

A Sip...



A Torquere Press Short

Crash and Burn
By Julia Talbot

Flying Dan Morrell loved the adrenaline rush that came with jumping his motorcycle over shit. The weightlessness that came from flying, when he reached that pinnacle right before the bike started to pull him down, gave him a freedom he never had on the ground. At least not with his sports medicine guy giving him Hell.

"Danny, your knees just can't take much more of this," Francis was going on. And on. "You need to take some time off, maybe think about surgery."

"No way. All natural, that's the Dan-man." He wasn't going to get plastic and metal and shit in his knees. No way.

"Then you'll be crippled by the time you're forty." Packing his little bag, Francis patted his wrapped up leg. "At least stay off it today and ice it, okay? You'll be feeling it by supper time."

"I'll be fine." Waiting until Francis left, Dan grabbed his own little bag, pulling out a bottle of pain pills. He popped two, grinning at how pissed Francis would be that he had them, and swallowed them dry.

Dude. Foul.

He flopped back down on the couch in his trailer and turned on the TV. Sooner or later his assistant, Todd, would show up, clucking and fussing. Maybe by the time the guy got there he'd be in a nice blue haze from the pills.

In fact, Dan was asleep when Todd came in. Well, he assumed so, because when Todd shook his shoulder he stopped snoring and drooling and snapped awake.

"Wha'?"

"Wake up, Danny. You have an appointment in ten minutes."

His hand felt disconnected from his body when he scrubbed it over his face. Ow. Whiskers. "Uh-uh. Doc says no

standing, no walking. At least not tonight. Tell the sponsors I'm laid up."

Todd's green eyes went emerald hard and pissy. "Oh, Hell no. I'll bring them here. Get your ass dressed and presentable. You have fifteen."

"Remind me why I hired you, again?" Dan snarled, taking a swipe at the man.

"Because I was the only one you couldn't scare off, you bad-tempered bastard. Now get ready."

The door slammed back on its hinges when Todd left, and Dan sighed, levering to his feet. Man, he wished he was out on his bike.

The whole responsible adult part of his business sucked rocks.

Todd sat quietly in the background, making notes, listening to Dan's sponsors tell him how sorry they were they had to let him go.

"Your contract said your physical condition must be such that you can make all of your promo spots, Dan. I'm sorry, but you're just not capable anymore. We'll pay out fifty percent of your contract, as agreed, but we need a new face for our campaign. Someone younger. Fresher."

God, Danny was gonna explode. Todd saw it in those gray eyes, the way they went almost clear. That and the way Danny's jaw clenched and unclenched.

"Well, you got to do what you got to do," Danny said, his voice deceptively mild. "Thanks for coming by. Todd here will get you with my lawyer to handle the papers."

"Sure, Danny. Sure. Thanks. You've been a great rep for the company."

The fake leather of the little bench seat creaked under Danny's hand, the noise ominous. "Thanks. You'd best go on, now."

The suit got up, looking over at Todd, who rose and plastered a smile on his face. "Come on, Stan. I'll see you out and get you all those phone numbers."

He knew from Danny's stone face and thousand yard stare that things were about to go very bad. Time to get the suit out.

They'd barely hit the ground outside the trailer when things started crashing inside.

"Is he... Um. Is he going to be all right?" Stan asked, fiddling with his tie.

"Sure. Sure he is, Stan. I think this just came as something of a shock." Motioning, he led the way back to Stan's car, pulling a card out of his wallet. "Here's the new lawyer. Contact him and straighten it all out. I'd offer a bonus as well as the fifty percent, though. He made you a lot of money."

"Oh. Of course. We were thinking of giving him the trailer. What do you think?"

"I think that's fine." If it was still in one piece when Danny was done. "Thanks, Stan. Bye."

The sound of glass breaking reached him even from the parking lot, and Todd trotted back to the trailer, knowing he had to put a stop to it all.

"Danny! Man, quit. You might have to live here."

Something smashed up against the closed door, but then it went quiet, so Todd peeked in.

"Danny?"

"Just go away, man." Sitting in the middle of the squalor, head in his hands, Danny had that slump-shouldered, defeated look. Todd felt it like a blow to the gut, which kind of surprised him. He liked Danny all right, had been hot for him more than once, but Todd had never felt that kind of protectiveness for him before.

"I can't. Now, come on and get up." Picking his way through the broken bottles and plates, the books and what looked like the TV in pieces, Todd helped Danny stand and move back toward the little bedroom. "I'll get someone to clean this up."

"You mean you're not gonna quit now that I've lost the gravy train?" Danny asked, staggering a little, hands clutching Todd's arm.

"Not today, Danny," Todd replied, easing his drugged up and somehow lost looking boss down on the bed. "Not today."

The deal was done. He had the trailer, all three of his bikes, and more than a million and a half dollars in settlement.

Fucking hollow victories weren't worth shit.

What it came right down to was that if no one was going to pay him to ride, that money would go fast. Entry fees, equipment, repairs; it all ate up cash like Pac-Man with his ghosts.

His lawyer and accountant had all made their suggestions. Todd had come and gone like a wraith, serving drinks, bringing pens, and otherwise being quiet and helpful. It made Danny want to scream.

So he did, somehow finding himself in the bathroom, pounding his hands on the sink, screaming his damned fool head off. Everything he'd worked so hard for was fucked. Not because of his drinking or partying or lack of skill, but because his fucking body just wouldn't so what it used to do.

"Danny! Danny, quit it!" There was Todd again, grabbing him, pulling him out into the tiny hallway. "You're not helping shit."

No. No, Todd was the helpful one, wasn't he? Danny turned and drove his hand into the wall next to Todd's head, his face inches from Todd's nose. "Why don't you quit? Why are you still fucking here? I'm a fucking lost cause."

"I... I don't know. You're still paying me?" Those green eyes were so wide, so shocked, and it kinda revved his motor.

"True enough. I wonder how helpful you really want to be."

"What?" That pretty mouth fell open, and somehow Danny had never noticed how sweet Todd's lips looked, how hot that square-but-lean face was.

"I need to blow off steam." He leaned, trying to press his mouth to Todd's, but Todd ducked.

"No. No, I won't do that unless you mean it. I'll... I'll find you someone."

"What if I want you?" The thought had never occurred to him before, and Dan wondered why not. Now, with Todd pressed up against him, he thought maybe it was the best idea he'd had in ages.

"You don't. You're just pissed off." Pushing Danny away, Todd stuck his hands in his pockets, shoulders hunched like Danny had actually hit him. "If you had ever once looked at me before now? I'd be naked in a heartbeat. I'll make a couple calls."

Todd left him standing there with his mouth hanging open, just like that.

When the hot young thing showed up, though, Danny gave him a fifty and told the kid to go have a beer on him. Somehow, it just wasn't the same.

The sponsors had let Danny go almost a month earlier.

Todd wasn't sure what to do. He was still getting a paycheck, but he really didn't have much to do. The man had stopped going to meets and events and all, and was pretty much living off of his new investments. It was like life had stopped dead.

Maybe it was time to resign.

Todd didn't miss the high stress life, really, but he kind of missed Danny. He missed poking and prodding the man, making him do what he needed to do. Nowadays he just fielded calls from reporters who wanted to do retrospectives on Danny's defunct motocross career.

Putting on his best "come on and get up and be happy" face, Todd took Danny the newest round of paperwork to sign, along with his morning OJ and paper.

"Hey, man, come on, you need to get up."

Danny had sold the big house in Malibu two weeks ago, moving into what Todd privately thought was a much cuter beach bungalow. The Hawaiian style bedroom made him smile every time.

Rolling over, Danny burrowed his head under the pillows, moaning. Which presented Todd with the tightest, roundest male ass he'd ever seen.

He'd seen a lot of them, but never Danny's.

Huh.

"Go 'way."

"I've been thinking about it, actually."

Danny's head of spiky brown hair popped up, those famous gray eyes staring at him. "What?"

"You don't need me, Danny. You've got things all figured out." Shrugging, he set the tray down, arranging things just so. "I'm a glorified butler."

"Well, that's not exactly my fault." Rolling up, muscles sliding under smooth, tanned skin, Danny sat, picking at the breakfast tray. "I mean, I still have plenty for you to do."

"What?" Bullshit. He'd asked for stuff. There were no appointments to make, no calls to field except the ones Danny wouldn't answer.

"You don't poke me to work out. You don't push me to enter meets. You just sit in the office and obsess. I swear, you're disappearing. I actually miss the clucking and fussing."

Todd stared, mouth dropping open. "I. You." He thought he might bust a vein.

"I. You. I tried that, too. You turned me down." Draining the orange juice, Danny pushed out of bed and headed for the bathroom. "I'm gonna take a shower."

Seconds ticked by before Todd could make himself move, marching right into the bathroom and ripping open the shower curtain.

"You fucking hit on me when you were buzzed and pissed off! I was supposed to say yes to that?"

Dude. How was he supposed to hang on to his righteous rage when faced with naked Danny? The man was a work of art, all lean, sculpted muscle and scars. Jesus.

Wet and blinking, Danny gaped at him. "Huh? Man, you're in my shower."

"Not in. Just interrupting. Answer the question."

"Okay. I hadn't thought about it before. That day, I thought of it, okay?"

"Well, no." Damn it, he wouldn't be anyone's afterthought.

"Look, I was thinking about it just now, too." Danny turned a little, opening his hand, which was pushed down and wrapped around... Oh, God. That made his mouth water.

"Go you," Todd said, sounding like he was strangling on a frog, even to himself. "I'm going to go send out your press release."

"You don't have to run off!" Danny called to his retreating back.

If the man had even thought about laughing at him, Todd might have lost it. The fact was that Danny wasn't laughing at him, though. Not one bit.

All he could hear in that rough voice as he ran was need.

Danny found TDC, set the kicker to the top, and got ready to stomp. Clutch in, set in first, he flipped his helmet closed and stared down the long dirt road he'd chosen to tear up.

Now.

He kicked it hard, tearing off with a backend skid that would have made his sponsors cheer. If he had any.

That wasn't his problem, though, not really. He hit the first bump going way too fast, his knees screaming at him when he touched down. No, his problem was Todd. Fucking bastard had turned in his two weeks notice. Just like that. Just when Danny was starting to obsess about the man in a serious way.

He'd never seen Todd naked. Somehow that seemed completely unfair. When had the man gone from fussy assistant to someone so necessary that his leaving was gonna tear a hole in Dan's world?

The bike slid under him when he landed, and he geared down, ripping it back into balance before gunning it again and heading up the next hill. The thrill of speed seemed distant, like the buzzing of a fly on a hot summer day. Even the pain in his legs faded to a secondary annoyance. That fucking asshole. Giving up on him, just like everyone else.

Something twisted in the front of the bike when Dan took the next jump, something that sent him sideways in the air and left him with his feet flying up behind his head.

Fuck.

Time stopped just long enough for Dan to see what was gonna happen. Then his chin crashed down, his spine bent in on itself, and the bike went flying, leaving him skidding across the dirt track to crash hard into the brush in the bar ditch.

The last thing he saw was his helmet, bouncing away in a crazy, cartoon-like roll.

Todd paced, waiting for the results of the x-rays. Goddamn Danny to Hell. The man had gone right out after Todd turned in his resignation and laid the bike out, tearing the damned thing to pieces.

"Mr. Aloway?" the doctor asked, finally coming into the little waiting room.

"That's me. How's he doing, Doc?"

"Not bad, considering. Mild concussion, a strained right wrist. The rest is bumps and bruises. He's lucky."

"Yeah. Until I get done with him." Todd grinned a little. "Can I see him?"

"You bet." The doctor looked tired, dark circles sagging under his eyes. "He's in the exam room at the end of the

hall. He's on a little fluid, but mainly that's because he's a little dehydrated from drinking too much and not eating enough."

"Damn it," he grumbled before offering up a smile.
"Thanks, Doc."

"No problem."

The doc left, and Todd took a deep breath before marching out of the room and down the hall, ready to give Danny a piece of his mind.

Of course, faced with a stoned and half asleep Danny, it was hard to be nasty. Todd tried real hard to manage it.

"Are you out of your mind?" he growled, pulling a chair over so he could sit next to the little gurney. "What the Hell were you thinking?"

"I was thinking that I wanted to ride," Danny slurred, his mouth looking like it was moving in slow motion.

"Well, now you can't."

"Not for a bit, huh?" Danny shifted, grimacing. "Damn, this bed is the worst. When can I go home?"

"Soon. The doc says you're mostly bruised."

"Oh, go me." Those gray eyes went all unfocused, and Danny blinked hard. "Don't go."

"I won't. I'll stay until you go home."

"No." Groping out with one hand, Danny reached for him.
"I mean don't quit on me."

Shit. That was so not fair, asking him that in the hospital when all Todd could see were bruises and cuts.

"You're cheating, Danny. You can't ask me this now."

"Only chance I'll get, I leave it up to you. I need you, man."

"No. You don't need me at all. You're going to have to accept that your life has changed." It wouldn't be easy, but Danny was surprisingly capable when he wasn't being stupid.

"I know that..." Blinking some more, Danny shook his head slowly. "I just. Need you around..."

Todd opened his mouth to reply, but Danny's lashes hit his cheeks like they were weighted down, and the man started to snore. Just like that.

Damn. They said in vino there was veritas. Maybe that worked for opiates, too.

Thank God Danny was down for the count. Todd needed some time to think. Lord knew Danny had given him plenty of food for thought in a tiny amount of time.

Maybe Danny did need a fucking keeper.

Three weeks later, Danny was feeling on top of the world, the physical therapy the doc had laid out for him making him downright spry.

And, you know, he still had Todd.

So the man was still acting as his assistant and not doing the other shit Danny really wanted to do. So what? He figured as long as Todd was there, he had a chance.

"You want some eggs, man?" Dan asked, scrambling more cheese into the mix he had on the stove.

"Huh?" Todd glanced up, green eyes barely open, coffee clenched in one hand.

"I asked if you wanted eggs. We could go surfing today."

"What's gotten into you? I have work to do." Yeah, there were papers strewn everywhere. Todd had been working on his one remaining contract, a video game deal that could pull his ass out of the fire for sure.

"All work and no play makes Todd a dull boy." Sliding the eggs on to a plate, Dan slapped them down on the table before giving Todd a spontaneous hug from behind. Sure, the guy was still kinda prissy and pushy, but he hadn't disappeared when Danny needed him. He'd stayed.

Todd sprang up out of the chair, coffee cup crashing to the floor. "What are you doing?"

Ow. Dan rubbed his chest, right where Todd's elbow had connected. "I was just moved to say thank you."

"Well, you're welcome and stop that."

Danny tilted his head, staring right into those eyes. "Why? Am I gross?"

"Hardly. I just don't... I work for you."

"What?" Oh, for Christ's sake. "I don't care."

"Maybe I do." Frowning, Todd went to get a rag and mop coffee. "I just don't want to mess things up, Danny."

Growling, he slapped the rag out of Todd's hand and grabbed the man's surprisingly muscled shoulders. "Well, too bad. I've been good, but I'm tired of waiting."

Danny went for it, just like he would jumping his bike, eyes wide open when he leaned in and took a kiss.

Smooth, soft, Todd's lips felt amazing under his, and when Todd gasped Danny took that mouth with his tongue, letting himself taste coffee and heat. God, that felt good, better than it had with anyone in a long, long time.

Todd broke away, staring at him, lips red and swollen. "What..."

"Shh. Don't." He didn't want Todd to ask, to talk. They just needed to feel.

Danny kissed the man again, cutting off any more questions. This time Todd gave it up, too, putting one hand behind his neck and holding him close, kissing him right back.

The touch jolted right down his spine, making his cock rise in a rush. Moaning, he reached down and grabbed Todd's ass, squeezing the tight muscles he found there, wishing the cloth was out of the way.

His own robe wasn't tough to get rid of. Todd's clothes seemed harder, like every button, snap and zipper was fighting him, just as stubborn as the man who wore them. They were finally naked together, though, and Danny pushed Todd back to sit on the table, muscling right up and spreading the man's thighs.

"This is a bad idea," Todd said when they broke for air. Those hands never let go of him, saying something completely different, and Danny choked out a laugh.

"No, it's the best idea in forever. Kiss me, Todd."

Todd dove back into the kisses, lips mashing against his, cock hard against his belly. Yeah. Just like that.

Or not. He wanted... Everything. Slipping to his knees, Danny pulled at Todd's hips, rubbing his cheek along the long, hot cock he found there.

"Danny! Jesus. Too much. Too fast."

"I like speed, remember?" Opening up, Dan slid his lips around the head of Todd's cock, licking and sucking, tasting salt and musk. Fuck, that was. More.

Danny sucked, pulling hard, finally closing his eyes. The sound his lips made on Todd's skin was insane, erotic, making him moan and reach for his cock. He stroked off in time to his sucking, his head bobbing up and down.

Todd's fingers slid into his hair, holding his head in place, and those hips started moving, cock fucking his mouth hard and fast. Oh, God, who knew Todd had that kind of need in him, that kind of desperation? It made him fucking insane.

His hand curled under Todd's balls, pulling at them, and Danny swallowed hard when Todd's cock hit the back of his throat.

A harsh cry sounded, Todd's hips snapping, hot seed falling on his tongue, down his throat.

When he pulled away to breathe, Danny leaned his head on Todd's hip, his hand clenching on the base of his cock, which was gonna start drilling a hole in something any minute.

"Want you," he gasped out. "Want to fuck you."

Fingers slid along his cheeks, tilting his head up. "You're crazy, you know that?"

Meeting Todd's eyes, Danny nodded, grinning a little. "Probably. You're gonna run my life, for sure."

"Yeah. Get up here." Leaning back on the table, Todd spread for him, giving him the most amazing view, and Dan didn't need to be asked twice. He really couldn't believe Todd was letting him do this.

Standing, he pushed between Todd's legs again, moaning a little. "I need something slick."

"You have oil. Right there."

"Oh. Smart man."

"That's why I do all the hard work," Todd teased, licking at his jaw. "You're the brawn."

"I'll show you brawn." Moving away was the hardest thing he'd ever done, but Danny wanted that oil. When he came back, Todd was stroking his rising cock, recovering pretty damned well.

"Fuck, Todd. That's... Fucking hot."

"I'm hotter inside. Come on, man."

Jesus. When Todd decided to do something, he did it up right, no matter his earlier protests. Danny had to reach down and squeeze the base of his cock again, then beneath to pull his balls down, just so he didn't blow all over the place. The oil fought him, but he got it open and got his fingers wet, glancing up to meet Todd's eyes.

"You sure?"

"I am, yeah. Might as well live like my ass is on fire, right? That's your motto."

Those green eyes were laughing at him, but it wasn't malicious, just sexy as all fuck.

"You know it." Pressing two fingers to Todd's tight, hot hole, he grinned. "Let me in."

"Uh-huh." The man opened right up for him, bearing down to pull his fingers right in. Snug, so warm it could be an

August night in Texas, that sweet spot made Danny pant, made his knees weak.

He worked to get Todd loose and ready, but Danny knew he was going too fast. He couldn't help it. Todd wasn't helping either; every stroke the man gave his own cock made muscles tighten down like a wet dream.

"Gotta, man."

"Now, Danny." Those eyes met his, all the laughter gone, just do me sex in them now.

He pulled his fingers free, grabbing the napkin next to Todd's hip to wipe them off before lining his aching cock right up, the head rubbing over Todd's slick ass.

Todd grabbed his hips and pulled, surprisingly strong, urgent and needy. They both moaned when he slid deep inside, his hips working in short bursts to get in all the way.

Oh, Goddamn. Danny rested his forehead against Todd's, feeling muscled thighs wrap around his hips, Todd's cock fully hard again against his belly.

"Ready?"

"Fuck, yes. Move, Danny."

Nodding, he started moving, his hips rocking, his cock in that heated vise of a body. Back and forth, he thrust, Todd met him, and he figured he'd last maybe a minute. Maybe a half a minute.

"I'm not... I can't. Todd."

"S'okay, man. Come on. It's okay."

Oh, Christ. Danny lost it, slamming into Todd, his balls hard and tight against his body. Sparks blew out behind his eyes, his breath heaving in his lungs, and Danny shot so hard he all but bit his own tongue off, filling Todd right up.

"Danny. Almost there. Please."

He couldn't move. Well, not his hips. Not now. He could move his hand, though, so he pushed it down between their bodies and wrapped his fingers around Todd's silky cock, stroking hard. Hot but not quite as hard as when Danny sucked him, Todd was ready, too, and it didn't take long before liquid heat poured over Danny's hand and wrist, making him hum.

"Oh, fuck, Danny," Todd said, panting hard. "Good. Real good."

"I didn't think you'd go through with it." He was glad, though. Real glad.

"I wanted to know. What it was like."

"Now you know." Danny took a kiss, his heart pounding in his chest. "Stay?"

Grinning, Todd nodded. "Things will have to change if I do."

"Whatever you want, man."

"Oh, don't be that easy, Danny," Todd said, kissing his chin. "I like you better as a challenge."

He could live with that. He surely could. "I'll get right on that," he said, hugging Todd tight. "Today."

Three months later, Todd was working at the computer, humming happily as he watched the blue screen shots of Danny doing flips and jumps for video game footage.

"Hey, you," Danny said, slipping an arm around his neck, setting an orange juice down on the desk with his other hand. "How's it going?"

Things were going great. He and Danny were partners, essentially, working at virtual bike demos and video games. Todd was proud to say that he had a handle on most of the business so all Danny had to do was ride and smile and shake hands.

Todd tilted his head up to let Danny have a kiss, smiling against that pretty mouth.

"You're in a good mood," Danny said, stroking the back of his neck.

"I am. I was just thinking..."

"Uh-oh. Danger." Those gray eyes twinkled for him, Danny laughing a little. "Thinking what?"

"About how glad I am that you crashed your bike that time. I would never have stayed otherwise."

"Well, then, I'd do it again in a heartbeat. We burn a lot hotter together than we do apart, baby."

Todd nodded, letting Danny pull him into another kiss, work almost forgotten. Living like his ass was on fire had its advantages.

He thought Danny might agree.

end

Crash and Burn

Copyright © 2007 by Julia Talbot

All rights reserved. No part of this eBook may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews. For information address Torquere Press, Inc., PO Box 2545, Round Rock, TX 78680

Printed in the United States of America.

Torquere Press, Inc.: Sips electronic edition / August 2007

Torquere Press eBooks are published by Torquere Press, Inc., PO Box 2545, Round Rock, TX 78680