."

"And the obvious problem of inviting him to spend 'a traditional family Christmas' with you never occurred to you?" his friend asked along the phone line. Jones could just imagine his friend arching an eyebrow as he said it.

"There's no problem," Jones said, very firmly, sure that it would become the case if he kept repeating the fact often enough.

"You've never had a traditional family Christmas!" Trevor reminded him yet again. "How the hell do you invite someone to spend a holiday with you when you don't even celebrate it?"

"Well, I had this crazy idea that I could phone up my friend, and he would actually help rather than make sarcastic comments," Jones said.

Trevor sighed along the phone line. "Okay – I'll play. Are you all set for the hot depressed guy to turn up?"

Jones looked around the room as he considered exactly how to answer Trevor's question.

"The tree's moulting. The label on the turkey says it needs to defrost for another three days. The presents are covered by more sticky tape than wrapping paper. I made Christmas punch, but it contains so much vodka, I'm going to pass out after one glass. And I've made mince pies, but the recipe book only knows how to use an electric cooker and mine's gas."

"Yep, that sounds like a traditional Christmas to me," Trevor said cheerfully.

"So helpful," Jones muttered.

He looked around his previously neat and orderly apartment. It looked like a tinsel bomb had exploded in the middle of it. The list of things he needed to do ran around and around in his head, reminding him that there was a very good reason he didn't do things at the last minute. He could feel his blood pressure and his nerves getting worse by the second.

"Do you actually have any proof the guy's not an axe murderer?"

"What?"

"You invite a man you've met once to spend Christmas with you. I'm just wondering if you checked if he was a psychopath or not," Trevor asked.

"He's not like that," Jones said as he straightened the tinsel he'd put up around the picture frames. An axe murderer wouldn't brood over an ex-husband that way. He wouldn't look so melancholy and lost. An axe murderer wouldn't have shown up in his fantasy and given him the best orgasm he could remember.

"Seriously, Jones," Trevor said, "Don't fall for him. He'll be on the rebound, and you'll be the one who ends up getting hurt."

Jones nodded, almost dropping the phone in the process. He knew all that. He knew his fantasy wasn't reality. Knowing it didn't change a damn thing. He still had this stupid feeling he was waiting for his master to come home rather than for a stranger to turn up.

At that moment, the buzzer sounded, letting him know someone was waiting outside the building to be let in.

"That's him," Jones said. "Got to go. Thanks. Have a good Christmas."

Jones hung up the phone without giving his friend time to say anything sarcastic in response, and pressed the intercom leading to the front door. "Hello."

"Jones? It's Grayson Wheatley. We met at—"

"Yes, sir." Jones pressed the button that opened the main door. "It's the sixth floor, apartment six C, sir." He let go of the button and rolled his eyes at himself. Grayson obviously knew that—he had to have pressed the button marked six C to be buzzed in.

Spinning away from the door, Jones rushed over to the CD player and switched on the festive mix he'd picked up while he was in town that morning. A jingle song filled the room.

Jones looked around. Everything was as right as it was going to get.

Someone knocked on his apartment door. Squaring his shoulders, he took a deep breath and opened it.

"Hello, sir," Jones stepped back to let him in, then turned to shut the door.

With his back to the dominant, Jones closed his eyes. In between all the other things he'd been trying to do, he had come up with an idea. It was too late to worry about if it was a good idea or not now.

Jones turned to face his guest and dropped to his knees.

## Chapter Two

Grayson blinked. He was definitely the guy from the bar. Even sloshed memories didn't forget a face like that. As Grayson stared down at a head full of thick, dark waves, the submissive caught his free hand and guided it to his mouth.

Soft, pink lips brushed across his knuckles. Grayson's head swirled with fresh doubts, over whether there was a part of the previous night that he'd completely blanked on. His cock wasn't worried about any of that. A beautiful, and apparently very willing submissive knelt at his feet.

"Is that how you always welcome a man into your home, Jones?" he asked.

Jones. Grayson knew that much. Admittedly he was only entirely certain of the name because someone had written it down, along with an address and a time, on the back of a napkin from the bar, but still...

Jones glanced up at him. Then the younger man's eyes flicked up above his head. Grayson's gaze automatically followed. Mistletoe.

Grayson chuckled at the sight as some of his tension eased. Even if he was hazy on details from the previous night, Grayson had woken with a definite impression of the submissive's personality. Christmas fun fitted that memory far better than an impromptu blow job.

The fingers that had guided his hand to Jones' lips twitched. Grayson kept hold of them when the submissive would have pulled away, worried that he'd done the wrong thing. He tugged gently at Jones' fingers, coaxing the other man back to his feet.

"I believe the tradition is to kiss on the lips," Grayson teased, telling himself he was merely reassuring the other man he hadn't made a fool of himself with his bit of Christmas flavoured submission.

Jones swallowed.

Unless Grayson was very much mistaken, a very slight blush stole its way to the other man's cheeks. Grayson tucked a knuckle under his chin to tilt his head back and brushed their lips together. It was just a chaste moment of contact. It still made Jones' blush deepen.

When Grayson dropped his hand from his face, Jones quickly turned away. "Would you like some Christmas punch, sir?" he asked, blurring the words together in his haste to get them out.

"Yes, thank you." Grayson left his overnight bag by the door and followed him down the short hallway.

"If you'd like to go through and sit down, sir," he offered, indicating another door as he made his way into a kitchen.

Grayson followed him instead and watched Jones poured out a glass of punch. When he turned, Jones gasped to find Grayson right behind him. He wrapped his hand around Jones' and steadied the glass, when it would have tipped.

"None for you?" he asked.

Jones's looked up at him, blinked and looked down.

Grayson tucked his knuckles under Jones's chin and made him look up again. For a moment, he almost forgot he didn't have the right to take another kiss from him. Hell, he knew he hadn't really had the right to take the first one, just an excuse.

"You're not used to having a dominant in your house," he guessed.

"No, sir," Jones admitted, looking more and more uncertain of the wisdom of inviting him by the moment.

"Here are the ground rules," Grayson said, taking the glass off him and putting it down on the counter. He turned away and took another glass off the shelf as he continued. "Yes, we both know I'm a dominant and you're a submissive. But that doesn't mean you're going to spend your whole Christmas waiting on me hand and foot."

He poured a second glass of punch and offered it to Jones.

The younger man hesitated, then took it. "Thank you, sir." His gaze darted around the room and he took a sip of the punch.

Grayson lifted a hand and stroked Jones' hair back from his face. The move surprised the younger man into looking him right in the eye. Grayson stared back at him, trying to read his expression.

Jones was between him and the counter now, effectively cornered. He didn't seem any more worried about that than by the fact Grayson was completely incapable of keeping his hands to himself.

"Perhaps we should go and sit down."

Jones nodded, apparently too polite to point out he couldn't do that until Grayson got out of his way. Finally Grayson managed to take a step back and let the younger man lead the way into the living room. Evidently Jones liked Christmas—a lot. The room was a grotto to make any department store's Santa green with envy.

Grayson took a seat in one of the leather armchairs flanking a fireplace. Jones knelt to the left of his chair, apparently without even considering the chair opposite him as a possibility. Grayson studied him, trying to work out if there was some sort of declaration inherent in the move. Claude sure as hell wouldn't have got on his knees unless he intended to suck him off, and that usually meant he wanted something expensive.

Grayson held back a sigh. That was another reason a gay man shouldn't get married. Too much thinking with his cock, not enough thinking with his brain. He couldn't even claim to have been taken in by an act. He'd always known Claude was a spoilt little bastard.

Jones glanced up at him. For the first time he seemed to realise he was kneeling next to a veritable stranger.

"Do you mind, sir?" he asked.

Grayson took a long time in answering, knowing he should put some distance between them, but not quite capable of forcing himself to do that.

"Fetch something to sit on," he said in the end. "There's no point in making yourself uncomfortable."

Jones took one of the big cushions off the sofa and placed it back at Grayson's left. He sat rather than knelt on it, making himself comfortable just as Grayson ordered.

"Better," Grayson said. He reached to stroke his hair in praise but stopped himself short. In spite of the fact he barely knew the man's name, there was already a peaceful sort of feeling settling over the room. He could do without that disappearing to be replaced with a lecture on messing up the guy's hair.

Jones shifted on the cushion, letting his head brush against Grayson's hand, inviting the praise. Grayson cautiously rested his hand in his hair. Jones smiled.

"You don't belong to me," Grayson stated, not sure who he thought needed reminding.

"I know that, sir," Jones said, his expression unreadable.

"Are you always this friendly towards men you don't belong to?" Grayson forced himself to ask, hoping the reality check would do him some good.

Jones looked down, but kept his head where it was, letting Grayson's fingers linger in the dark waves.

"No, sir," he said after a little while. "Not usually." He sounded as if he would have far rather lied right then, but Grayson had no doubt that what he'd said was the truth. "But I always try to be respectful towards dominants," he added, as if that might make it all okay.

Grayson looked down at where Jones sat at a stranger's feet in his own home.

"So you're one of those who believe dominants are intrinsically better than submissives?" Grayson realised, a little sadly. Claude may have been a bastard in a lot of ways, but that had never been one of his faults. He'd always been damn sure he deserved the best of everything – and he had never been afraid of throwing a temper tantrum to get it.

Jones shook his head. "No, sir."

Grayson studied him carefully. "Yet every dominant deserves your respect?"

The younger man frowned. "*Everyone* deserves respect, sir," he said staring down at his drink.

He was so serious, so certain about everything. Grayson stroked his fingers through his hair. Right then, he couldn't even pretend that he was soothing the submissive rather than himself with the action. There was something reassuring about Jones, something that said there were nice guys left in the world, and one of them might one day want to kneel at his feet.

"I don't mind dominants giving me orders," Jones said, evidently giving a great deal of thought to his answer. "I like to be useful. If someone asks me to fetch him a drink, I respect his right to do that. And if he asks me to perform some service that I set outside my limits, I expect him to respect my right to politely decline."

Grayson's fingers twirled a strand of Jones' hair, around and around. He should ask. Jones was probably leading up to some point where he could politely remind Grayson that he'd offered Christmas companionship and nothing more.

"And how does that equate to not thinking you're worth a chair?" he asked instead.

"If you'd prefer..." He was already half way to his feet.

Grayson put his hand on his shoulder. "Just answer the question."



"Sitting here with you, it feels..." he shrugged away his attempts to find exactly the right word. "It feels nice, sir. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable."

Grayson's fingers found their way back into Jones' hair. Nice. Yes. It was. "I'm not uncomfortable."

Jones glanced up at him.

"As long as you don't start thinking you need my permission to sit on your own furniture, it's not a problem."

Jones nodded. "Yes, sir."

Grayson cleared his throat and took a sip of the punch. "What are our plans for the evening?"

"I rented some movies I thought you might like, sir," Jones offered, rising and walking across to a pile of DVDs by the TV.

Grayson followed and looked over his shoulder. It looked like the guy had cleared the entire festive collection of DVDs off a shelf. His lips twitched into a smile. He had to stop himself short to prevent himself from pressing a kiss on top of Jones' head.

He was a sweet guy. That didn't give anyone the right to take advantage of him. Grayson turned away from temptation, promising himself there would be no more kisses.

"Host's choice," he said over his shoulder.

Jones looked across at him and then back at the DVDs. He stared at the titles for several long seconds. They were all the old Christmas classics. The kind anyone would have seen two dozen times over when they were growing up. The kind of films Claude would have sneered at.

Grayson pushed the comparison away. After barely thinking of Claude for months, Jones' enthusiasm for the marriage Grayson had found out wasn't the cure to all gay ills had already stirred far too many memories and inspired way too much whisky. Claude wasn't going to spoil any more of his time with Jones.

Eventually the submissive picked one of the DVDs and set it to play. Retracing his steps across the room, he settled himself on the cushion next to the chair again.

Grayson slouched a little in the chair, immediately settling his hand back in Jones' hair. By the time the trailers preceding the movie had run their course, Jones' head was already resting contentedly against his knee.

\* \* \* \*

Jones drained the last of his punch as the titles on the second movie rolled down the screen. He looked at Grayson's glass and found that empty too.

"I'll go and..."

He took the glass out of the other man's hand and went to refill it. The whole world seemed slow and sleepy now. He smiled at nothing in particular as he wandered into the kitchen.

He looked at the punch bowl. It was empty. That was... Jones frowned. That wasn't good. The recipe had called for a hell of a lot of vodka and he'd drunk half of it. That wasn't good.

"Problem?"

Jones looked over his shoulder. Grayson leant casually against the door frame, looking perfectly at home.

"We drank all the punch, sir."

"Thirsty?" Grayson asked.

Jones shook his head.

"Then it's not important."

That was logical. "Yes, sir."

Grayson put his arm around his shoulder. He was lovely and warm. His shirt was soft under Jones' cheek. Jones gave a contented little sigh. Grayson chuckled. The sound rumbled through his shoulder, making Jones smile against the cotton.

"Someone's sleepy," Grayson said.

Jones nodded. Then he frowned. "Is there something I can do for you, sir?" He looked around the kitchen. Even if there was nothing Grayson wanted, there were the plates of food they'd worked their way through. They should probably be washed up and —

Grayson ran his fingers through Jones' hair, derailing anything like a thought process. Jones looked up at the taller man. Grayson stared down at him with a strange little expression in his eyes — one that made him look suspiciously like his fantasy master from the previous night.

Jones tilted his head to one side, trying to remind himself why he'd decided that sort of comparison was dangerous. "Sir?"

"I think it's time you went to your bed, and I went to mine," he said.

Jones nodded.

Grayson just stood there, looking down at him.

Jones blinked and realised he hadn't actually shown Grayson where the bedroom was. He blushed and turned away. "Through here, sir."

In the hallway, he saw Grayson's bag by the door. He retrieved it and carried it into his bedroom. Grayson chuckled and took it from him.

"I'm sorry, sir. I meant to unpack for you," Jones remembered.

"Then it's a good thing I thought to leave your Christmas presents in my car until the morning."

Jones shook his head. "You didn't need to..."

Grayson ruffled his hair.

"At least I remembered to make up the bed fresh," Jones offered. And at least he was still just about sober enough to remember not to say it was *his* bed. He suspected Grayson wouldn't be impressed at the idea of him sleeping on the sofa. Best not to mention it. Anyway, Grayson was much taller than him – even if he wasn't a guest, he had to take the bed simply because he wouldn't fit anywhere else.

Grayson sat down on the bed, just as his fantasy had. "What was in that punch?" he asked, running a hand through his hair.

Jones frowned. "It said it was a traditional Christmas thing. I've got the recipe somewhere."

"Vodka," Grayson guessed. "Never have got the knack of vodka." He lay down, his feet still hanging over the edge of the mattress.

Jones stared down at him, taking the opportunity to look when the other man couldn't catch him.

"Go on," Grayson said, his eyes still closed. "Go get some sleep before I end up trying to do something you'll regret in the morning."

Jones forced himself to retreat from the room and close the door behind him. Wandering into the living room he lay down on the sofa. Christmas glitter twinkled in the glow of the fairy lights.

He tried to remember if Trevor had mentioned if he was supposed to switch the lights off or not. He looked at his watch and wondered how Trevor would feel about being woken up in the early hours of Christmas morning to discuss appropriate uses of festive electrical equipment. Jones covered his mouth with his finger tips as he almost gave in to the tipsy inclination to giggle.

The inclination to laughter drained away as Jones turned his head towards his bedroom door. A moment later, Jones found himself standing outside that door. He tapped gently on it. The part of his mind that hadn't absorbed too much vodka tried to work out an excuse for doing that.

Did Grayson have enough blankets? Did he want a drink of water? Jones shook his head, willing to admit the truth to himself if no one else. He just wanted to be closer to the other man for a little while longer. He wanted a little more of that contentment they'd found as he sat at Grayson's feet.

Grayson didn't answer the knock. Feeling guilty, but not quite so guilty he wasn't going to do it, Jones nudged the door open and peeked inside. The dominant lay asleep exactly as Jones had left him. Clicking the door softly closed, Jones walked across the room and cautiously lifted Grayson's feet onto the bed. Slipping the other man's shoes off, he set them to one side and considered the dominant's clothes.

No. It would be hard to explain himself if Grayson woke while he was trying to undress him, even if he did just want to make him comfortable. Jones took a blanket from the bottom of the bed and draped that over the dominant instead.

With a slight sigh, Jones took a spare pillow and a spare blanket and put them on the floor next to the bed. It was pointless clinging to excuses when Grayson was asleep and none the wiser to any of them. He'd been hoping he could sneak in and sleep by the side of the bed from the start.

He put the pillow on the floor and lay down.

The movement made his shaft rub against the inside of his trousers and reminded him his cock had been half hard most of the night. Against all sense, considering he wasn't

supposed to be there at all, let alone there and sporting a straining erection, Jones closed his eyes and invited the fantasy version of Grayson into his mind.

The real world Grayson shifted in the sleep, settling himself more comfortably. Jones smiled in the darkness and curled up a little more snugly under his own blanket, content to let the fantasy slip away in favour of the real man right then.

## Chapter Three

Grayson blinked his eyes open and frowned at the unfamiliar shapes looming in the shadows. Sitting up, he glanced at the floor by the side of the bed just in time to stop himself swinging his feet off the mattress and treading on his host.

Jones lay curled up, fast asleep on the bedside rug. Grayson smiled at the sight. In spite of the hard floor beneath him, he seemed very comfortable and entirely at peace with his little part of the world. Grayson lay back down and peered over the edge of the bed at the sleeping submissive.

Without thinking, he reached down and pushed Jones' fringe back off his face. The younger man stirred, leaning into his touch. Murmuring his pleasure at the gentle contact, he blinked his eyes open.

"Sir?"

No one should sound that happy about being woken up in the middle of the night for no good reason.

Jones sat up a little. "Is there something I can —"

Grayson kissed him. He leant over the edge of the mattress, barely keeping his balance, and kissed Jones before he could remember why he'd promised himself he wouldn't do that.

A gasp brushed against his lips. A jolt of surprise pulled the younger man away. Grayson wound his hand into Jones' hair, holding him still as he slid his tongue against his lips and nudged them apart to taste him properly. The sweetness of the Christmas punch still lingered. He tightened his grip in the younger man's hair, pulling him closer, demanding better access to his mouth.

Jones leaned up willingly. Part of Grayson registered that enthusiastic acceptance. A second later, he'd dragged Jones all the way up onto the bed.

The younger man was still dressed. That wasn't right.

Grayson tugged at Jones' shirt. "Off."

"Sir?"

"Clothes off," Grayson said between kisses. "Now." He needed the younger man completely accessible, now.

Jones fumbled with his buttons but Grayson couldn't stop kissing for long enough to help. The younger man whimpered into his mouth as he finally managed to scramble out of the last of his clothes.

Grayson leant back, staring down at Jones as his hands roamed eagerly over the skin displayed for him in the half light. Finding Jones just as hard as he was, Grayson wrapped his hand around the submissive's erection, not stroking him, just holding him there in the palm of his hand.

"Sir?" It was half a whimper and half a plea.

"Mine," Grayson said suddenly. Letting go of Jones' cock, he took hold of the younger man's wrists and pinned him to the mattress. The need to possess coursed through him more strongly than he ever remembered. The little voice in the back of his head that had been reminding him that he couldn't do this all night fell silent. "Say it," Grayson demanded.

Jones swallowed and licked at his lips. "Yours, sir."

Grayson murmured his pleasure into the other man's hair as he trailed a kiss from his temple down to his neck. He pressed his lips against bare skin, nipping at the curve of his throat. He reached Jones' collarbone and unease began to prick down his spine.

Something was wrong.

He pulled back.

Jones saw his frown and reflected it back to him. "Sir?" This time the word was full of confusion.

Grayson stared down at him, trying to make his brain work through the lingering haze of vodka.

He let go of Jones' wrist and touched his finger tips to the other man's lips and then his cheek, as he tried to place what wasn't right about him.

"Sir?" Jones asked again.

Grayson's fingers traced a line down his neck. Nothing stopped his fingers.

No collar.

Grayson frowned. "Where's your collar?"

The submissive hesitated. "I...you haven't. Sir, I mean..."

Grayson looked around the room. There had to be a collar. "There's one in my bag," he remembered. "Bring it here."

Jones wriggled out from his place half pinned underneath him and went to the bag. A few seconds later, he was back carrying the collar. Kneeling by the side of the bed, he offered him the strip of leather.

Part of Grayson remembered that he'd put that collar in his bag for a very specific reason—a reason that didn't involve putting it on Jones. But he pushed that aside and quickly fastened the leather around Jones' neck. One of the holes was well worn, but achieving the correct fit required the use of a different hole. Even so, something eased inside him when the leather was wrapped snugly around the submissive's neck.

"That's better, isn't it?" he asked.

Jones nodded, but there was something hesitant in his eyes.

He was going too fast. Even through the vodka, Grayson knew that. But, as Grayson stroked his fingers across the leather marking the submissive as his, he only knew that Jones was there. Jones was safe. And Jones was his. Everything else could be worked out over time.

"Good boy," he whispered.

The gentle bit of praise made Jones' lips twitch into a smile, but his eyes still looked serious.

"Mine," Grayson told him again.

Jones didn't need to be prompted. "Yours, sir."

Grayson nodded. Slipping a finger into the collar, he gave a little tug, encouraging him back onto the bed. Jones came willingly, but he didn't seem entirely sure what to do with himself once he was there. Grayson tugged again, and the younger man collapsed on top of him. Jones stared straight into his eyes for a moment, so shocked, so perfect.

Sliding his hands into his hair, Grayson guided him down for a kiss as he let the smaller man's body rest on top of his. Jones' hands fisted in Grayson's shirt as he parted his lips, inviting his master to taste him properly.

Running his hands down Jones' back, Grayson palmed perfect, tight muscles, settling his hands on the other man's backside. Jones gasped into the kiss and rocked against him, thrusting his erection against Grayson's hip and then pushing his backside into Grayson's



hands as if he wanted everything in the world and his only problem was deciding what he should beg for first.

Without any warning, Jones suddenly started to wriggle away. Grayson frowned and tightened his hold on him, not sure what he could have done to scare him or make him think he couldn't have the whole world on a stick, any way he wanted it.

No, Grayson realised, Jones wasn't wriggling away. He was working his way down his master's body, pressing kisses against his shirt as he went. Grayson dropped his head back on the pillow and stopped trying to keep him where he was.

Jones reached for Grayson's belt. This was a bad idea. He knew that. Part of him knew he would regret this. A far larger part didn't care. Right at that moment, Grayson wanted this—Grayson wanted *him*. And Jones had never felt more certain about what he was doing in his life.

The dominant's hand stroked his hair. Jones glanced up at him as Grayson wound his fingers through his hair in that same way as he'd enjoyed all night.

Jones smiled at the thought. Grayson liked doing that when he was sober too. He'd liked him then too. It wasn't entirely unreasonable to hope he might have thought about the blow job before he'd put another submissive's old collar around his neck.

Belt undone, Jones carefully undid the dominant's fly. Grayson helpfully lifted his hips off the bed so he could tug his trousers and his boxers down to free his cock. Grayson was already more than half hard. Leaning down, Jones pressed a kiss to his shaft. And then another, and another.

As his lips touched the tip, Jones moved to take him into his mouth. He stopped short and looked up when Grayson tugged very gently at his hair.

"Don't rush?" It was a request, not an order. Grayson didn't sound like a dominant right then. He sounded like a man in need, not a man in control.

Jones nodded. "Slow, sir," he agreed.

He pressed another kiss onto the stiffening shaft. Lapping delicately, he worked his way up and down the dominant's cock, coaxing him fully hard as slowly as he knew how.

Grayson stroked his hair, murmuring his pleasure, but not offering any instruction. He let him do exactly as he pleased, nuzzling and licking his cock until Jones finally took the

tip between his lips. Pre-cum seeped onto his tongue and he swallowed it down, eager for his first real taste of the other man.

The hand in his hair tightened for a moment. Jones looked up, wondering if even slower would be even better.

Grayson's eyes were closed, his head tossed back. He blindly stroked his hair, as if in apology. "Good, darling," he whispered to the ceiling. "That's good."

Jones lapped at the head again. Wondering how he could regain that tighter grip – the one that silently promised Grayson would keep hold of him forever.

The older man's hips rocked as his body sought more. He stilled for a few moments, then his hips thrust forward again. Jones rode out the movement, savouring the knowledge that the other man was enjoying it too much to control his instincts.

Grayson opened his eyes. He shook his head, a sad little moan escaping from the back of his throat. "Stop," he ordered.

Jones glanced up at him, wondering if he had misread the other man's enjoyment.

"Have to stop," Grayson whispered again.

"Sir?"

"Can't stay still."

Jones blinked up at him. Grayson knew he was drunk. Jones could see it in his eyes. And he knew he wasn't as in control as he wanted to be.

Jones dropped his gaze for a moment. "It's fine, sir," he whispered. "Let me feel you move inside me? I...I like that – I like knowing you want this just as much as I do."

Grayson dropped his head back onto the pillow. From the first moment Jones took him back into his mouth, he could tell there wasn't an ounce of control left in the older man. It was as if his request to know how much his mouth pleased him had freed something inside the dominant, as if he suddenly understood he didn't have to control his every response.

Glorying in each sound of pleasure and each uncontrolled movement he coaxed out of the older man, Jones tried to make it last as Grayson had asked. There was still only so much time he could cram into one blow job. Grayson's hand tightened on his shoulder. His hips bucked and Grayson spilled into his mouth.

"Jones!"

Jones' eyes opened very wide. Swallowing rapidly around Grayson's shaft, it was only then he realised just how sure he'd been that Grayson would have called out a different name when he came.

He let Grayson soften in his mouth for a little while, drawing out his pleasure for as long as possible before he finally had to let the other man's shaft slip from between his lips. He rested his head on Grayson's stomach, feeling the dominant's body shift underneath him with each breath he took.

Jones closed his eyes and just relished the connection until the other man tugged his wrist to bring him up the bed. Pausing to do up Grayson's trousers en-route he slowly moved up to the pillows.

Grayson pulled him close and kissed him, slipping his tongue into his mouth to turn the first brief contact into something deeper. He explored every bit of Jones' mouth, lapping at his lips and coaxing him to stroke their tongues together in an intimate little dance. Sleepy and sated, it seemed like Grayson could kiss forever.

Jones tried to fall into the same mood. It went from difficult to impossible to ignore his own lingering frustration when Grayson wrapped his fist around his neglected erection. Jones gasped into the kiss, thrusting helplessly against the dominant's fingers.

Grayson pulled back and looked down between them. Jones glanced down too, watching the tip of his cock disappear and re-appear from within the tight channel of palm and fingers as he pushed himself into the other man's grip. Grayson shook his head, and Jones somehow found the strength to still his hips.

Keeping him in the palm of his hand, Grayson kissed him again, slow, gentle and incredibly sweet. Jones whimpered into the kiss, helplessly pleading to be allowed to come too.

"I want to keep you like this all night," Grayson whispered in his ear as he pressed a kiss to his neck. "I want to go to sleep knowing you'll still be hard and aching in the morning when I wake up with you still in my arms."

Jones swallowed, wishing he could honestly tell the other man he didn't want part of the fantasy Grayson described, that he didn't want to blur fantasy and reality into one perfect mix so he could believe that this one night was going to be the start of something that would last long past Christmas.

"Will you do that for your master?" Grayson asked.

His master? Jones closed his eyes. "I..."

Grayson's fingers squeezed his shaft, tempting him to rub against his palm. "In the morning, when my head is clear, I'm going to show you exactly what your master can do with you when he's sober."

Unable to do anything else, Jones nodded. "Yes, sir."

A triumphant little growl escaped from the back of Grayson's throat. He dropped Jones' cock to roll him onto his back and pin him against the mattress.

"Mine," he said again, between kisses.

He barely gave Jones time to say, "Yours, sir," before he stole his breath with another deep, demanding kiss. The weight of his body pressed Jones down against the mattress, keeping him still and tempting him to rub himself against the other man while the friction from Grayson's clothes against his bare skin heightened every nerve ending in his body.

As the kisses turned sleepy again, Grayson turned Jones so he could spoon behind him. Jones somehow resisted his body's plea to press his backside back against the other man's crotch in offering as Grayson pulled the blanket over them.

In the morning, he reminded himself. In the morning, his master had plans for him. They included at least one orgasm, and the opportunity to please his master in the light of day when they were both sober.

Pressing a last kiss against his neck just above the collar, Grayson's hand slid down his body to loosely wrap around his cock. Jones bit his lip and fought to stay still as his whole body begged for permission to move.

"Mine," Grayson said once more, sounding incredibly pleased with that fact.

Jones nodded.

Grayson's hand tightened around his erection.

"Yours, sir."

Grayson made another contented little noise in the back of his throat. In moments he was asleep. Jones stared into the darkness, savouring the way his master's body curled close to his back. As Grayson dropped into a deeper sleep, he let go of Jones' cock and pulled him even closer against his body.

In spite of his inclination to stay awake all night just so he could enjoy the way the other man held him, Jones couldn't resist the perfect safe feeling that wrapped around him, lulling him to join his master in sleep. His eyes dropped closed.

\* \* \* \*

Grayson stared at the collar around Jones' neck as the early morning sun filtered through the curtains. The blood drained out of his face.

No, he couldn't have...

"Sir?" Jones blinked sleepily over his shoulder at him. The younger man smiled, and then he seemed to realise something was wrong. He turned around in Grayson's arms, so serious, so concerned.

Grayson pulled away, retreating to the other side of the double bed. "I didn't..." he whispered.

He couldn't have put Claude's collar around Jones' neck. He couldn't have done that. No matter how drunk he'd been. No matter how besotted he was with Jones. He couldn't have brought the younger man into his bed last night. He couldn't have collared him. There was no way he could have taken such complete advantage of a man like Jones. Except the collar was there and Jones hadn't bloody well put it there himself.

"Come here," he ordered. His voice rougher and more hollow than he'd ever believed possible.

"Sir?" Jones obviously didn't know what was going on, but he came to him without any hesitation.

Grayson forced his hands to remain steady as he reached for the collar and undid the buckle.

"Sir?" Jones asked again.

Sir, Grayson thought. A mark of respect – because everyone deserves respect...

The buckle gave way. The leather slipped from around his neck. Grayson stared down at the collar he'd put around Claude's throat all that time ago, at the collar he'd put in his bag to remind him what came of hasty decisions and bad judgement, to remind him Jones deserved better than to be hurt that way.

Jones touched his wrist and broke the spiral of thoughts.

Grayson stood up and got off the bed. In moments he was out of the room. Seconds later he was out of the apartment.

Someone called after him, an honorific first, and when that didn't work, someone called his name too.

Grayson glanced down at the collar in his hand and kept walking.

## Chapter Four

"Jones?"

Jones looked up. He'd kept his eyes shut so tight for so long, the room looked blurry. The bedroom door opened. A moment later Grayson was crouched down in front of him.

Jones blinked and tried to make sense of that. "Sir?"

Grayson stroked his hair back from his face, in an already familiar way.

"But... You left, sir," Jones said. He'd heard the door slam and everything.

"I know. I'm sorry, darling. It never occurred to me just how hard it would be to find a leather shop open on Christmas Day. It took me forever to remember about an old place where the owner lives above the store."

"I don't understand, sir." Although that didn't feel surprising when he could barely wrap his mind around the idea that Grayson was *there*, let alone focus in on what he was saying.

Grayson looked down for a moment. "You know that the collar I had with me wasn't bought for you," he said, making an obvious effort to gentle his voice.

Jones nodded. That much had been obvious.

"It was Claude's old collar."

"I don't mind —"

"Well, I do," Grayson cut in, sharply.

Jones dropped his gaze. "I wasn't trying to take his place, sir," he whispered. "I know —"

Grayson put his finger tip over his lips. "I was wrong to put that collar on you. You deserve better than to be treated like that."

Jones watched as the older man slipped into deep thought, obviously having some difficulty working out what to say next. "I wanted you. I wanted my mark on you and this was the only one to hand. It's Claude's collar, but I wasn't thinking of anyone but you last night."

Jones took Grayson's hand and moved it, as politely as possible away from his lips.

"You said my name, sir."

"What?"

"When you came, sir, you said my name." He offered Grayson a shy little smile. "You said it rather loudly, actually. I know who you were thinking about last night, sir."

Relief shone in the other man's eyes for a moment. "Good. But that still doesn't make anything that happened last night the least bit acceptable," he added very firmly. "That wasn't what your first night in my bed should have been like."

Jones studied the dominant for several seconds. "I might be a submissive, sir. But I know my own mind. I made my choice. If anyone took advantage of the situation, it was me."

Grayson stroked his fingers through his hair. He smiled slightly, as if he didn't believe that, but thought Jones was sweet for saying it anyway.

"You want to belong to me?" he checked.

"Yes, sir." Logic might tell him that he was a fool to offer himself to someone he barely knew right then, but logic couldn't compete with the certainty he felt about Grayson. A habit of taking things slow couldn't alter the fact he wanted Grayson to be his master now – right now.

Grayson looked down at the collar.

"I'm not going to put it on you straight away."

Jones opened his mouth, not sure what to say, but knowing that a decision like that had to be protested. Before he could say anything, Grayson put the collar into his hand and closed Jones' fingers around it.

"You're going to take this and keep it safe for your master until we're ready for it. It's yours, but I don't want you to wear it yet. From now on, we're going to take everything very slowly. No rushing into things. I'm not making the same mistakes again."

Jones looked at the collar and then at his master. His master. Grayson had labelled himself that, he couldn't object to Jones using the title inside his head now.

His eyes dropped back to the collar. He wanted the leather wrapped around his throat so badly he could taste it. "I'm not Claude, sir."



"No, you're not. If I make the same mistakes with you, you're going to end up getting hurt in a way Claude wasn't even capable of."

Jones ran his fingers over the leather. If his master wanted to set the time scale, then that was a master's right. "We can go slow if you want to, sir."

Grayson pressed a kiss against his forehead. "Good boy. Now, come on. It's Christmas. There are presents under the tree waiting to be opened."

Jones nodded.

When Grayson went into the shower first, Jones hurriedly took the presents he'd bought for the other man out from their hiding place and put them under the tree, next to the ones Grayson must have placed there on his way in.

"No sneaking."

Jones looked over his shoulder as he put the last present in place. "I wasn't—" Too late, he saw the teasing light in the other man's eyes. He returned his smile as stepped past him to take his turn in the shower.

When he came out of the bathroom with a towel wrapped around his waist, Grayson was sitting on the bed looking incredibly pleased with the world.

"What do you eat for breakfast?"

Jones looked towards the kitchen. "If you'll tell me what you'd like, sir, I can—"

"I can handle breakfast," Grayson told him as he got off the bed and walked across to him.

"Just tea, sir."

Grayson nodded, Jones could almost see him filing that little bit of information away as if it were vitally important. His master pressed a kiss to his temple on the way past. "Get used to answering questions, darling. There'll be a lot of them."

Jones nodded.

An hour and a half later, as they sat by the base of the tree, he was just starting to appreciate just how much *a lot* of questions could actually represent. Especially since they'd both largely taken refuge in safe gifts topped up by gift vouchers.

Each gift voucher came with questions. What sort of music did he like? What sort of books did he read? Where did he like to go? What did he like to do? Grayson seemed determined to know everything there was to know about him.

"Jones?"

Jones looked up from the present he was opening.

"Can I ask you something?"

Jones nodded, wondering why the man playing a million and twenty questions with him suddenly felt like he needed to ask for permission to ask anything at all. Somehow they'd moved as they unwrapped. He now sat between Grayson's outstretched legs, half leaning back against his master's chest.

"Does your family have a problem with you being gay?"

Jones shook his head, wondering where the hell that came from. He pulled down the sleeves on the jumper Grayson had bought him, hiding his hands as he forgot to conceal the fact Grayson had bought a garment several sizes too large for him.

"You have a lot of family photos in the apartment, for a man who was going to be spending Christmas on his own," Grayson observed gently.

Jones shook his head. "It's nothing like that. My family's just...we've never really been big on sticking to traditions."

Grayson waited a little while. Jones tried to work out how to explain his family to the other man. "Sometimes we'd celebrate a version of Christmas. Other years it would all be about the Winter solstice. Hanukah. Ramadan." Jones shrugged. He'd tried a bit of all of them over the years.

He looked up at Grayson. The guy didn't get it, but he couldn't really blame him. It was hard to explain his parents to someone who'd never met them. Jones took a deep breath and did his best.

"We moved around a lot. A *lot*," he stressed. "As in – Antarctica's the only continent I haven't lived on for at least a year or two. We tended to celebrate a little bit of whatever was going on around us. But even if we hadn't, my parents just don't do calendars the way other people do."

Over the years Jones had learned to read people's reactions to his attempts to explain his family to them. Grayson merely looked interested, in exactly the same way he had when Jones said he liked fifties music and Terry Pratchett books, as if this was just another fact about him to be filed away.

"I was twelve before I knew my date of birth," Jones went on. "They don't believe in birthdays. I'd just come home one day and they'd have decided *that* random day would be a celebration of me. Not because it was my birthday, just because."

Grayson's lips twitched into a smile.

"We never had a Christmas tree as far as I can remember – but we had this thing that looked like a palm tree for a few months one summer when we lived in Australia. I'm still not sure why, it just turned up in the living room one day. Sometimes it was decorated, sometimes it wasn't." He found himself smiling at the memory of that little tree as his eyes rested on the over-decorated pine, moulting needles all over his floor.

"You really love them, don't you – your parents?"

Jones tuned his head on the side, thinking it was a very strange question. "Of course, sir."

"And where are they at the moment?"

"West Wales. They're staying there until the first snow clears. They're planning travel up to Scotland next, then Scandinavia in the spring, but their plans change with their moods, so they might actually go anywhere. Where ever they end up going, they said they'll call in to see me on the way past."

"You keep in touch then?"

Jones nodded. Slipping from Grayson's loose embrace, he took the last letter they'd sent him from his desk. "They know I worry if they forget to write, sir." Sitting back down on the floor next to Grayson, he handed him the sketch that had arrived with the letter. "The place they're staying at the moment is called Tepee Valley."

As Grayson looked over the sketch, Jones studied him very carefully.

"They want to stay until *after* the first snow clears?" he asked.

Jones smiled. "The tepees are actually a lot warmer than they look."

"You've lived in one?"

Jones nodded. "A few times, sir."

"Did you like it? Growing up that way?" Grayson asked.

Jones looked at the letter, at the sketch, at his mother's hand writing and his father's art work. "I think it was a lovely way to grow up, but I always knew that wasn't who I

wanted to be when I grew up. I love my parents. I love the way they raised me. But..." he shrugged.

"But you're more suited to a different sort of lifestyle," Grayson filled in for him. "One where you know where you are and what's expected of you. Where you know the rules and the roles. Where you know who you belong to."

Jones set the letter and the sketch carefully aside. "Yes, sir. I do like things I can be certain of."

Grayson nodded. "If you don't really celebrate Christmas, then..." Grayson waved his hand at the tree and the decorations and everything else.

"I invited you for Christmas, it seemed like there should be a Christmas here for you," Jones said softly.

Grayson stroked his hair back from his face. "You know, there's no reason why you couldn't have done this just for yourself. You deserve this just as much as any dominant."

Jones nodded. "Yes, sir." He turned to another present, but Grayson frowned, he turned Jones back to face him and studied him very carefully.

"You did a little bit of everything when you were growing up?"

Jones nodded.

"Did one set of traditions appeal to you more than the others?"

Jones shook his head. That had always been his problem.

Grayson stroked a finger tip down the side of his face. "So maybe, you decided you should keep your options open until you met your master – so you and he could make those decisions together?"

Jones shrugged, not quite able to meet his master's eyes. "Re-inventing yourself once is one thing. But I don't want to make a habit of it, sir. When I find a new way of doing things, I want..."

"You want those new traditions to last forever."

"It sounds silly when it's said out loud," Jones said, willing to laugh at himself over it.

"It sounds beautiful."

As their eyes met, it was as if Grayson really did understand that in a way no one else ever had. Jones stared back, not wanting to lose that moment.

"Next year, we'll have Christmas at my house," Grayson decided. "I'll show you exactly how my family celebrated it when I was growing up. Then we can work out what traditions we want to keep from your side, and from my side, and we'll add in a few of our own. Okay?"

Jones looked down. "I meant what I said, sir. I don't mind if we go slow. I don't expect you to make those sort of plans with me."

Grayson reached out and touched the shape the rolled up collar made in Jones' pocket. He hadn't realised the dominant had even noticed he'd tucked it away in there. Grayson said it was his, but still.

He looked up, about to apologise for taking liberties with the mark, but Grayson didn't look like he wanted to hear an apology.

"When I put this on you, it will be forever. I want us to be ready to have a forever when we say that."

Jones nodded and then looked quickly down, he felt ready for forever now. He wanted the forever to start right that second, and he knew he couldn't say otherwise without it sounding like a lie.

Grayson stroked his hair. "Darling?"

Jones smiled as he pulled away from the other man to start collecting up the scraps of wrapping paper they'd dropped around the base of the tree.

Grayson covered his hands.

"Are you hungry, sir? I bought some..."

Grayson shook his head.

"Maybe..."

He shook his head again.

Jones gave up and waited for an order.

## Chapter Five

Grayson studied his new submissive for a long time, trying to work out what was suddenly making Jones so uneasy. "You understand why I want to wait before we start making promises to each other?" he asked.

Jones nodded, but he couldn't meet his master's eyes while he lied to him.

Tucking a knuckle under Jones' chin, Grayson made the younger man meet his gaze. No, not lying, just very uncomfortable with the truth.

"Sir?"

"The idea of waiting scares you," he observed.

Jones looked down and stayed silent.

Grayson waited him out, letting him come to his master of his own volition.

"Not wanting to wait scares me, sir," Jones finally whispered. "I'm always the one who wants to take things slow. I'm always the one who wants to wait—to be sure."

Grayson coaxed him to lean back against his chest and rest against him. There was obviously more to it than that. He stroked Jones' hair back from his face and waited some more.

Jones finally he shrugged. "I don't usually invite men I barely know into my home. I don't usually throw myself at them when they are too drunk to know what they're doing. I don't make rash decisions. I've never had a one night stand in my life. I don't even *kiss* on the first date. I..." he trailed off into a shrug.

Grayson pressed a kiss onto his temple as he wrapped his arms more tightly around him. "There's nothing wrong with any of that." Hell, he'd have been quite happy to find out that Jones had never got past first base with a guy before last night.

Jones curled into his embrace a little more snugly and Grayson realised what Jones was trying to tell him. "And last night wasn't a one night stand," he added.

Jones nodded but he didn't seem convinced.

"We are going to have a lot more sex, on a great many future occasions."

Jones smiled at the reassurance, but his heart wasn't really in it.

Grayson pressed another kiss against the top of his head and encouraged Jones to turn around in his arms so he could look him in the eye when he spoke to him.

"When I got here yesterday, all I knew was your name was Jones." Grayson frowned. "I still don't know what your first name is," he realised.

Jones hesitated. "Is it important, sir?"

Grayson saw the look in his eyes. "Your parents didn't like traditional names any more than they liked traditional celebrations?" he guessed.

Jones nodded.

Grayson brushed his hair back out of his eyes as he chuckled. "Very well, you can keep your secret for a little while. But I'll have to know at some point. Before the collar goes on at the very least."

Jones nodded. "I do understand why we shouldn't rush into anything," he said again. It still sounded like he was trying to convince himself rather than his master. "You need time to get over Claude properly and –"

"What?"

Jones hesitated.

Grayson made Jones look up and meet his eyes. "Darling, there's no getting over him left to do."

"You're still getting drunk to forget him, sir." For all his instinctive submission, Jones met his eyes when he said it—he didn't shy away from calling his master on his stupidity.

Grayson pushed down a sigh. It was wonderful that Jones felt comfortable enough with his master to do that when it was needed, but God, this was embarrassing. Unfortunately, it was also unavoidable. "Claude didn't get me drunk, darling. You did that all on your own."

Jones frowned.

"You're..." Grayson stared down at him. "You were kneeling there at Bernard's feet. So serious, and so sweet, and so convinced that getting married to someone would make everything right with the world. And my head was so full of what would happen to those ideals if you married the wrong man. If I'd known you didn't belong to Bernard from the start, I could probably have come up with a response that involved more conversation and less whisky, but as it was..."

Jones smiled slightly.

Grayson stroked his hair back from his face. "Do you know the most painful thing about divorcing Claude?" he asked.

Jones shook his head.

"Discovering it was only my pride that really got hurt." Grayson sighed. "I proposed the same day civil commitment became law. There was no love lost between us. I think at that point I wanted to get married just because I could, just because no one could tell me being gay meant that I wasn't good enough to get married. It wasn't my finest moment."

Jones touched his cheek. "It went to a lot of people's heads, sir," he excused.

Grayson turned his head and kissed his finger tips. "I've always been impulsive, but I'm not usually that stupid."

Jones smiled his apparent acceptance of his new master's stupidity as well as his impulsiveness.

"It will be different with you," Grayson promised. "I'll do everything right."

"Yes, sir."

Grayson touched his cheek. "But that's not what you really want, is it?"

"I can wait, sir."

"What is it you're in such a sudden rush to get to?" Grayson asked, remembering what Jones said about wanting to take it slow with everyone else.

Jones looked down. "I'm looking forward to the certainty, sir."

Grayson smiled at the simple honesty. "And if you knew exactly when each bit of certainty would be forthcoming—would that help?"

"Sir?"

Grayson reached passed him and picked up the calendar Jones had given him. He turned to January 2010. "Do you have a pen?"

Jones fetched one for him.

"You like the idea of Christmas at my house next year?"

Jones glanced at him.

Grayson marked it down on the calendar. He turned his attention to the room for a few seconds. "How long have you lived here?"

"Since last year, sir," Jones said, confusion dripping from every word.



"No emotional attachment to it?"

Jones shook his head.

"When we move in together, I'd like you to move in to my house. It's a big old place, and it's draughty as hell, but I grew up there, so did my father, and his father come to that. I think you'd like the roots we'd have there."

Jones glanced up at him. "I...if that's what you'd like, sir," he said.

Grayson studied the calendar carefully, wondering what order everything should be done in.

"Collar first," he mused.

"Sir?"

He glanced up at Jones. "The collar should come first," he said. "Before we think about moving in together or an engagement or anything else. Agreed?"

Jones' fingers went automatically to the collar in his pocket. He nodded.

Grayson held out his arm, inviting Jones to curl into his side so he could see the calendar too.

It didn't take long to fill everything in. Moving in together. Engagement. Marriage. Slow was all well and good, but there was no reason to take it to excess. A year was more than long enough to get everything settled very satisfactorily.

As the last things were added in Grayson could see by the way Jones looked at the calendar that he'd stumbled upon exactly what Jones needed — everything laid out, organised and predictable, and under his master's control.

"Thank you, sir."

Grayson pressed a kiss onto the top of his head. He was rather taken with the calendar himself. While he had a feeling he'd be feeling incredibly frustrated by slow progress by the New Year's, he was equally sure it would be worth it if it made sure Jones knew it meant he was serious about him.

When he was about to put the calendar aside, Jones shifted, as if to bring something to his master's attention.

"Darling?" Grayson prompted.

"About last night, sir. I'm sorry if you regret what..."

Grayson blinked at him. "The way I remember it—I woke you up in the middle of the night, dragged you into my bed, enacted the single most inappropriate collaring in the history of leather, and then received a really, really amazing blow job for my cheek. What are *you* apologising for?"

Jones looked up at him for another brief second. "The whole waiting thing," he whispered. "I really screwed that up for you, didn't I?"

Grayson leant his forehead against Jones', not wanting the younger man to see his amusement and mistake it for laughter at his expense as he finally realised what Jones was trying to get him to mark down on the calendar.

"Sir?"

"I wasn't talking about us waiting to have sex," Grayson clarified. "Not for any longer than it takes to finish putting everything else on the calendar, anyway."

"Oh..."

"When I collar you, it's going to mean forever. You can't promise forever to a man you don't know. By the time we get to that point, I am going to know your entire life story. I'm going to know your favourite everything. I'm going to twine our lives together until we can't imagine not spending the rest of our lives together."

Jones nodded at each point, completely focused on his new master's words. He looked beautifully shocked when his shoulder blades touched the carpet and he realised Grayson had been rolling him over onto his back as he spoke.

"And I'm going to know what makes you moan for me, what makes you beg me to let you come, what makes you blush and what makes you squirm. I'm going to know how to hold you on the edge for hours, and I'm going to know every inch of your body."

Jones kept nodding.

Grayson caught his wrists and pinned them to the carpet. "I'm going to learn exactly what you love your master to do the most. So, we are going to have to try every single thing within your limits over and over again until I'm certain of your every response." He stared down at the younger man. "I have no regrets, and you have nothing to apologise for."

Jones looked down for a moment and then back to his master's eyes. "Teach me what you want too, sir?" he asked.

Grayson leant down and kiss him very gently on the lips as his hands tightened around Jones' wrists. "Of course," he promised. And that reminded him. "I promised I'd let you come this morning, didn't I?"

Jones swallowed.

"After I went to sleep, did you wake up during the night?"

Jones nodded.

"Were you hard all night?" Grayson whispered in his ear.

He managed another nod as a beautiful blush stole to his cheeks.

"If you do exactly as I say, you'll be allowed to come."

He nodded again.

"Stay right where you are."

Grayson sat up, releasing Jones' wrists. Clothes had to go. He was about to issue the order when he changed his mind. Reaching down, he began to undress his new submissive himself.

Nudging the material aside, he stroked Jones' skin as he undressed him. He was gloriously sensitive, quickly arching into his new master's touch. He bit his lip as a frustrated whimper broke through.

Grayson caught that lip between his thumb and forefinger and extracted it from between his teeth. "No hiding. Let your master hear you."

"Sorry, sir."

Grayson chuckled as he went back to his teasing. "I'm not that cruel. It will take a lot more than that for you to lose your chance to come."

By the time the last of Jones' clothing was tossed aside, Grayson was already adept at making his lover squirm. But Jones was still holding back, and that wasn't acceptable. He wanted Jones to be free to wriggle without worrying he would displease his master by moving too far. "Do you like being tied up?"

"Yes, sir."

Grayson reached behind the Christmas tree to where he'd hidden an extra present, just in case it would prove appropriate. "After waking the owner up at the crack of dawn on Christmas morning, it seemed a pity to only buy the collar."

"Yes, sir," Jones agreed wholeheartedly.

The packaging fell away to reveal a simple pair of leather cuffs linked by a metal chain. Grayson looked around the room. A heavy wooden cabinet stood to one side of the tree. It had little round feet at the bottom, where something could be passed behind them. Grayson tested the cabinet. Solid as a rock.

Jones sat naked at the base of the tree as he watched his master, looking like the world's best ever Christmas present, and seemingly perfectly at ease with his nudity right then.

Grayson held out his hand and Jones put his wrist into it without the slightest hesitation. The leather wrapped perfectly around his skin. Grayson smoothed it into place before he guided Jones closer to lay on the floor and offer his other wrist up to the cuff as he threaded it behind the leg of the cabinet.

With Jones secured neatly in place, Grayson leant back on his heels and looked him over. "Perfect," he whispered.

That made Jones blush beautifully for his new master.

Hands on the floor on either side of Jones' shoulders, Grayson leant over him and brushed their lips together. The submissive's lips instantly parted for him, welcoming him home. Grayson let a little more of his body weight rest on the younger man's torso.

Jones moaned his appreciation and the chain between his cuffs rattled against the wood. Grayson grinned into the kiss, knowing what Jones wanted to do. The younger man fidgeted underneath him, pressing himself up against his master's body, unable to pull Grayson down more firmly on top of him.

Suddenly Grayson pulled away. He sat back and feasted his eyes on Jones' body.

"Tell me what you like, sir?" Jones asked.

"You like this," Grayson murmured. "God, you're glorious."

Jones struggled to force a deep breath into his lungs as he stared up at his master and tried to work out why the hell he was all the way over there, barely even touching him.

"Is...is this part of going slow, sir?"

Gray smiled and shook his head. "This is your master deciding his clothes are in the way."

Jones nodded — in full agreement about that. Even as he said the words, Grayson was tugging his shirt over his head, obviously too impatient to bother over fiddly little things like buttons. The shadows of the previous night hadn't done his new master justice. He was all perfect hard lines of muscle. The chain rattled above Jones' head as his body demanded the right to reach out and touch, to explore that body with more than just his eyes.

Grayson chuckled at the sound. Naked now, he reached forward and put his hands on Jones' wrists. For a second, Jones thought that he would undo the cuffs and let him touch, but his hands slid down his arms without unbuckling the leather, and they kept going to trace a line down his torso and to his hips.

His master's fingers splayed out wide, as if he wanted to touch as much of his skin as possible. Kneeling between Jones' spread legs, he bowed his head and pressed a kiss to the tip of Jones' cock. His grip on Jones' hips tightened as he thrust helplessly towards the older man's lips.

The cuffs rattled again as Grayson took the very tip of his cock between his lips and started to suckle gently around the head. His tongue caressed the glans, and Grayson hummed his enjoyment.

His new master had wonderfully big strong hands. They pinned Jones' hips easily in place, freeing him from the responsibility of controlling his reactions. He twisted and writhed in his master's hold, failing to keep back pleasure-filled whimpers as Grayson kept him still so he could do as he pleased with his mouth.

"Please, sir," Jones whimpered.

Grayson pulled back a fraction with a last lick to the tip of his cock and looked up at Jones.

"I...does slow mean you...I mean...I don't mind if you want to stop at oral, but..."

Grayson pressed another kiss to the tip of his cock. He let go of his hips.

"You can come when I'm inside you, not before."

Jones nodded, too grateful to hear that slow didn't mean no real sex to worry about anything else right then. Then Grayson calmly went back to wrapping his lips around his cock.

"Sir? I—" Jones cut off with a gasp as slicked fingers stroked against his hole. He arched up off the floor, pushing himself into his master's mouth.

Grayson's eyes smiled at him.

Slow. His new master really liked slow. His tongue slowly swirled around the tip of Jones' cock. His fingers slowly worked their way into his hole to slowly rub against his prostate. He slowly stretched him open, adding another finger and then another.

Jones gave up on the idea of staying quiet. By the time Grayson finally let his cock slip from between his lips, a steady stream of begging filled the air. The shock of cool air surrounding his shaft, for what felt like the first time in years, silenced him.

Watching as Grayson sheathed his cock in latex and slicked the condom with extra lube, Jones spread his legs wider in anticipation.

Grayson shook his head. Nudging him to turn over instead, he stopped him on his side, so he could spoon behind him. Leaning up on one elbow, Grayson looked over at him. Jones turned his head, twisting so he could see his master properly too. Grayson brushed their lips together as his cock nudged its way between Jones' cheeks.

Slow. Jones had never known slowness could be so frustrating – or so magnificent. Grayson pushed into him, stretching him open even further, making sure he felt every inch of his master's cock filling him up.

Slow. Jones whimpered as Grayson's cock rubbed against his prostate. No matter how much Grayson seemed to love the idea of slow, there was no way in hell Jones could follow that lead right then. He'd never been quicker to the edge of orgasm in his life.

"Hush, that's okay." Grayson reached around his body and took his cock in hand, stroking him in time with his thrusts. "Come on, darling. Come for your master."

Jones did as he was told. Pushing himself back on his master's erection and forward onto his hand, he came at his master's command, pleasure swirling inside him faster and faster until it peaked into one miraculous moment where nothing existed but bliss.

Grayson slowed his thrusts as Jones fell still within his master's embrace, fighting for breath and unable to make real thoughts happen when gratification filled his mind. The only facts he was sure about were that his master was still buried deep inside him and Grayson hadn't come yet.

"Don't stop, sir. Please?" Jones managed to whimper.

"Hush. Just relax and trust your master to know what he's doing." Even as he said it, Grayson started to move again.

His own frustration sated, Jones' brain slowly came back on line and he found himself able to concentrate on every move his master made in a way that had been impossible before he'd come.

Jones rocked back into each thrust as he started to really learn his master's body. Minutes later, as Grayson came inside him, he pulled him back against his chest, holding him so tight he could barely breathe, so tight Jones really could believe the other man would never let go of him.

Sleepy with satisfaction, Jones was quite content to lie passively, still in his bondage, as Grayson recovered and pressed a kiss against his neck. His master cleaned them both up and pulled the brightly coloured throw down off the sofa to cover them. When he'd freed Jones' wrists, Grayson coaxed him to turn around and snuggle into his side under the warmth of the blanket.

Jones pressed a kiss onto his master's shoulder in response, just next to where his head rested.

"Comfortable?" his master asked.

Jones nodded, trying to avoid remembering that Grayson's going slow plan meant he couldn't request the right to go to sleep in his arms every single night from now on. Only from March twenty-ninth on – and March was months away.

"Time will go faster than you think," Grayson whispered in his ear, as if he somehow knew exactly what was on his mind.

"You're sure you want to wait, sir?" Jones checked.

"Very sure. You might have to live with the fact your master was stupid enough to marry a man he didn't know – but you're bloody well going to know I didn't do that with you." Grayson's fingers twirled in his hair. "Just because I'm damn sure I fell in love with you within five minutes of meeting you, that doesn't mean you don't deserve to have things done properly for you – slowly."

"What if I don't need more time to know that I feel the same way about you, sir?" Jones asked, cautiously, his heart racing as he hoped he wasn't making a huge mistake.

Grayson smiled. "You can't put love on a calendar, darling. I'm not going to make rules about that."

Jones nodded and curled in closer to his side. "So I'm allowed to be in love with you right now, sir?" he checked.

"Very allowed," Grayson said. "I'd be a hypocrite to say you weren't."

Jones nodded. He ran through everything that had been marked down on the calendar, wondering if there was anything else that he could sneak in now, before his master thought to make a rule stating it couldn't happen until far too many months had slipped by.

His master was just dozing off to sleep, when Jones' after-glow addled mind stumbled on something that hadn't already been made part of the go slow plan. He immediately blurted it out. "Rainbow-Sky."

Grayson said nothing for a moment. "Rainbow-Sky Jones?" he hazarded.

Jones nodded, relieved that he didn't have to explain the randomly announced words. "It's hyphenated, sir," he added.

Grayson pressed a kiss against the top of his head. "It's a good name."

"You could change it if you like," Jones offered, suddenly realising this was his chance. "That's something a master could want to do, isn't it?"

Grayson rolled Jones over and looked down at him.

"The name stays," he decided.

"We could put it on the calendar," Jones offered. "Or next year's calendar – you could change it really slowly, sir."

His master shook his head as he grinned down at him. "The name stays."

Jones nodded, not entirely surprised.

"Rainbow-Sky Jones-Wheatley ... Wheatley-Jones?" Grayson frowned as he considered both options. They were both huge mouthfuls, but Jones' lips still twitched into a smile, as he realised his master intended to change both their names on October seventeenth.

"We'll work on the names," Grayson said. "But the Rainbow-Sky bit stays. It suits you."

Jones had severe and long standing doubts about that fact. He also had every intention of using the next several months to gain a first name he'd be willing to introduce himself by on a regular basis.



Grayson chuckled as if he could read his mind. "We can talk about it more later," his master offered, as he coaxed Jones to lay a little more comfortably in his arms. "There's plenty of time."

Jones nodded. There was plenty of time, because they were going to do things right, and they were going to do things slow. And most importantly of all, they were going to do them forever.

## About the Author

Kim is 25 years old, from a small town in South Wales.

After writing for years, Kim is finally editing some of the stories to share with the rest of the world. Kim writes both male/male and male/female stories that range from the dark and paranormal right through to the lighter, funnier side of life.

The only thing every story contains is a happy ever after for the two (or more!) characters that deserve it most. Oh, and kinky sex – there's always plenty of that too – but Kim takes no responsibility for any of that. It's all the characters' fault. Honest...

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## Also by Kim Dare

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G-A-Y: Gay Like You  
G-A-Y: Gay Until Graduation  
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