



Lust Bites

GAY SINCE TODAY

Kim Dare

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Gay Since Today

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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 SINCE TODAY

Kim Dare

Dedication

To everyone who makes a leap of faith, and to those who catch them.

Chapter One

"He's gay."

"Not funny," Tyler Harris muttered, keeping his eyes fixed firmly on his computer screen.

His friend didn't take the slightest notice of his attempts to ignore him. "I'm not being funny. He's gay," Ryan repeated.

Tyler held back a sigh. Okay, so he could admit it. He had a crush on the guy. And yes, he could put up with his friend's teasing — especially since he was well aware that he was making a complete fool of himself over a man who didn't know he was alive. But still, if they wanted to wind him up, they could at least put a bit of effort into it.

Tyler pushed his chair away from his desk and spun around to face his friend. "Gay? James Ford. Is he, really? Since when?"

"Since today! He is officially gay since today. Now will you please stop being a stubborn pillock and get down to the damn bar before someone else snatches up the guy you've been obsessing over for months!"

Tyler rolled his eyes and abandoned the idea of getting any tiny bit of work done until he gave in and fell for whatever trick they wanted to play on him before the rush of stupidity that would surround April Fool's Day tomorrow. Grabbing his coat and his keys, he headed for the door. Ryan remained hot on his heels, still babbling away even though they both knew he wasn't listening to a word of it.

It wasn't entirely a coincidence that Tyler had chosen to take up residence in the student halls directly opposite the most popular gay bar at the university. It was a decision that had proved very convenient on numerous occasions — like that night. Within minutes, Tyler was striding through the door, ready to give his friends a very large piece of his mind regarding the appropriate use of practical jokes when a guy had an essay due in the next day.

James Ford stood on the other side of the room.

Tyler's feet stopped moving him forward. All he could do was stare.

Black hair falling in careless little waves over the collar of a well worn leather jacket? Check. Eyes so dark it was hard to believe they weren't pure black too? Check. Bone structure that would have made Michelangelo weep for joy? Check. Body that would make any gay man in his right mind do a lot of other things with considerable joy? Check.

James Ford, right there in a gay bar, in all his tall, dark and dominant glory? Check.

"Told you so," Ryan sing-songed behind him.

Tyler's every fantasy come true? Check!

"You might want to close your mouth. Not that the fish impersonation isn't cute, but you know what they say about never having a second chance to make a first impression," his friend added.

Tyler turned his back on his fantasy, and stared at Ryan. After a few seconds he took his friend's advice and closed his mouth.

"Did he see me make an idiot of myself?"

Ryan glanced past him and shook his head.

Tyler risked a glance over his shoulder and took a deep breath. "Why isn't anyone talking to him?"

Ryan shrugged. "It's singles' night at The Prince's Crown. The only guys who are here instead of there, are here with their boyfriends. Oh, and there's this guy who's been going on and on about what a fantastic leather dominant James Ford would make—I'm pretty sure damn near everyone thinks he's going to turn into the next Marquis de Sade if they say the wrong thing to him."

Tyler nodded, still trying to wrap his head around the fact the guy was there, let alone anything else.

"Don't worry, you can thank me for running all the way up to your room and practically dragging you back here so you could take a shot at him before anyone else gets here later."

Tyler nodded again.

"Now you're doing an impression of one of the little nodding dogs people put in the back of their cars. It's not much of an improvement on the fish act."

Tyler glared at his friend, only just stopping himself from automatically nodding yet again. "You're not helping."

Ryan reached out and ruffled up Tyler's hair. Before Tyler had time to protest, his friend had already moved on to straightening his coat collar.

"Much better. Now, do you have your wallet with you?" Ryan said, suddenly all business.

"Wallet?" Tyler blinked. He tapped his pockets. "Wallet...Oh, bugger! Wallet!"

Ryan rolled his eyes. He pulled out his own wallet, extracted several notes and pushed them into Tyler's hand. With his wallet almost back in his pocket, he changed his mind. He took out several brightly coloured condoms and pushed them into Tyler's hand too.

Tyler was about to protest when he caught the look on Ryan's face and thought better of it. He was nervous as hell already, a lecture on safe sex wasn't going to help.

"No harm in being prepared for all eventualities," he muttered, shoving them in his pocket along with the notes.

"There's a good little boy scout," Ryan told him. "Now go and put them to good use. And remember all the details—I listened to all the babbling about him when he was straight and you were boring, now I want to hear some of the good stuff."

"Ryan!"

"Don't get me wrong—I love the fact that I've been with Harry for years. But a little bit of vicarious variety will do both of us the world of good. Details—remember that, Tyler—you owe me details." He stood up on tip toe and pressed a kiss to Tyler's forehead, obviously thoroughly enjoying his chance to play the doting match maker.

Rolling his eyes at his friend, Tyler made his way across the room, rehearsing what he would say when he reached the other man every step of the way. Nothing fancy. Nothing cheesy. Just keep it simple...

"Hi, I'm—"

"Harris."

Tyler nodded, thrown completely off his stride. "I'm Tyler Harris," he agreed.

"You're in my history lecture."

Tyler nodded again and tried not to grin at the simple fact that James Ford knew he was in his lecture. Hell, the fact that Ford knew he was alive was pretty damn amazing.

"I'm Ford." The taller man held out a hand.

"Of course. I mean, I know you are. I mean, I..." Tyler cleared his throat. "Can we rewind a few seconds and try that again?"

Ford nodded. Tyler realised that the other man was still standing there with his hand out, waiting for him to show any evidence of real brain activity.

Tyler put his hand in Ford's hand.

The other man's smile became slightly less strained.

"Can I buy you a—" They both started at the same time. They both stopped at the same time.

Tyler cleared his throat again. "Two beers?" he suggested, digging deep into his jacket pocket for the notes Ryan had lent him. God help him, his hands were actually shaking. The notes crumpled in his hand as he pulled them out. Several condoms scattered onto the floor around his feet.

Don't look down. Tyler kept repeating the phrase over and over in his head as Ford's eyes went from one point on the floor to another, from one brightly coloured condom to another, before finally looking up and meeting his eyes.

"Is there any limit to the number of times we can do the rewind and start again thing?" Tyler asked, still studiously keeping his eyes off the floor.

For a few seconds, Ford's expression was unreadable. Then his lips twitched, heralding a burst of laughter. It broke the tension. Tyler managed a chuckle to, even as he fought like hell not to blush bright red and failed.

He gave the bartender the money for the drinks, trying to be subtle as he checked there wasn't another condom between the fivers. Gary, the bartender, didn't laugh. He seemed to have to put a lot of effort into achieving that objective.

"Thanks," Tyler muttered as he watched him walk back down the bar a little way.

Ford picked up one of the beers and quickly downed several large mouthfuls.

Tyler tried not to stare at the way Ford's Adam's apple bobbed as he swallowed. He failed quite spectacularly. The little part of his brain that hadn't melted when he saw Ford standing by the bar pointed out that he shouldn't be getting hard at the sight of a man drinking a beer.

The rest of his mind didn't care. It was James Ford drinking a beer, with him, in a gay bar. Forget that his jeans were rapidly tenting over his cock and his jacket wasn't long

enough to disguise that. The fact he hadn't already come in his pants or dropped to his knees and begged to belong to him for the rest of his life was bloody well amazing.

"I'm gay." It was a stupid thing to blurt out, but Ford knew that if he didn't say it, he was going to burst with pent up need to get those words out in the air where other people could hear them.

Tyler's eyes opened very wide.

The guy thought he was an idiot. Ford had the horrible feeling he was right. He was acting like an idiot. And he was acting that way in front of the guy he'd been surreptitiously staring at for a whole term of history lectures. He was even cuter close up. All spiky blonde hair and gorgeous blue eyes and a damn near permanent blush right along his cheekbones.

"That's good," Tyler said. "I mean..."

Ford smiled as he watched the blush deepen. His new friend took a deep breath as if he was working really hard at not hyperventilating. Ford couldn't stop himself from staring. It had never occurred to him there could be any man in the world who would find his coming out more stressful than he found it himself.

"Can we rewind?" Tyler asked, hopefully. "Just one more —"

He was going to get slapped. As Ford leant forward and covered Tyler's lips with his own, he knew that he was going to get slapped, and he knew he bloody well deserved it for kissing the guy without warning — without the slightest invitation.

Tyler gasped. His lips parted. Ford lifted a hand and put it on the back of the smaller man's head, terrified that he would pull away and break the first kiss he'd ever shared with a man before he even got started. Somehow, Tyler didn't push him away. He even parted his lips further, welcoming Ford's mouth against his.

Ford leant into the kiss, ducking to bring them to the same height, stepping closer so their bodies touched. Something smashed and crashed off to one side of them, but that didn't really matter, because a second later Tyler's hands slid into his hair, pulling him down to deepen the kiss.

His hands were strong, the grip on his hair demanding. It was nothing like kissing a girl. Tyler's tongue quickly thrust into his mouth, eager to taste him properly. Ford carefully

put his other hand on Tyler's waist. There wasn't a curve there to caress, no softness under his hand, just hard muscle.

Ford moaned his pleasure into the kiss, sliding his hand behind Tyler's back to pull him closer so their bodies pressed tight together. Muscle and strength and a very promising erection rubbed enthusiastically against his body. He slid his tongue into Tyler's mouth in return.

When the guy started sucking on the tip of his tongue, Ford heard himself whimper like a puppy. But that didn't matter, because the pleading little noise made Tyler pull him even closer, until he didn't have to try to duck and make them the same height anymore, because the smaller man was half way to climbing up his body.

"Your condoms are getting wet."

Ford hesitated, a tiny frown gathering between his eyebrows as his mind tried to process the words and failed. Tyler pulled away. Ford tightened his grip on him, but it didn't do any good.

"What did you say?" Tyler demanded, as he turned his face away.

"Your condoms are getting wet," the bartender repeated. He nodded to the tipped beer bottles and where the beer was spilling off the bar and onto the floor where Tyler had dropped all his condoms.

Tyler glared at the bartender, obviously not the least impressed with that observation coming at that particular moment.

Ford took a deep breath. He'd just kissed a guy. He couldn't help but smile, hell, he could barely resist the temptation to grin like an idiot.

"Come back to my place?" Tyler asked suddenly, pointedly turning his back on the bartender.

The moment he said it, Ford could see Tyler doubted if it he should have.

Ford put his finger tip to Tyler's lips.

"No more rewinding," he decided. He'd made his leap out of the closet and there was no way he was taking a step back now. "Your place."

Tyler nodded. He looked back to the mess they'd left by the bar and smiled hopefully at the bartender.

"Go on," the guy said, smiling indulgently back at Tyler.

Ford wasn't entirely sure he liked the way he and Tyler smiled at each other.

"He's a friend of yours?" he asked as they walked out of the bar.

"Who? Gary?" Tyler shrugged. "There aren't *that* many guys out at the university. You end up knowing most people after a while."

Ford nodded, pushing his hands into his pockets as he realised that he'd just left a bar with someone he didn't have the confidence to put his arm around on the way home. He'd just left a bar with a guy.

Tyler glanced at him again, a strange little look in his eyes. "If you have any interest in that direction, I have to warn you – his boyfriend is completely psychotic."

"Who?"

"Gary – the bartender," Tyler reminded him.

"No. I thought you and he –" he cleared his throat. "None of my business."

Ford mentally rolled his eyes at himself as they crossed the road. If his friends saw him now, they'd laugh their arses off at him – blushing and stammering like a damn virgin who didn't even know how to hold a conversation with a woman. With a man...

Tyler didn't laugh. He just nodded as if everything made perfect sense and led the way into the halls opposite the bar and up to his room. Ford followed as close behind him as he could without running into his back.

Tyler was wearing a short leather jacket. He had a great arse. A prickle of residual unease ran up his spine at the thought, but Ford pushed it aside. He was allowed to think that now. If someone did somehow manage to snatch the words out of his head, they couldn't object to that fact that an openly gay man appreciated how nice a backside another man had. He looked up just in time not get caught staring when Tyler turned around and let him into the small study bedroom.

"It's your first time – with a guy I mean?" Tyler blurted out as he closed the door behind him. "It's just that someone said that you said you were gay since today, so that could mean that you haven't had time to. It doesn't make any difference really. I just wondered. I mean..."

He was babbling again. Ford had already discovered a good cure for that. His kiss stole the rest of the words out of the other man's mouth.

Tyler didn't hesitate to kiss him back. He didn't hesitate to press his body against him in blatant offering until he suddenly broke the kiss with a gasp and looked behind him. It was only then that Ford realised he'd been walking the smaller guy backwards.

When he recaptured the kiss, Tyler didn't make any further objection to being held against the wall. He still clung to Ford. His hands still roved all over his body as if he was desperate to touch all of him at the same time.

Ford helplessly rocked against him, pressing the smaller man back against the plasterwork. He tried to gentle his touch. He tried to break the kiss so he could check in with the other man. But his body was ignoring his mind's suggestions right then. He rolled his hips, rubbing their bodies together.

"Ford." It was barely a whole word. Tyler barely had time to say it before Ford caught his lips in another kiss.

"Ford."

That time something got through to him. He managed to pull back far enough to look down into the other man's eyes. He should apologise for damn near jumping on him the moment they stepped through the door, he knew that. But he didn't want to. For once in his life he didn't want to feel like he had to apologise for wanting to get as up close and as personal with another man as was physically possible.

"Do you know what you do?" Tyler asked, more than a little breathlessly.

Ford raised an eyebrow. "I'm pretty sure I get the theory."

Tyler shook his head, his blush rushing to his cheeks again. "I mean do you know what *you* do – what you *want* to do?"

Ford stared down at him. "Everything," he blurted out. He'd been telling himself he didn't want to do anything with another guy for so long, the possibilities overloaded his mind. "I want to do everything."

Tyler smiled. He stared up at him for a few seconds. "You're a –" He quickly cut himself off. Before Ford could demand he finish that sentence, Tyler nodded to himself as if suddenly very sure about everything.

He slipped his hand into Ford's hand and moved out of his position trapped against the wall so he could lead him across to the bed. He nudged Ford to sit on the edge of the mattress and dropped to his knees on the floor in front of him.

Keeping Ford's gaze, he leant forward and pressed a kiss to his fly in an offering far more eloquent than any words he seemed able to manage.

Yes!

Part of Ford's mind shut down after that single word screamed inside his brain. But a tiny part of him struggled against instinct. "What about you?"

"I can wait," Tyler said reaching for Ford's belt. He seemed to cut a word off the end of the sentence, but Ford decided to worry about that at such time as he could coax his brain back up above his belt.

To hell with it! He could prove he wasn't a selfish bastard later. For now, Ford just leant back, making it easier for Tyler to undo his fly. A man's hands. Ford watched fascinated as Tyler deftly undid the denim and pulled down the zip without any fumbling.

He might not be able to get a sentence out without blushing, but he didn't hesitate now that he was on his knees and sliding his hand into Ford's boxers. Convinced he should be doing something more than just sitting there, Ford shifted in his perch on the edge of the bed.

Tyler put his hand on Ford's stomach, spreading out his fingers and pressing down on his abs, keeping him in place.

"I know what I'm doing," he told him. "Just let me make your first time good for you, okay? Don't think. Don't worry. Just this time, just...let me?"

There was no doubt Tyler really wanted him to do that. Ford nodded, dropping his hand onto the mattress next to him and giving Tyler free rein.

The other man tugged his clothing aside. Ford lifted his hips off the mattress so he could pull the material down his legs, but that seemed to be all the cooperation Tyler needed from him.

His erection sprang free from the fabric, curving back towards his stomach in its enthusiasm at finally getting what it wanted from life.

"Gorgeous," Tyler murmured, wrapping his hand around Ford's shaft. His thumb ran back and forth over the head, pulling a moan from Ford. He looked up, and Ford could see his own thoughts reflected back to him in his soon to be lover's eyes. He wasn't the only one intensely aware that this was his first time with another man.

Tyler smiled to himself, apparently loving that fact right then. He pressed a kiss to the tip of his cock. He held Ford's gaze as he began to suck the shaft into his mouth, little by little. Ford held his breath, watching his cock disappear between the guy's lips.

He took him further and further into his mouth, his tongue rubbing against the shaft, welcoming him every inch of the way as he filled the other man's mouth. He touched the back of Tyler's throat, but when Ford expected him to jerk away and splutter, Tyler just kept going.

Ford's hand clenched into a fist, gripping the bed sheet tight in his hand. Tyler maintained his slow, steady decent. The top of Ford's cock slipped into the guy's throat. Ford bit his bottom lip, trying to hold back a groan of pure pleasure.

Tyler's hands slid up his thighs to rest on his hips. His gaze came up and met Ford's again as his stretched lips kissed the base of his cock. Ford stared down at him, speechless. The moment seemed to last for hours before Tyler slowly pulled back, letting Ford's cock re-emerge from between his lips inch by inch.

Cold air surrounded his shaft as Tyler let it slip from his mouth completely. Ford watched the kneeling man take a deep breath, and did the same.

"You know, you don't actually need to hold your breath when I do that," Tyler whispered. He smiled up at him as his tongue flicked out and caressed the tip of his cock.

Ford just continued to stare down at him, mesmerised by the easy pleasure Tyler seemed to find in kneeling at another man's feet. Hell, he was so relaxed in that position he'd managed a whole sentence and a touch of teasing.

Tyler smiled again, ever so slightly shyly in spite of everything. "Yes."

"What?" Ford managed.

"Yes, I do like this." With that, he took Ford's cock back into his mouth and began to suckle around the head as if it was a tasty little treat made just for him.

Ford managed to unclench his fist and let go of the bed spread. Before he could think better of it, his hand was on the back of Tyler's head, tangling in the short blond strands and gaining a firm grip on his hair.

Tyler looked up at him.

Let go before he stops!

Ford heard the warning screaming inside his head, but he couldn't obey it. His other hand joined its friend on the back of Tyler's head.

Tyler held his gaze as he dipped his head into Ford's lap again. He drew back, sucking along the shaft as he went, but he bobbed back towards the root before the glans could slip from between his lips.

He set up a rhythm, stroking the shaft with his tongue each time he rose and descended. Ford's grip tightened on his hair as his hands followed Tyler's movements. Tyler made no objection to any of it. It was as if there wasn't anything he couldn't do with the other man right then. He could do anything he wanted, and Tyler would simply thank him for letting him be a part of it all.

The idea dropped to his cock and swirled into all the pleasure already racking his body, pushing him even closer to the edge. Tyler's hands tightened on his sides as if he knew he couldn't hold back much longer, as if he was in just as much of a rush as Ford was to see him come.

Without even being able to warn Tyler, Ford bucked and spilled into his mouth. He threw his head back as he yelled his pleasure loud enough for the whole floor of the building to hear. Tyler swallowed rapidly around his shaft, dragging more and more pleasure from him with every movement of his lips and tongue.

By the time Ford pulled himself together enough to look down and focus properly, he was already softening in Tyler's mouth. Even then, the other man made no attempt to pull away. Ford blinked and he realised that at least part of the reason for that was probably the way his hands were still firmly tangled in Tyler's hair.

Ford released him. Tyler pulled slowly away, looking almost reluctant as he let his cock slip from between his lips. Sitting back on his heels, Tyler delicately caught a drop of semen that had escaped from between his lips and licked it off his fingers.

Chapter Two

"You know, you don't have to feel guilty," Tyler said softly.

"I don't," Ford said. He wasn't going to feel guilty about liking guys ever again. Never again.

"Not for getting sucked off by a guy," Tyler said, as if he had no idea why anyone wouldn't take that in his stride. He casually started to straighten Ford's clothes up for him as he spoke, tucking him neatly away in the process.

"For what then?"

Tyler picked up one of his hands and pressed a kiss to the finger tips as if the affectionate little gesture was second nature to him too. "You can put your hand on the back of my head. I don't mind. I'm not claustrophobic or anything." There was that same little hesitation in the middle of it all, as if there was a word he was consciously keeping back.

Ford stared at his hand as Tyler held it to his lips. "I shouldn't have..."

"In case you haven't noticed, Ford – I'm not a girl. I'm not going to throw a hissy fit if you spoil my hair. And I'm not going to break if you like playing a bit rough either." He smiled against his fingers, but he didn't look him in the eye as he said it.

Ford shook his head.

"Ford?" Tyler lifted his gaze for a moment. He suddenly looked very serious. "I like playing a bit rough too."

Ford stared down at him.

"I'm sure there are a lot of gay men out there who love to be treated as if they're fragile, delicate little things. But I'm not one of them. If you start imagining you have to treat me like I'm made of glass then you're going to drive us both insane."

Ford frowned, wondering where the hell all that came from. He shook his head, not wanting Tyler to get entirely the wrong idea why he'd gone to the bar that night. "It's not just about someone who can...that's not the reason I like guys."

It wasn't about just wanting someone who could take rougher treatment, who could take orders. That wasn't it. Ford stared down at the man kneeling at his feet. Just because

that was what he always imagined doing with guys, just because he always imagined being in control and calling the shots, it wasn't—

"Ford?"

He met Tyler's eyes.

"You can say you're gay *and* you like leather. I'm not going to freak out on you. Actually, the gay thing probably isn't the only thing I have more experience with than you do."

Ford met Tyler's eyes. His nerves were still there, but there was a little bit of a spark behind that, something that pushed him to prove it if he was into it. Ford felt himself tense at the challenge. His eyes narrowed.

Tyler smiled, slightly shyly up at him. "My instincts are usually pretty good. I didn't have you down as gay, but I pegged you as a dominant the first moment I saw you."

He seemed far happier about that fact than Ford had ever imagined any man could really be. Ford studied him carefully, trying to work it out. "And what does that make you?"

"A submissive," Tyler said. He didn't seem the least bit bothered about admitting that fact either.

"And how rough do you like?" Ford asked, cautiously feeling his way forward in the conversation, unwilling to go from being out, gay and kinky, to being some sort of pervert in the other man's eyes in one great swoop.

Tyler's eyes sparkled with interest. "Tell me what you want. If I really don't want to do something—I'll tell you. If you're going too far or too fast for me—I'll tell you. I expect you to stop if I need you to, but I don't expect you to tread on egg shells around me. I like clear orders."

There was that pause again, right at the end.

Ford frowned. "Finish your sentence."

Tyler looked down for a moment before he lifted his gaze again. "I like clear orders, sir."

His eyes seemed so big, so nervous, as if he expected to be knocked back for taking liberties. Ford studied him for several long seconds, wondering if Tyler meant what he said, or if he was just talking a good game.

“Stand up.” His voice sounded different when he gave the order, even though he hadn’t intended it to.

Tyler quickly stood up, stepping back to give Ford room to rise to his feet too.

Ford stepped forward, eliminating the gap between them. Tyler just stood there, just waiting. In that moment it really seemed as if he could do anything in the world with the slightly younger man. As if Tyler accepted every single part of him, everything single thing he’d hidden from the rest of the world so carefully for so long.

Able to do whatever he wanted, Ford found himself leaning forward and brushing their lips together in a gentle little kiss.

Tyler tensed, as if thrown off balance. Ford slid his hand into Tyler’s hair and tightened his hold on him, keeping him in place, demanding that he accept the gentleness with the same obedience he seemed willing to offer in exchange for rougher touches.

Tyler liked that, he arched into Ford’s body, making him aware of his untended erection as it strained against his fly. Ford smiled into the kiss.

“If you meant it when you said you’d submit to me, you don’t get to pout if I have no interest in acting like a complete bastard for your amusement.”

“If you don’t like my manners, you could always teach me better, sir,” Tyler offered. As simply as that, the orders he was given and the tight hold Ford had on him seemed to let him find the strength to push some of his nerves aside.

Ford met his eyes.

“Want to spank me, sir?” Tyler asked.

Ford studied him for several long seconds, trying to work out if that was what Tyler wanted, or if he was just trying to think of things to please him, or if he was looking for ways to test him and his inexperience.

He was so far out of his depth he’d lost all sight of land. There were no familiar landmarks to guide him forward and tell him what he should do next. There were just instincts that he hadn’t explored, that he wasn’t sure he could trust.

“Tell me what you want, sir?” Tyler asked. It was the most honest sounding thing he’d heard pass Tyler’s lips. No pretence, no trying to say the right thing or worrying if he had made a fool of himself. There wasn’t even any babbling—just a simple little request.

Ford saw the bit of confidence the submissive had pulled together melt away. He saw the trust it had taken for Tyler to ask that of a practical stranger, and he realised for the first time that he wasn't the only one making leaps of faith right then. He wasn't the only one who was scared.

"I want to tie you up," Ford told him, hoping like hell he was right to return Tyler's honesty. "I want you completely helpless so I can do whatever I want with you. I want you to know that you really are that helpless. I want you to trust me that much. I want you naked. I want to feel your cock in my mouth. I want to hold you on the edge for hours and I want to know that if I let you come or if I don't let you come, it's all down to me."

Tyler's eyes dropped closed.

"I want you to put yourself in my hands and give yourself up to me. And I want to know that you'll keep that promise you gave me. If things go too far – I want to know that you'll tell me that."

Tyler nodded. "Yes, sir," he whispered. "All of it – yes."

Ford swallowed down his relief as Tyler saw his fantasies all laid out for his inspection and gave his unconditional approval to them all. Clear orders. That was the one thing Tyler had been certain about when he was telling him what he liked.

"Strip."

Tyler nodded again. It seemed to take him a moment to realise nodding wasn't actually enough to obey that particular command. Tyler took half a step back to give himself room to move. He reached for the hem of his shirt and pulled the material up over his head.

"Freeze."

With the cotton wrapped around his arms and his limbs extended above his head, Tyler froze. Below the shirt, his eyes blinked their confusion.

Ford stepped forward and placed his fingertips on the notch of bone between Tyler's collar bones. He glanced up from the skin displayed for his inspection and met Tyler's eyes again.

He couldn't move without Ford's permission. For the first time, Ford really believed that. He really could do whatever he wanted with him. Ford pushed aside his sudden urge to do everything all at once and forced himself to be patient.

He trailed his fingers very slowly down the centre of Tyler's rib cage. He had a fantastic build – one that should never be hidden behind clothes.

"I'd keep you naked all the time if you belonged to me," he said.

Tyler's teeth bit into his bottom lip for several seconds before he managed to answer. When the words came, they had that same strange calmness to them that had been creeping into the submissive since Ford took control of him. "Could get cold in the winter, sir," he whispered.

"I wouldn't let you freeze," Ford promised.

He brushed his thumb across one tiny nipple. Tyler's eyes dropped closed as he gasped. Ford circled the nipple with his thumb again. Tyler tensed but he didn't react again until Ford scraped his thumb nail across the tightly pebbled tip. Tyler's groan went straight to Ford's cock, making him slowly start to harden again.

He was wonderfully responsive – far more than Ford had guessed a man would be.

"Some guys like it, some guys don't, sir," Tyler whispered.

It was useful information, but Ford didn't want it right then. He didn't want a teacher. He didn't want Tyler feeling like he had to tell him what to do, and he didn't want to be the closet case that didn't know what he was doing.

"The only responses I'm interested in are yours. And I don't need an interpreter. If I want to know how you'll react to something, I'll find out for myself."

Tyler nodded his acceptance of all of that. "Yes, sir." Some more of his nerves seemed to leave him then, as if Ford had taken away a pressure he wasn't truly interested in bearing.

Ford ran his fingers down his stomach again, until he reached Tyler's jeans. He undid the button and took hold of the tab on the zipper.

"Carefully, sir," Tyler requested.

Ford raised an eyebrow at the idea he would be careless with someone who was...who was submitting to him, he guessed, someone who he couldn't believe didn't belong to him. He pulled the zipper down an inch and he forgave Tyler for his warning.

"Do you always go commando?"

Tyler nodded.

Ford smiled to himself. If he'd known that since the start of term, he would have learnt even less history than he had managed to push into his brain over the last few months.

Just the idea that Tyler had been sitting in the same room as him all that time, without anything on under those skin tight jeans scattered every thought in his head.

He dragged the zipper down, careful not to catch anything important in the metal teeth.

"May I put my arms down, sir?" Tyler asked.

"No."

Ford didn't even look up as he said it. Tyler's arms stayed where he'd put them. The issue wasn't open to debate. He slid his hand into Tyler's jeans and wrapped his fist around the other man's cock.

In the distance he heard someone whimper, but his attention was fixed very firmly on the shaft in his hand. He was both longer and thicker than Ford had imagined he would be. His cock was solid and hard in his hand. Ford tightened his grip around it.

A pleasure filled moan told him Tyler liked that. He stroked the shaft very slowly, taking his time in enjoying his first introduction to a cock that wasn't his own.

"Sir, please?"

"What do you want, sweetheart?"

Sweetheart...Yes, he was allowed to call a man that now. He liked that. It suited Tyler nicely. He let his hand slide up so it cupped the head and the glans rubbed against his palm, slicking his hand with pre-cum while he waited for Tyler to scrape together an answer.

"May I lower my arms, sir?" he asked, a slight tremble in his voice.

"No."

"Sir!"

It was a protest, but it was so filled with frustration and pleasure the word damn near took Ford's breath away. He tore his eyes from Tyler's shaft and met his eyes.

"If you prefer me to call you something else?" Tyler asked.

"No!"

The submissive jerked at the snap in his voice. Ford settled his free hand on his back to soften the correction. "Sir is fine," he said more calmly. "From now on, whenever we're alone, that's what you'll call me." He wanted to hear a man, to hear Tyler, call him by that title in that voice over and over again for the rest of his life. He wanted to hear that catch in the submissive's voice as he found comfort in the word, in belonging to a good master.

"Yes, sir."

With his one hand still wrapped around Tyler's shaft, Ford ran the fingers of his other hand over the line where his shirt tangled around Tyler's arms.

"Sore?" he asked.

Tyler shook his head. A touch of colour rushed to his cheeks.

"You asked for permission to move – twice."

"I can't..." Tyler cleared his throat and tried again. "I'm not very good at staying still without proper bondage, sir. I don't have that sort of control," he admitted.

"Do you have proper bondage?"

"Toy box, sir," Tyler whispered, looking across to a box in the corner of the room.

"You still don't have permission to move," Ford warned, as he walked across to explore.

Any doubts he had about Tyler's inclination towards leather evaporated. He really did have far more experience than Ford in all sorts of areas. He picked through the contents, lifting up some of the larger items so he could see what was hidden beneath them.

"It's a spreader bar, sir."

"I would never have guessed," Ford muttered, thoroughly over any enjoyment he'd felt about being new at this.

"Sorry, sir," Tyler said. "I just –"

Ford picked out a gag out of the box. He held it up where the submissive could see it, taking away any need Tyler might feel to explain the world of leather to him. He might not have much apart from the glimpses he managed to catch from gay porn sites while he prayed no one would find out, but he wasn't an idiot. And more than that, something about all this made sense deep down in the same part of him that had always known he was gay.

Tyler kept his mouth shut after that. A paddle lay at the bottom of the box, next to a crop and a flogger.

"You like pain?" Ford asked.

"I'm not much use for anything hard core, sir," Tyler said.

Ford looked over his shoulder.

Tyler was watching him carefully, his hands still above his head. He looked nervous, but not at what Ford would do exactly. Ford frowned as he walked back across to him,

wondering what had spooked a man who was calm enough about a little bit of pain to keep those sorts of toys in his room.

When he was up close, he could see what it was. Tyler was scared that he wouldn't be pleased with him, with his toys. Ford stroked his cheek. Tyler quickly turned and pressed a kiss against his fingers.

"I'm very pleased with you already," he said.

Tyler blushed and smiled.

"And I'll be even more pleased with you once I've got you tied up properly."

Ford went back to the box and pulled out two sets of leather cuffs. He attached them to the headboard, one at each corner of the bed so Tyler's hands would be spread out wide either side of the pillows.

"Come here, Tyler."

He looked up, just in time to see the submissive cross the room. His cock bobbed in front of him with each step, inviting Ford to wrap his fist around it and play with it however he wanted.

Reaching up instead, he pulled Tyler's shirt off his arms. Tyler tried to lower his limbs once they were free.

"No, you don't."

Ford caught hold of Tyler's wrist and immediately offered it up to the cuff. Tyler made no complaint as first one and then the other wrist was locked securely in place. He soon lay back on the bed, half exposed and completely perfect.

It only took moments for Ford to have Tyler's shoes and socks off and his jeans down his legs and tossed aside. The spreader bar only took another minute to set in place, separating Tyler's legs and pushing them out to the bottom two corners of the bed. All fastenings checked and found to be correct, Ford stepped back to admire his prize.

Tyler's erection stood proudly away from his body, just begging for a dominant's touch to let him come.

"Did you ever think a virgin would have this much control over you?" Ford asked.

"What?"

"That's what you were thinking when you were on your knees for me a little while ago, wasn't it, sweetheart? You were all over the fact that you were the first man who'd ever gone down on me."

Tyler swallowed several times. Yes, he'd liked it. He'd loved knowing that Ford had somehow chosen him to be the one who could introduce him to both men and leather. But it hadn't occurred to him how a dominant would feel about that until then. His mouth went dry as he realised he'd somehow got himself all tied up by a complete novice who wasn't at all happy with that status.

Ford had something to prove, to both of them. And he had all the time in the world in which to do it. Tyler shifted on the bed as all those ideas dropped straight to his cock. The chains rattled. He wasn't going anywhere, and he wasn't going to get any touch that his dominant didn't grant him.

"Does that appeal to your submissive side?" Ford asked as he sat down on the edge of the bed. "Do you like knowing that you're the one with all the experience, all the techniques, but I'm the one calling the shots? Do you like knowing that I've never even touched another man, but I can spend the rest of the night making you squirm and there's nothing you can do about it?"

Ford bowed his head over Tyler, offering his lips for a kiss, but pulling back a little at the last moment. "Answer me."

"Yes, sir. I like that. I like all of it," Tyler said.

"And when that's not true anymore, what will you think then?" Ford asked. "Do you have a virgin fetish, is that it, Tyler?"

Tyler whimpered, trying to stretch up and catch the kiss Ford teased him with. The dominant didn't relent in the slightest. He seemed quietly fascinated with the control he had over the situation, with the simple fact that he could grant or refuse kisses based on nothing more than his whim.

Tyler met his eyes for a moment.

"If I ask you a question, I expect an answer," Ford said.

Tyler couldn't even remember what the damn question was. He struggled through his memories and finally stumbled upon it. "No virgin fetish, sir," he managed to stutter out. Although he was pretty close to developing a complete Ford fetish. The fantasies that filled

up the boring bits of history hadn't done the other man justice. The fantasy couldn't have convinced him to let anyone tie him up on the first date. The real dominant barely had to ask.

Ford sat up straight and looked over his body very slowly.

Tyler twitched in his bondage as he became increasingly and uncomfortably more aware of just how exposed he was. Stretched out naked next to larger, more muscular man, he felt heat rising to his cheeks. The only part of him that seemed to glory in the way Ford's eyes roved over his skin was his cock, which was pointing straight up in the air flourishing in spite of all Tyler's misgivings.

Ford reached out and wrapped his hand around his shaft. He began to stroke him very slowly, with calculated movements. Squeezing his erection, adjusting his grip, and jacking him ever so frustratingly slowly, Ford seemed to be thoroughly enjoying getting to know his new submissive's cock.

The guy had hardly stepped out of the closet. As such he deserved to be treated with patience. He was a dominant to whom Tyler had offered his submission. As such he also deserved his obedience.

All things considered, Tyler wasn't expecting anything more than a hand job. He could live with that. As long as he got to come at some point before he died of frustration, he was really flexible about the details.

His teeth bit into his lip as he tried to be patient and obedient and remain sane all at the same time.

Ford's hand disappeared from his cock. Tyler opened his eyes, a protest already forming on his lips. A warm hand palmed his balls. The protest melted away into a pleasure filled groan as Ford gently tugged on the sacs.

"Do you like that, sweetheart?" Ford asked.

Tyler nodded, once more worrying his lip with his teeth.

"Answer me properly."

"I like that, sir. I liked what you were doing before too," he blurted out.

Ford chuckled. "I'll let you come before the end of the night."

Tyler glanced up at him. Ford had obviously already reached the conclusion that exactly how and when he came was Ford's choice. Tyler nodded his understanding.

Ford stroked his cheek with his other hand, as he squeezed his balls ever so gently before turning his attention back to Tyler's cock.

Without any warning he bowed his head and licked the tip of his shaft. Tyler damn near bucked off the mattress at the sheer unexpectedness of it.

"Don't tell me you didn't know dominants can give head too?" Ford teased.

Tyler cleared his throat. Lots didn't. But he decided Ford was right, he didn't need his submissive to teach him about things. He was more than capable of deciding what he wanted to do. Tyler nodded enthusiastically. Ford smiled and ran his tongue over the head again, licking up his pre-cum as if it was the most natural thing in the world for a dominant who'd just stepped out of the closet to do.

He appeared to be completely focused on his first foray into fellatio. A small frown gathered between his brows as he concentrated on taking the tip of Tyler's cock into his mouth for the first time.

Tyler held his breath, scared that any tiny movement might spoil the moment, might make the other man stop.

Ford suckled cautiously around the glans, rubbing his tongue against them. He had no real technique of his own, but Tyler could tell he was trying to copy some of the moves he'd offered Ford when he knelt by the side of the bed. It was slightly clumsy, more than a little bit awkward, and entirely perfect.

Tyler couldn't help but let out a moan of pleasure as Ford finally worked out how to swirl his tongue around Tyler's cock in a way guaranteed to completely melt his brain.

Ford looked up at him, success shining in his eyes.

Tyler wanted to be a good submissive. He wanted to be someone who could let himself be toyed with all night, just for his dominant's amusement. As he looked down at Ford, Tyler was sure the other man would have happily experimented on him for hours, but that sort of stamina just wasn't in him right then.

"I can't...Please, sir...I have to come."

Ford murmured something unintelligible around his shaft. Tyler really hoped it was permission to come in his mouth, because the vibrations surrounded his cock and made it impossible for Tyler to do anything other than that.

He bucked helplessly between the dominant's lips. Hot suction continued to surround the tip of his cock. Ford hadn't pulled away. He hadn't taken offence. When Tyler looked down his body, he was just in time to see Ford straighten up, letting his softening shaft slip from his mouth.

Gasping for breath, Tyler dropped his head back onto the mattress and tried to convince himself that no blow job, no matter how good, should make him feel that dizzy with pleasure.

Ford was studying him intently when Tyler blinked his eyes open. The intensity was hot, but it was also a little bit unnerving.

"It's kind of traditional to untie me at this point, sir," he whispered.

"Tradition's over rated."

Tyler swallowed down his nerves as he shifted on the bed. The chain rattled around his wrists. Ford smiled at both the sight and the sound.

"What do you do when you're not in history lectures?" Ford asked, out of nowhere.

"This," Tyler said. His head was so full of submission it seemed crazy to pretend that anything else existed outside the handcuffs.

Ford's smile grew into a grin. He nodded his understanding of his inability to give his lover a better answer. "It's late. I should go. You should sleep. Maybe we'll do this again."

Tyler nodded enthusiastically.

"You're a regular at the bar opposite, right?"

Tyler nodded again. "I'll be there tomorrow night, sir," he blurted out. "Not that I'd automatically expect that...I mean, I just thought I'd mention it in case you —"

Ford put a finger tip to his lips. "Don't make any plans until I get there."

Tyler wasn't entirely sure if Ford was flirting or issuing an order. "Yes, sir," he agreed, either way.

Ford stood up.

"Untie me before you go, sir?" Tyler asked.

"Did you think I'd forget to?" Ford asked.

Tyler bit his bottom lip, but Ford hadn't taken so much offence at the reminder that he wasn't willing to unbind him. He undid the cuffs and the spreader bar and put them neatly away in the toy box.

Tyler sat up, pulling his legs up in front of him so he could rest his forearms on the top of his bent knees while he watched the other man move around his room as if he owned it—as if he owned him.

Ford was half way to the door when he paused. Turning around, he retraced his steps to the bed and tucked a knuckle under Tyler's chin, tilting his head back. The kiss was brief and sweet. Ford seemed slightly embarrassed by that as he pulled back and walked out of the room without another word.

Tyler grinned and rested his chin on his crossed arms.

He could always spot a good dominant.

* * * *

If the halls Tyler lived in had a semi-deserved reputation based on the fact it was opposite a gay bar, Ford's had a far better deserved reputation for housing men whose life revolved around the three R's. Rowing, rugby and running. A display cabinet full of trophies stood in the lobby.

Ford's wallet, discovered on the floor by the side of his bed that morning, provided a reassuring weight in Tyler's jacket pocket. He had a good excuse to be in Ford's building. He wasn't being pathetic and clingy and stalking the guy. He was returning his wallet. That wasn't even submissive, it was just good manners.

Tyler looked into one of the common rooms as he walked down the hall. There were a few guys hanging out there. He recognised a few of them as men he had seen around, but there wasn't anyone he knew. Damn.

He stopped in the doorway and cleared his throat. "I'm looking for James Ford?"

One of the guys sprawled on the sofa looked up from his magazine. Tyler was pretty sure he was on the university rugby team with Ford.

Tyler could practically see the flag marked 'gay' shoot up in the guy's mind. He held back a sigh, determined that no one, not even a card carrying homophobe was going to spoil his mood.

"Don't bother," the guy said, pointedly turning his attention back to his magazine.

"Bet's over."

"Bet?" Tyler repeated blankly.

"The whole queer thing. Someone bet Ford he wouldn't go into the gay bar on Sloan Street and tell everyone he was gay."

"He..." Tyler hesitated.

"April Fool's Day – you know? Or don't your lot do that? Afraid one of the bets will chip your nail varnish or something?"

"April the first was..." It was today – wasn't it? Tyler did the math in his head. Thirty days have September... Last Monday was the twenty-ninth. So yesterday was... Tyler closed his eyes for a second.

"James Ford is as straight as I am. Did you really think he's one of you?" the guy demanded.

No, Tyler didn't think Ford was gay, he *knew* he was. A guy might go into a gay bar on some stupid bet. He might even get a blow job off some guy as part of an April Fool's Day joke. A blow job was a blow job after all – a man's mouth probably wasn't that different to a woman's mouth in the grand scheme of things.

But a straight man wouldn't have returned the favour. A straight man wouldn't have kissed him the way Ford had – he wouldn't have been able to project that perfect sense of peace that could only belong to a genuinely gay man who'd finally escaped from a closet full of lies.

Tyler met Ford's friend's eyes. "Of course," he said. "My mistake."

If Ford had retreated back into the closet, what else could he say? It wasn't as if he could tell them the details that would prove Ford was living a lie. Even if he was willing to take the flack from them when he told the truth, he couldn't bring himself to risk that they would believe him and let the same petty bigotry fall on Ford next time they saw him. It had to be Ford's decision.

"He is not a fucking queer." The rugby player was right up in Tyler's face by then, glaring down at him. Apparently he hadn't heard Tyler agree with all that already.

"You're right," Tyler lied again, without missing a beat. "He's not."

The guy glared down at him, apparently thrown off balance by the fact that Tyler wasn't wrangling over Ford's status with him.

Tyler took a step back. "If you see Ford, tell him that someone found his wallet and handed it in to the security guard's office."

He turned around and walked quickly out of the building, not running away from them half as much as he was striding away from the parts of the story that had a horrible taste of truth about them.

* * * *

"Did you know?"

Ryan looked up from his note book. Tyler was vaguely aware of every conversation in the bar stopping short as everyone turned to eavesdrop on them.

"Did you know he was here on some stupid bet?" Tyler demanded.

"What?"

"Did you know that James Ford was in here on a bet?" he repeated.

From the confusion on Ryan's face, he hadn't known. Part of Tyler had known that before he even asked, but right then, Tyler wasn't sure he cared. Ryan was there and he needed someone to blame.

"He's straight?" Ryan asked. "I thought you and he..."

All the anger that had seen Tyler storm across the campus drained away as quickly as it had bubbled up inside him. He slumped down onto the bench seat next to Ryan.

"Yeah. I thought so too," he muttered, folding his arms across his chest and slouching even further into his seat, feeling more and more sorry for himself by the moment. Happy April Fool's Day...

"He seemed pretty gay when he kissed you," Ryan observed with obvious caution.

"Seemed pretty gay when we were back in my room and he—" Tyler cleared his throat. "Doesn't matter. By the time he got back to his own room, back to his own friends, the bar, me—it was all an April Fool's Day bet. At least, that's what he said when he was talking to straight men."

Someone put a double whisky down in front of him. Tyler looked up and saw Gary looking just as sympathetic as Ryan.

"So he is gay, he just isn't out?" Ryan asked.

Tyler shrugged, trying to convince himself, even more than his friends that it really didn't matter.

"I'll get over it," he said. "Who wants a guy who can't get out of the closet unless he's hiding behind a bet, right?"

"Exactly," Ryan said with the kind of bright, cheerful expression people used when they were talking to someone who was standing on a ledge.

Tyler tossed back the whisky and got up. "I'll probably be back for sympathy tomorrow." Right then, he just wasn't ready for it.

It didn't matter how much he wanted to put on a brave face. It was far too soon to pretend that the fact Ford was so ashamed of being with him he'd retreated into a closet at the first opportunity didn't hurt like hell.

Chapter Three

"Has Tyler been in tonight?"

The bartender looked straight through him.

"Tyler Harris," Ford prompted. "He was in here last night."

The bartender seemed deaf.

Someone came up to the bar a little way down from him and ordered a drink. The bartender didn't seem to have any trouble hearing him. When he'd served the drink, he went back to sorting out the glasses he'd been stacking into place before the other man spoke to him.

"I'll have a beer, please."

The bartender's intermittent hearing seemed to have deserted him again.

Someone else came up to get a drink. The guy served him with no problem. When he tried to walk away from Ford without acknowledging his existence again, Ford caught hold of his arm and pulled him back. "What's your problem?" he demanded.

The bartender looked down at his arm, but Ford kept hold of it, not about to be ignored.

Finally the guy, Gary, Ford remembered Tyler calling him, looked him in the eye. He seemed furious. Ford could sympathise. He was well on the way there himself.

"What the hell's going on?" he demanded.

"You don't like it here, there are plenty of other bars. You might be more at home in another establishment."

Ford gritted his teeth. "Look—I just want a drink."

"The management reserves the right to—"

"Bull," Ford snapped.

"Gary's right—you should go."

He turned to see another man standing by the bar next to him.

"I'm meeting someone here," Ford said.

"Tyler won't be coming."

“What?” he let go of Gary’s arm, losing all interest in the bartender.

“Tyler was in here earlier. The deal you’re offering, he’s not interested in someone who wants to play that sort of head game with him.”

Ford shook his head. Tyler was into it. He’d been very clear about that – proud of his desire and his ability to submit. He’d got off on it. Ford could still remember the taste of him on his tongue. Tyler had been into it.

He looked from one guy to the other. There was only one thing to do and that was speak to Tyler directly. That was his only chance to sort this out. And if he’d been wrong, if Tyler hadn’t really been serious about wanting that and he’d just been trying to play along to please him, then...

Then they could find something different for them to do. Ford swallowed down a spike of panic. They’d work something out – they had to be able to do that, because the idea that he’d done all this and he still couldn’t have anything with Tyler was impossible.

He turned away from the bar.

“He’s not in his room,” the guy said.

“Then where is he?” Ford demanded, stopping short.

The guy shrugged. “He’s not an easy man to find unless he wants to be found. Leave him be. You’ve done more than enough already.”

There was no way in hell Ford could stay there and resist the temptation to pick the guy up by his shirt and try to shake some extra scrap of information out of him. He was obviously one of Tyler’s friends. Throttling him probably wouldn’t do him any favours when he managed to track Tyler down.

Ford strode out into the evening. The cool air did nothing to calm his temper or ease his confusion. The simple pleasure that had settled inside him the previous night started to crumble as everything fell apart around him. Turning back towards his room, seeking refuge in the familiar until he could work out his next move, he paced quickly along to the corner.

Apparently he wasn’t the only one having a rough night of it. As he turned the corner, he caught sight of some idiots scuffling down the far end of the street. His eyes narrowed as he walked along the pavement towards the group. Not a scuffle. Three or four guys surrounding one.

His pace quickened.

Three or four guys surrounding Tyler.

He broke into a run.

Three of his *friends* surrounding Tyler.

Catching hold of one of them and spinning them away from the smaller man – Ford looked around the faces of several of his friends from the rugby team. “What the hell is going on?”

They were drunk – very drunk – all of them. They glared back at him, sullen and sloshed in equal measure.

“He said you’re gay,” Tony accused, for all the world like a toddler carrying tales back to the grownups.

“I did not!” Tyler protested, eyes opening very wide.

Tony took a step towards Tyler. Ford put a hand on his chest and pushed him back several paces. “Leave him be.”

“Why do you care? He your boyfriend or something?”

“No, he’s not.” Ford snapped.

Tony began to say something else, but Ford wasn’t interested.

“Because *he’s* not interested in *me*,” Ford threw at him.

“What?” Tyler blurted out.

Ford glanced back at him very briefly, before he turned his attention back to the other guys.

“You’re not gay!” one of them said.

“Newsflash – I am *very* gay.”

“You can’t be.”

Ford didn’t look the least bit impressed with his friend. “Well, I am. So you’re just going to have to grow up and deal with it.”

The guy shook his head, confusion swirling around him and his other friends.

Ford gave an exasperated sigh. “Go home. Sleep it off. We’ll talk about it in the morning.”

“But – ”

"Right after you explain what the hell this was all about," he added, waving his hand at the street they stood in.

Tyler watched Ford as he sent the other men on their way. Through everything Ford said to them, the only words Tyler found repeating through his head were the same—he's not interested in me.

"You okay?" Ford asked when he turned back to him. He sounded so worried, so concerned.

"It was nothing." Tyler looked up at Ford. He seemed to be just about clinging to his temper by the skin of his teeth. "Seriously—it was nothing. They're just hecklers. They're drunk and confused, but they're not even real bullies, let alone anything else. There's not a mark on me. You can check if you'd like, sir?" The words rushed out, tripping over each other in their haste.

Ford stared back down at him.

"If you'd like," Tyler repeated. He couldn't risk letting another 'sir' slip through.

Ford shook his head. "That's not necessary."

"So you didn't mean what you said to them?" Tyler said. "About—" He cut himself off and looked down. Just because Ford had blurted something out in the heat of the moment, that didn't mean that he was actually out. He should know better than to catch one comment and run with it. Ford was a 'straight guy' standing up for someone he thought needed protecting from the school yard bullies, nothing more.

"I might be besotted with you, but I'm not so far gone I'd taken advantage of what—a blow job in payment for getting rid of them?" Ford looked Tyler up and down, his eyes narrowed. "Especially when you could have got rid of them on your own if they were really bothering you, couldn't you?"

Tyler nodded. On any other night he would have seen them off with a good dose of sarcasm and, if things really got out of hand, a very useful left hook. But some stupid little part of him had wanted to know if Ford had mentioned him, or not. He'd wanted to know what Ford had said to them. "It wasn't a thank you. I just thought you might want to..."

He looked down at the pavement for a few moments, folding his arms across his chest again, wondering if there was any use in praying to a god of submissive idiots for the strength to stop throwing himself at the other man. It was no use. He couldn't do it.

"I don't mind being...discreet." Discretion was a pretty word for the kind of shame-faced hiding that left a bitter taste in Tyler's mouth, but he couldn't keep the offer back. The man standing before him wasn't just any gay man. He wasn't just any dominant. James Ford was the only man who had ever called to his submissive side so strongly that he'd let himself be tied up on a first date and –

"What?"

Tyler cleared his throat. "Some guys prefer things that way. There's no law saying it has to be all rainbow coloured flags and gay pride, is there? Telling them it's a bet probably won't work for long now we're past the first of the month. But you could tell them I was tutoring you for history or something." He thought about that idea for a moment. "I actually could tutor you for history as well if you like."

Ford put his fingers over Tyler's mouth.

"My history grades are pathetic because I spent the whole of every lecture trying to be subtle while I stared at you. I have no idea what the rest of that speech was about."

Tyler couldn't meet his eyes and pretend he didn't care. He looked down. "I know you told them that I was a bet for April Fool's Day. I know you're not really out or anything. I don't mind. Like I said, if you want to be discreet, then we can."

"You'd accept that?"

Tyler nodded. "A good submissive accepts his master's decisions, sir. Not that I'd expect you to want to be a formal master or anything," he added quickly. Heat raced to his cheeks, half in embarrassment and half in guilt at lying to the dominant. That sort of sneaking around wasn't part of his submission. And if Ford said no to him even after he offered to pretty much whore out damn near every one of his principles then...

Ford tucked his fingers under his chin and pushed his head up. He looked down at him and shook his head.

Tyler tried to look away. Ford looked completely disgusted with him and his behaviour. He had a good point.

"If that's what you think submission is about, it's no wonder they..." he said.

Tyler swallowed, not really following, not really caring. "I don't mind," he said. "If that's what...if you're not comfortable being out then..."

"I'm out – I thought I made that perfectly clear when I was talking to them. Hell, I was pretty bloody well sure I made that clear last night as well."

"They're all drunk – they won't remember properly. I won't tell anyone what happened in my room. And I'll make sure no one at the bar says anything about the kiss," he rushed out, speaking over the dominant every time he tried to speak. "And if they do let slip, you can tell them about it being April Fool's and –"

Ford shook his head. "I'm out!"

Tyler opened his mouth, but Ford put a finger tip to his lips.

"I'm out, okay?" he said again, a little more calmly. "It never occurred to me so many people would argue with me about the fact!"

Tyler smiled at the pure exasperation in his voice. Suddenly very high on the fact everything wasn't as thoroughly buggered up as he thought it was, he couldn't quite resist. "You're sure, sir?"

Ford stopped half way through a heartfelt sigh. "Now you're just winding me up, aren't you?"

Tyler bit his lip.

"Brat!" he muttered, but he'd already stepped closer, his hands were already resting on Tyler's waist as if he was itching to pull him closer.

Tyler smiled up at him, but his smile faded when Ford held back and failed to tighten his grip on him.

"Sir?"

Ford seemed very serious. "You're not the only man who's been speaking to someone's friends," he said.

Tyler blinked at him.

"I'm not playing mind games with you. That wasn't what last night was about."

"I understand that now, si –"

"You promised me that you would tell me if I took things too far. That's something you need to tell your...your master, not your friends, sweetheart."

Tyler shook his head.

"Well, they seem incredibly pissed off with me for the way I treated you –"

Tyler put his fingers over his lips. "That's my fault, sir." And it all tumbled out about his own visit to the bar and what he'd actually told them.

"Come back there with me, sir?" Tyler asked. "I'll tell them that I was wrong about everything. I swear it's nothing to do with kink. They all know I'm a sub and..."

He walked backwards, pulling at Ford's wrist to make him follow. But Ford stayed where he was.

"There's no harm done, sir. You'll see," Tyler promised. He wasn't going to have his master thinking that he'd gone to all the trouble of coming out and the gay part of the student body wasn't going to welcome him with open arms.

Ford shook his head. "They can wait. Your place?" he suggested. "Or my place? I don't care which—somewhere we can be alone."

"My place is closer, sir."

It was the obvious deciding factor. Ford led the way, striding out until he seemed to check himself and slow down for Tyler's benefit.

"I can keep up, sir," he promised.

Ford didn't appear to believe him.

Tyler hesitated. The submissive side of him wanted to accept it because it was his master's decision. The bit that was desperate to get to his room as quickly as possible had no inclination to be treated like a tottering girl in high heels. He strode out, overtaking the other man. Ford laughed and caught up with him. Before he was quite ready for it, Tyler found himself once more alone in his room with the other man.

"Do you have a girlfriend, sir?" he blurted out.

Ford raised an eyebrow. "Not having a girlfriend is probably part of the whole being gay and being out thing."

"I just wasn't sure if you'd done that bit yet, sir. Sometimes it takes a while to bring everyone up to date, and you've kind of had a lot of girlfriends."

"Wonderful what you can convince yourself to do when you're terrified not screwing half the girls you know will make a little neon sign light up above your head declaring you're gay," Ford said, hooking his fingers into Tyler's belt and pulling him closer.

Tyler reached and stroked his hair back from his face. "I'm sorry, sir," he said, feeling somewhat guilty that he'd managed to skip over that and go right to being out while he was still a teenager.

"I heard you talking about the bar," Ford said, a strange little smile playing around his lips.

"What?"

"That's why I was there that night – not because it was April Fool's or anything else. I was there because I heard you talking about it. I went there hoping you would be there."

Tyler smiled. "Really, sir?"

"You have no idea how jealous I was of you."

"Me?"

"You always seemed so comfortable inside your own skin. And I..." Ford shrugged. "I was left being a 'sweet guy'."

He was a sweet guy. Tyler didn't doubt it. But Ford didn't seem half as enthusiastic. "You say sweet as if it's evil, sir."

"A sweet guy. A perfect gentleman. That's what girls always said about me. They could always trust me not to be all over them at the first opportunity."

Every thought but the need to soothe the pain he heard in the dominant's voice disappeared from Tyler's head. Everything else could wait. "Want to show me how ungentlemanly you can be now you're out, sir?"

Ford smiled. "Sure you don't want me to act like –"

"Act like you," Tyler ordered.

"The 'me' who wanted to throttle those guys in the street, just because they were rude to you?" Ford asked, seemingly amused to find that he had a protective, jealous streak as wide as any dominant's.

"Just be you – the you that you want to be when you're with me, sir?" Tyler asked.

"I'm going to tie you up and you're never going to have to deal with idiots like that ever again. I'm just going to keep you tied up safe in this room forever," Ford told him, still perfectly serious.

"Okay."

Ford frowned. "We really need to talk about you understanding sensible limits sometime, sweetheart."

Tyler shook his head. "It's okay for you to want that right now, sir. It couldn't happen like that, but I like that you want it."

Ford reached out and pushed Tyler's jacket back off his shoulders. It fell to the floor behind him. Tyler cautiously lifted his own hands and touched the edges of Ford's jacket.

The other man nodded his permission and let him keep pace with him as their clothes fell to the floor around them. Quietly, as if it was something they had done for years, they walked across to Tyler's bed. Leaving him sitting on the mattress, Ford walked over to the toy box and brought back the cuffs.

He smiled and brushed a kiss onto Tyler's bare shoulder as he fitted them in place around his wrists, restraining his hands in front of him and pulling them up to clip them onto the head board. "The way the guys were in the street. You have to put up with a lot of that?"

"Sarcasm and back handed comments mostly. Nothing serious. Nothing that stops it being worth it, sir." He didn't miss the fact that Ford hadn't labelled them as his friends right then.

Ford left his lips resting on his shoulder. He seemed buried deep in his thoughts. He checked the fit of the handcuffs several times before he trusted them to hold his lover safe and still for as long as he wanted.

The dominant was just as hard as he was. He wanted it just as much as he did. Tyler could sense it in him. But he didn't seem to be in a rush. His movements were slow and almost sleepy as he ran his hands over Tyler's body.

Cautious, not wanting to take over too much control or spoil the mood, Tyler turned on his side, inviting the other man to spoon behind him. Ford snuggled up to his back. His erection pressed tight against Tyler's buttocks.

Tyler let Ford explore his body, let minutes pass with nothing more than gentle touches and kisses to the back of his neck. Finally, he whimpered his pleasure, unable to keep his frustration to himself forever.

"You don't like gentlemen, do you?" Ford whispered in his ear.

Tyler shook his head.

"Tell me what you want, sweetheart."

The way they were curled on the bed made any other option unthinkable. "Either let my hands free for a few minutes so I can get myself ready, sir, or —"

"I'll do it," Ford cut in.

Tyler looked at the bedside cabinet. "There's lube in the top drawer."

Ford fumbled in the draw until he found it.

"Have you ever — with a girl — this, anal I mean, sir?"

"It would have felt like I was trying to pretend she was a guy."

Tyler nodded his understanding. "You need to put lube on your fingers."

He watched as Ford did that.

"Start with one finger," he advised.

Ford slid one finger against his hole, he made tiny circles against the tightly puckered ring, but that was all he seemed inclined to do right then.

"Remember the whole thing about you not treating me as if I was fragile, sir?" Tyler asked.

Ford slid a finger inside him.

Tyler looked over his shoulder. Ford was frowning slightly. "If you've changed your mind, sir," he began, trying like hell not to let any disappointment creep into his voice.

"No!" Ford met his eyes. "It's the hottest thing I've ever seen. I just feel like a selfish bastard."

"It's good from my side too, sir," Tyler rushed to reassure him.

Ford didn't look convinced. Not making a point of showing off how he was more experienced than his lover was one thing. Letting that sort of silly idea linger in his master's mind was another.

"Two fingers, sir," Tyler ordered. "Just trust me and give me two fingers. Please?"

Ford relented.

"And just crook your fingers a little," Tyler suggested. He squirmed around the dominant's digits, trying to help him find exactly the right spot.

He gasped and clenched around Tyler's fingers as Ford's fingers hit gold. A spurt of pre-cum landed on the sheet as pure pleasure raced up and down his spine. Ford seemed to get the idea. He rubbed his fingers against Tyler's prostate again and again.

Tyler bit his lip, pressing helplessly back against Ford's fingers, trying to lodge them deeper inside him.

Suddenly the fingers disappeared from inside him, leaving him empty. He looked over his shoulder, ready to beg, plead and threaten in order to get those fingers back inside him in the next three seconds – or better still, to get them replaced with a cock inside the same time frame.

Ford looked mesmerised and adorably shocked by just how much Tyler liked that. "You didn't think I was doing this all for your benefit, did you, sir?" he asked.

Ford met his eyes. It wasn't just the gay bit he loved. The control that sort of pleasure represented was obviously rocking his world right then.

"Yes, sir."

Ford looked his query at him.

"Do that little trick with your fingers and I'll promise you the world on a stick if you'll let me come, sir," Tyler said, biting his lip as he realised it was true. "Do you like hearing your submissive plead? I can beg very prettily if I think it will get me what I want off a dominant."

"Off me," Ford corrected.

Tyler looked over his shoulder.

"Just off me, no one else."

Tyler hesitated, not quite able to believe the dominant wanted him to contribute to a discussion about possible monogamy when he was so desperate to come he could barely see straight, let alone think straight.

"Most guys like to screw around quite a bit when they first come out. See what's on offer before they make a commitment, sir."

"I know what I want," Ford said. He certainly sounded entirely positive about that, positive in the way only a dominant could be.

"Just you, sir," Tyler agreed. As if there was any chance he would ever say anything else to the man he'd been fantasising about for so long it was hard to believe there wasn't more than lust underpinning his need to belong to him.

Ford slid his fingers back inside him. Quick learner. He found Tyler's prostate and rubbed his fingers against it, pulling a moan out of him.

Within seconds, Tyler was biting his lip and more than ready to start that begging he'd talked about.

A third finger slid inside him, stretching him open even further as Ford worked the fingers inside him, flexing them and making him squirm. His other hand touched Tyler's cheek, guiding him to offer his lips up to be kissed. A moment later Ford's tongue was thrusting into his mouth in time to the fingers inside his arse.

"Gonna come without you if you don't screw me soon, sir," Tyler informed him the moment Ford broke the kiss.

"You don't have permission."

"Doesn't matter. I'll have to take the punishment because there's no way in hell —"

Ford hit his prostate again. Tyler broke off into a low moan.

Ford laughed and took his fingers away.

"Condoms next to where the lube was, sir."

Ford hesitated.

"I'm submissive, not suicidal, sir. Condoms aren't open for debate." Not on a damn second date, he reminded himself, no matter if he was half sure he was well on the way to being in love with the other man.

Ford had one out of the wrapper and on his cock without making any further comment.

Tyler looked over his shoulder. He didn't want to ruin anything for Ford's first foray into anal, but at the same time...

And then it was irrelevant, because Ford had slicked the latex with extra lube and he was pushing into him slow and steady and just the way Tyler loved. All the gentlemanly-ness had put them both so on edge it was never going to be a marathon.

Each thrust set off new fireworks in his prostate, making him groan and whimper and plead for more right from the start. Ford was less vocal, but he didn't seem to be any the less enthusiastic — just very, very focused on everything, as if he was trying to memorise everything that existed in the world, one moment at a time.

No one should be able to look so hot or drive someone so close to the edge when he was concentrating that hard. All too soon, it was too much for Tyler. He came before Ford

had even reached the point when he wanted to focus on reaching around Tyler's body and touching his cock.

Completely untouched, he spilled onto the sheet in front of him as if it was his own first time rather than his dominant's. It would all have been incredibly embarrassing if Ford hadn't joined him in finishing the sprint a second later.

They lay together, just catching their breath for a few minutes before Ford dispensed with the condom and undid the cuffs. As soon as he was free, Ford turned Tyler around in his arms so he could curl into his side and rest his head on his shoulder.

"You're not disappointed that I wanted to..." Tyler asked.

"You damn near scared the hell out of me. I thought you were telling me *you* were ill."

Tyler shook his head. "Just careful, sir."

"Good boy." He pressed a kiss onto the top of his head.

Tyler nodded into his shoulder and closed his eyes.

"You know what you said earlier?" Ford asked.

Tyler murmured a noncommittal noise against his lover's skin, not having the least clue what the other man was actually talking about.

"You said that being gay and out was worth any hassle?"

Tyler nodded.

"You were so right."

Tyler grinned against his shoulder. "You're glad you came out then, sir?"

"Definitely."

"But you do know that our anniversary is going to be April Fool's Day." A moment too late, he realised what he'd just said. "I mean your anniversary – I mean your anniversary of coming out, sir."

Oh, dear God, now Ford was going to think he was some sort of psychotic stalker – the type of person who started talking about marriage before breakfast.

"I swear, this will be the last time I ever ask you this," Tyler promised. "Can we please just –"

Ford rolled him onto his back and shook his head as he grinned down at him. "No more rewinding."

Tyler bit his lip, wondering if he would ever actually be able to have a whole conversation with Ford if he truly meant that.

"I'm really bad at speaking without thinking, sir," he mentioned. "You know, just in case you haven't noticed that on your own..."

Ford brushed their lips together. He was still grinning.

His new boyfriend thought he was funny. Tyler decided it could be a lot worse, all things considered. Most men would have labelled him neurotic and run as fast as they could in the other direction by now.

"I like that. Makes sure I always know the truth. None of which changes the fact I came out today. April the second."

"Yesterday, sir."

"I don't think it counts if no one actually believes you."

"I believed you, sir."

"You believed I was there on some stupid bet," Ford finished for him.

"I know you weren't on a bet now, sir."

"I came out today."

Tyler shook his head, not about to let his new boyfriend cheat himself out of a whole day's worth of not suffocating in the closet, just because they'd suffered a few misunderstandings.

"Sweetheart?"

"Yes, sir?"

"You're not going to win this argument."

"The whole submissive thing—it doesn't really apply to everything in real life as well as sex. Well, a bit of real life—I'm pretty easy going about being bossed about a bit, or a lot even. But *real*, real life—the big stuff—"

Ford put a finger tip to his lips as the words began to babble together.

"You're not going to win because it will be a cold day in hell before I let you go through every single anniversary we spend together not quite sure what's a surprise I've arranged for you, and what's some joke another idiot is playing on you. No man that I'm in falling in love with is going through that every year."

For several seconds the casual announcement that he wasn't the only one falling for his lover rendered Tyler mute. When he'd pulled himself together, Tyler opened his lips behind Ford's finger—just a little hint that he had something to say.

"If you're going to start explaining that you really didn't mean to demand an 'our anniversary', don't bother. You offered to be discreet with me. I'm offering to be out with you. There'll be an anniversary for you to share with your master—providing you stop arguing about the damn date."

Tyler gently guided Ford's fingertips away from his lips.

"Gay since today, sir," he agreed.

Ford grinned and leant down for a kiss. "Good boy."

About the Author

26 years old, from Wales, UK, Kim writes about kink, love and happy endings. If a story doesn't have those three things, it's not going to be written - at least not by this writer!

Apart from that, Kim likes to write a little bit of everything. Male/Male, Male/Female, ménage, vampires, werewolves, ghost, time-travel - that sort of variety always keeps life interesting.

A firm believer that there is no "One True Way" for people to kink, Kim also likes to let the characters in each book pick their own ways to dominate and submit to each other. As long as they stay safe, sane and consensual – Kim's happy to let them live their lifestyle 24/7, or just open the toy box on weekends - whatever's right for them.

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