



The past couple years have been a real bitch for trauma nurse, Lucas Harris. He'd given up everything to be in a relationship with a man he loved, only to find out the feelings weren't mutual. Hurt and betrayed, Lucas leaves everything behind and moves to Flint, Michigan to start over again.

After a night of too many drinks, Lucas gets up-close-and-personal with paramedic Matt Shaw. The only problem is while Matt may be the sexiest medic in Flint, he's also as straight as they come. The last thing Lucas wants is to be someone's dirty little secret again, but at the same time he can't deny his growing attraction to Matt. When a near fatal incident forces the men to face their feelings for one another, Lucas knows things will never be the same again. Will his heart be able to survive the outcome?

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Light and Sirens

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LIGHT AND SIRENS

By

STEPHANI HECHT

Dedication

To Tam, Chris, Lily and Kris for demanding that Matt have his own story.

Chapter One

"Come on, you know you want it."

Lucas jerked his hand back and forced himself to smile, even though he didn't feel anywhere near amused. "Sorry, now really isn't the time."

Almost as if his arm was on spring, Gary reached out and grabbed Lucas's hand again. Lucas tried to repress a shudder as his fingers were once more pressed against Gary's hard cock.

It's not that Gary was bad looking or anything. In fact, one could almost say the radiologist tech was *too* handsome. From his carefully trimmed brown hair, tight physique and sharp green eyes, he had more than his fair share of attention from both sexes. So it's not like Lucas didn't find the guy physically attractive. No, the thing that had Lucas looking for the nearest escape route was that he didn't want yet another quick hookup.

After the past couple years of brief one-night-stands, backroom hand-jobs and I'll-call-you-in-the-mornings, he craved something more. A real relationship, with real emotions. Maybe because today marked his twenty-fifth birthday and perhaps he'd reached his breaking point. Whatever the reason, the voice in his head felt ready to declare *no more!*

Of course, Gary hadn't helped his case by accosting Lucas in the *urine room*--a small narrow space that connected the two halves of St. Michael's ER that were used to prepare urine samples to send up to the lab. Given they also stored used food trays and other dirty equipment in the area, the whole place smelled like a...well, piss room.

"Seriously, Gary, I have to get going." Lucas tried to make a break for one of the doors, only to have the man block his way.

"No, you don't. It's so dead out there, I'm sure they won't miss one little nurse," Gary said, all smooth and charm.

Lucas winced. He didn't know what hurt most, the way Gary's eyes had shown a flicker of disdain at the word *nurse* or the way he had to toss *little* into the mix. At just over five-foot seven inches, Lucas had always felt self-conscious about his small build. It didn't help that he was thin as well. As a result, he got called all kinds of fun things-- puppy, tiny, shrimp, twink, sweet cheeks--just to name a few.

Now, more angry than simply annoyed, Lucas tried to brush past Gary again. "I have charting to do."

Gary grabbed him by the shoulders and spun him around. Off balance, Lucas reached behind to grab the counter for support. When the heel of one hand settled into a puddle of God knows what, Lucas felt less than thrilled. *Happy birthday to me, I got a handful of pee.*

"What's your problem today?" Gary demanded, all the charm leaving his handsome face.

"Maybe I just don't feel like jerking you off in a room this public. Somebody could come in at any moment." He looked down at the counter and breathed a sigh of relief to find his hand had merely encountered some spilled water. Of course, given the environment, that didn't guarantee it was clean water, but it was a whole hell of a lot better than piss.

"That never stopped you before. Just last week you gave me head in the radiology room." Gary reached up and lightly stroked Lucas's jaw.

It struck Lucas that the gesture had been the one and only time Gary had touched him in a caring manner. Usually he'd be lucky to get a kiss before things got down and dirty.

"Yeah, and that wasn't exactly the proudest moment of my life," Lucas muttered as shame and a bit of self-loathing curdled his stomach.

"Is it because I didn't return the favor? I told you I had a meeting I had to get to."

"No, it has nothing to do with that." Inside, he screamed, *It's because idiot me once again let someone use me for sex. Fuck, I'm nothing more than a living breathing blow up doll to him.*

Thankfully, he was saved from continuing the inane conversation when the PA crackled to life and underneath all the static, he caught his name being paged. "Look, I really do have to go."

This time when he pulled away, Gary allowed it and Lucas evacuated the rancid smelling room for the marginally fresher air of the ER. Before he reported to the nurse's station, he took the time to stop by one of the sinks lining the wall, so he could wash his hands. If only it were so easy to scrub away his sour mood.

Calvin Dane, one of the ER docs, came up just as Lucas was drying off. "There you are. We've been paging you."

Lucas barely glanced at the doctor. With dark hair and sexy, chocolate, do-me eyes, Calvin had played a front and center role in many of Lucas's wet dreams. That was before Calvin had settled down with his partner, a paramedic named James. Since James was one of the few Lucas could call friend, he'd put Calvin in the do-not-pant-over category. "Sorry. I got tied up in something." Lucas balled up his paper towel and tossed it into the nearest can.

Of course, Gary had to pick that moment to walk by. He even gave a conspiratorial wink. Lucas barely held back the groan of embarrassment when Calvin narrowed his eyes in suspicion. "Please tell me you haven't been fooling around with that self-centered idiot again."

Despite his own earlier reservations, Lucas still got on the defensive. "Not that I was, but what business is it of yours?"

Calvin sighed as he ran a hand through his hair. "It's my business because I don't want to see my friend get hurt by yet another jerk."

"Well, then you better steel yourself for disappointment because I seem to thrive on always finding the jerks of the bunch." Not entirely comfortable discussing his lack of a love life in the middle of the ER, he switched topics. "What were you paging me for?" Lucas could tell by the way Calvin's jaw clenched, the doctor wasn't pleased about the dodge, but he went along with it.

"Follow me. I think it might be better if I just showed you the situation instead of telling you."

"Fine, but if it's just a trick to get me to look at Mr. Turner's naked ass again, you can save it. The first thing he did when the ambulance crew brought him in was to drop his *JC Penny* men's slacks and flash his big, old rear at me."

"Did he now?" While Calvin sounded serious enough, the corner of his mouth twitched.

"You know he did. He pulls that same stunt every time he's wheeled into this hospital. I swear, Mr. Turner is living proof that certain people should never touch booze," Lucas bitched as he started to follow Calvin down the ultra-white hallway. The only colors that ever broke up the starkness were the yellow privacy curtains surrounding the beds and the dark blue scrubs all the nursing staff wore.

"Speaking of booze, are you going to *Coolers* with us tonight?" Calvin asked.

Lucas hedged. While he normally would be up for a night at their favorite bar, it just didn't appeal to him at the moment. What he really felt like doing was grabbing a tube of cookie dough, a *Torchwood* DVD and wallow in self-pity. "I don't know."

"You really should. It's your birthday and everyone is going to be there."

Lucas started to refuse, but something else diverted his attention. "Why are you leading me back to the break room?"

"Because, like I said, I have to show you something."

Lucas skidded to a stop so sharply that his all-white Converse made a screeching noise on the tile. "Oh, fuck. There's a cake in there, isn't there?"

"It's the break room, so I'm sure all kinds of food is in there," Calvin replied evasively.

"You know what I'm talking about, Dr. Dane, so don't play coy." Lucas clenched his hands into tight fists as tension shot up his spine.

Calvin sighed. "Yes, there's a cake in there."

"And does said cake have my name on it?"

"Yeah."

"Please, tell me there aren't candles. At least give me that," Lucas pleaded as he glared at the closed door.

"Yes, it does and I should warn you, they're the trick kind that you can't blow out."

"Damn it. I told them I didn't want to make a big deal out of today," Lucas seethed.

Calvin came up behind him and placed a comforting hand on his shoulder. "Cut them some slack. The other nurses here love you and they wanted to do something special. They only have your best interests at heart."

Lucas took in a deep breath, some of the anger slowly leaking from his system. Calvin did have a point. Since he was the youngest and one of the few guy nurses, the rest of the staff tended to treat him like a younger brother. So, it would stand to reason they would want to make his day special. They had no way of knowing that this particular date marked more than the day he was born. How could they know that exactly two years ago his whole life had gone into the can? "Just tell me there isn't a balloon bouquet and I may be able to force myself to look excited about this."

Calvin gave another long-suffering sigh that told Lucas a Mylar and latex delight awaited him as well. No doubt one of the balloons would have a great big smiley face that proclaimed *Happy Birthday!*

A big part of Lucas wanted to revolt--wanted to turn heel and storm away. He knew he couldn't do that, however, because Calvin had been right when he said they'd only done it because they cared. So, he would do the right thing by going in there and facing it like a man. He'd even smile the entire time.

"After this, I'm going to the bar with you guys for sure. I'll be needing a drink in the worst way," he said before he pushed open the door.

The cake he'd been prepared for, but it was the large crowd that threw him off. The yell of *Surprise* was so loud, he actually retreated a step, bumping into Calvin. The doctor gave him a gentle nudge in the small of the back and that provided Lucas the strength to move forward.

Not only was the ER staff present, but also several paramedics. One of them was Lucas's closest friend, Jessie. He at least had the good grace to give a sheepish shrug of apology. Lucas didn't even have a chance to shoot a dirty look back before he found himself surrounded by several of the nurses.

They started to lead him to the cake, which did have his name and those damn candles. Just as he approached the table, he noticed another one of the paramedics, Matt.

As always, his heart skipped a beat at the sight of the blond EMS god. With sun-kissed, short blond hair and bright blue eyes, he had to be the best looking man to

ever walk the halls of St. Michael's. Unlike Gary, Matt happened to be good looking on the inside, too. Matt always had a smile or smartass comment at the ready, no matter how crappy his day had been going.

Matt was everything Lucas could ever want in a guy. His dream man all wrapped up in a hot-as-hell-package. There was just one problem. Just *one*, but it was biggie...Matt was as straight as they came.

For the past two years, Lucas had harbored a secret crush on the medic. He'd been forced to stand by and watch as Matt hooked up with every piece of female tail in Genesee County. Through it all, Lucas had always been careful to keep his feelings well-hidden. He hadn't shared them with anyone, not even Jessie.

"Hurry up and blow out the candles. I'm starving for some cake," Matt called from across the room as he shot off that grin. The one that never failed to make Lucas's cock snap off a silent salute.

Lucas wanted to shout back, *Come over here and let me show you just how good I blow*. Instead, he bent over and blew out the candles only to have them flicker back to life a second later. Calvin hadn't been lying about the trick candles. Even though he knew he'd be playing right into their hands, Lucas blew them out again, only to have them once more spark to life. "I suppose this was your idea?" he drawled to Matt.

Matt shook his head, a cocky gleam coming to his eyes. "Please, trick candles are so archaic and beneath me."

Despite still feeling a bit ambushed, Lucas grinned. "Archaic? Looks like somebody is actually using the thesaurus I bought them for Christmas."

"Like I had any choice when the gift tag told me it was so I'd use some other words besides fuck, shit and damn."

Someone brought over a glass of water and Lucas dunked the still flaming candles into it. They each let out a small spitting hiss as they were doused. Now if it would only be so easy to put out the ache in his cock, Lucas may actually think this a passable party.

Matt stepped closer and leaned in until his lips were just inches from Lucas's ear. "Speaking of presents, wait until you see what I got for your birthday."

Lucas stilled as desire coursed through his body. His breath even hitched for a second before he reminded himself that Matt meant the whole gesture to be on the friendly side, instead of the intimacy that Lucas craved. With a forced laugh, he

willed the tension from his body. "I'm almost afraid to see it. Are you going to give it to me now? Or are you going to make me beg for it?" He tensed as he realized just how many ways that last statement could have been taken. Most of them weren't G-Rated either. Matt chuckled, his breath fanning the sensitive skin under Lucas's ear.

"I'm not going to give it to you until we all go out tonight," Matt said as he reached around Lucas to snag a piece of cake.

"You're just trying to blackmail me into going, aren't you?"

"Maybe." Matt shrugged as he stepped back and then took a bite.

As Lucas watched the medic's lips wrap around the fork, he felt a weird sense of envy. He'd do anything to get that sweet mouth wrapped around him somehow. He didn't even care where, just so long as it was on some area of his body. "How do you know I don't want to go? Did Jessie say something to you?"

Matt just gave him a sly smile before he walked over to the corner of the room and started to flirt with Courtney, one of the newer nurses. Of course, Courtney immediately responded to the attention, even going so far as to twirl her long, brown ponytail as she thrust her chest forward.

Unwanted jealousy burned inside Lucas as he grabbed his own piece of cake. He took a seat and told himself he had no right to be envious of something he could never have. That Matt was just a friend and if Lucas wanted ever to be happy, he'd just have to accept that. The inner pep talk didn't help though, and he felt as bitter as ever.

The one piece of cake was followed by another as he tried to wallow away his sorrows in butter cream frosting. Finally, after another half hour of pretending all was good, Lucas couldn't take it anymore. He eased his way to the door, then took refuge in the hallway. It dawned on him that this had been the second time he'd ran away from a situation, but he still didn't man up and go back in. He'd just had enough of the birthday cheer for one year.

"Fuck." He moaned as he leaned against a wall. Because he was a glutton for more punishment, he took his cell out of his pocket and turned it on. Even though he'd expected it when the screen flashed *No new messages*, his stomach still clenched in hurt. Would it have killed his father or brothers to leave at least a short voicemail?

"Hey, you okay?" Matt asked as he ducked out of the break room.

Lucas jumped, surprised that he was no longer alone. Plastering on a fake smile, he said, "Sure, just ate too much cake."

"I'll say. You even have some icing still on your face." Matt smiled as he stepped in closer.

Face burning in embarrassment, Lucas reached up to wipe his cheek. "God, I'm such a slob. Did I get it?"

"No, it's right here." Matt swiped his thumb along the corner of Lucas's mouth.

Before he even knew what he was doing, Lucas had turned his head so he could nip the pad of Matt's thumb. As soon as his teeth sank into the warm flesh of the medic, reality slammed into Lucas. He let out a sharp breath as he pulled back. "Shit, Matt. I'm sorry."

Matt jerked his hand away before the light faded from his eyes. He took a step back. "It's okay."

Lucas's heart pounded, each beat seeming to say, *dummy, dummy, dummy!* Just when he thought his day couldn't get any worse, he had to go and make a complete and utter fool out of himself.

"No, it's not. I must have gotten a sugar high and it messed with my common sense." Lucas winced at his lame excuse. What he really wanted to do was beat his head against the wall in self-punishment for being so damn stupid. After this, he'd be lucky if Matt ever talked to him, and Lucas valued their friendship.

"It's okay," Matt repeated, but his face remained an emotionless mask.

"I didn't mean to come on to you or anything because I know you don't go for guys," Lucas continued to fumble around. Before the whole humiliating encounter could continue, Matt's partner, James came rushing into the hall.

"Sorry, to break up the fun, but we've got a transport."

Matt nodded to James. "I'll be right there." Turning back to Lucas, Matt said, "I don't want you to agonize over this. You just nibbled on me a bit. It's not like you stripped naked and begged me to ravish you or anything."

Despite himself, Lucas chuckled. "*Ravish?* Now I know that you read the historical romance novel I gave you, along with the thesaurus."

"Hey, I have to do something to pass the time between calls." Matt gave him a friendly punch on the arm before he left for the ambulance bay.

Alone once again, Lucas leaned back against the wall as he let out a groan of embarrassment.

Chapter Two

Matt sat in the driver's seat of the rig and absently rubbed his still, tingling thumb as he worried over the problem called Lucas. Even though he'd just been the center of a surprise party and surrounded by friends, it'd been clear Lucas had been far from happy. Matt hadn't missed the look of pain that haunted the man's gaze. What possibly could have upset him so much today?

He frowned to himself as he realized that Lucas had yet again edged into his thoughts. For the past month, Matt found his attention drifting back, time and again, to the man. It'd gotten so bad that he'd even had a few dreams about the nurse, each one of them more pornographic than the last.

A wave of unease hit him. Why did this have to happen now? He'd known Lucas for a long time. So why, all the sudden, did Matt have to notice how sexy Lucas's deep, blue eyes were when they darkened with emotion? How the man's dark hair was just long enough to grab on and pull during a good, hard fuck. Or the way Lucas managed to have a slim build, but not be too skinny either. Things had gotten so out of control that Matt hadn't even been able to have sex with any of his usual female prospects because they weren't...well, Lucas. Matt's head pounded as he realized where this twisted train of thought was heading. "I'm not gay," he grumbled to himself just as James opened up the passenger side door and climbed in.

"Good to know, but I thought we already established that," James replied with a smirk.

Matt glanced over at his partner and for the first time, looked him over as a sexual object rather than a work buddy. Sure, James had a cute smile that went great with his carefree styled brown hair, but he didn't make Matt hard the way Lucas did. Matt rubbed his thumb again as he pondered if maybe that meant that while he may not be attracted to guys, Lucas just happened to be an unique exception.

"Are you waiting for the transport to come to us?" James asked as he cocked a brow.

Matt started to put the ambulance in gear, then paused so he could look back over at James. "Have you ever been attracted to a woman?" he asked, hoping he didn't offend James.

Thankfully, James didn't appear insulted, but his eyes did widen in shock. "No, not even when I was still in high school and didn't even realize I was gay."

"Not even once?" Matt continued to persist as he started to back the rig out of the bay.

"Nope." James looked down at his paper work before he delivered the next zinger, "Lucas is cute though."

Matt nearly hit a parked car as a wave of fear and panic hit him. Had he been that obvious? If James noticed, then who else may suspect something? "I was just curious is all. Lucas has nothing to do with my question."

"Sure," James drew the word out, his disbelief ringing in the closed confines of the rig.

Matt circled the wheel around and started to move forward out of the hospital parking lot. "Because I don't think of Lucas in that way. He's just a good friend, same as you, Calvin, Jessie and Randal."

"Ah, I may be mistaken, but I've never seen you look at any of us the same way you do Lucas."

A spike of fear went through Matt, making his stomach flip. "I don't look at him any differently than anyone else."

"Okay." James sounded far from convinced though.

"Because I'm not attracted to him."

"Sure, you're not," James replied with the same near condescending tone.

"I mean it. I'm not gay."

"Of course not. The amount of time you commit to chasing after anything with boobs proves that."

"I don't think it's wrong or anything," Matt hastened to add. James was probably his closest friend. Matt would rather slam his own head in the back doors of the rig than hurt the medic's feelings.

"Nothing wrong with liking boobs or Lucas?" James replied in a practiced lazy drawl he'd learned from Matt.

Damn, Matt had never realized how annoying it could be until that moment. Matt paused, momentarily taken off track. "Lucas, of course."

James shifted sideways in his seat, then pinned Matt with a suspicious glare. "So, let me turn the tables for a while. Have you ever been attracted to a guy?"

"No," Matt replied too quickly.

James rolled his eyes. "We've already established that's a lie."

"No, *you* did. I already told you, I see Lucas as a friend and nothing more."

"How long have we known each other?"

"A couple years."

"And in that time we've suffered through numerous calls from hell, a near-fatal shooting and countless drunken nights at the bar. I know you pretty much better than anyone and I can tell when you're attracted to someone."

Matt started to deny it, but clamped his lips together and stayed silent instead. James would have seen through any lie he threw out anyway. After a few tense moments, Matt blurted, "One time."

"Huh?" James slowly shook his head, his brows furrowed in confusion.

"I was attracted to a guy, once." His fingers slid on the steering wheel as his palms grew sweaty. After keeping this secret for so many years, he couldn't believe he was about to share it.

"You mean someone besides Lucas?"

"Yeah."

James's expression softened. "Who was he?"

"A guy I met in my junior year of high school."

"Was he in the same class as you or something?"

Matt took a deep breath to steady his nerves before confessing, "No, he was the assistant coach of my hockey team."

"You mean..." James trailed off before his eyes grew huge with understanding. "Oh, he was older."

"Yeah, by ten years and since I was only sixteen at the time, you can guess what happened when our relationship was outed." Matt swallowed hard against the painful lump in his throat as he recalled the scandal that had followed, the intense disappointment in his father's eyes.

"Did the coach get into trouble for messing around with you?" James asked, his voice hesitant, almost as if he didn't know quite the right thing to say.

"Yeah, my parents were pretty upset when they first found out about it and pressed charges. Now I know that was the right thing for them to do, but back then, I hated them for it. In the end, it didn't go to trial because my coach agreed to leave town. My parents went along with it because, by that time, they just wanted the whole matter dropped and forgotten."

"Why would they do that if they were the ones who pressed charges in the first place?" James frowned.

"They hadn't counted on all the media attention. The last thing they wanted the world to know is that their son was having sex with an adult man." Even after all the years, it still stung a bit to admit that.

"I still don't get it. Not about them calling the authorities in the first place, since I think they did the right thing with that. He should have never been with a minor. What confuses me is them wanting to hide it. They should have fought to the end to get justice for you."

"Like I said, my dad didn't want everyone to think he had a gay son," Matt replied, the words leaving a nasty taste in his mouth.

"So you spent the past twelve years trying to prove that you're straight," James surmised.

"Hey, I happen to like being with women," Matt protested. He did, too. Until a certain dark-haired nurse had to invade his thoughts and muck everything up.

"But you also wouldn't mind being with Lucas," James pointed out.

Matt hesitated, heart pounding so hard it felt nearly painful. Then realizing he couldn't hide the truth from himself or James anymore, he gave a curt nod. "I don't know how I should deal with it either."

"If you want my honest opinion, I don't know if acting on your feelings would do you or Lucas any good."

Surprised, Matt shot James a quick glance. That had been the last thing he expected his friend to say. "Why not?"

James paused and it appeared like he was weighing his words. "Lucas has been hurt before and I'd hate to see it happen again."

"Why do you assume I'd break his heart?" Matt asked, more than a little offended. Sure, he may have a reputation for sleeping around, but he'd never been a jerk about it.

"I can tell Lucas likes you a lot. If you just sleep with him to satisfy your curiosity, it'll kill him to see you move on to someone else."

"And what makes you think that will happen?" Matt demanded sharply.

James leveled him with a knowing glare. "Are you going to tell me that you see yourself in a long-term relationship with another man?"

All the air seemed to be sucked out of the rig as Matt battled with that question. Thankfully, he was saved from answering that when they pulled up to the nursing home.

* * * *

Lucas downed a shot of vodka, shivering at the burn before he washed away the taste by sucking on a sugar-coated lemon. Even before he pulled the fruit from his lips, he waved at the waitress to let her know he needed another shot.

"Don't you think that maybe you should slow down a bit?" Jessie asked.

Lucas glanced over at this friend and fought back a snort of disgust. With his boy-next-door blond hair and dimples, he looked positively adorable as he snuggled closer to his boyfriend, Randal. But then again, Jessie had every right to look happy. Randal was built like a brick house and had the whole dark, dangerous and gorgeous thing down pat. Lucas would be all smiles, too, if he had the honor of curling around someone every night who looked half as delicious as Randal.

Not that Lucas begrudged Jessie's happiness. After the crappy childhood his friend had suffered through, he deserved to find the love of his life. Lucas just wished he could have a little piece of that kind of joy himself. "Since I fully intend on getting as shit-faced as possible, why would I want to slow down?" he challenged before glancing around to see if the waitress was fetching the requested liquor.

Randal and Jessie exchanged worried glances before Jessie said, "Don't you want to at least wait until the others get here?"

"Who's supposed to be coming?" Lucas nearly let out a whoop of joy when the waitress carried over his refill.

"James, Calvin and Matt."

"Crap, I better get a double then," Lucas responded and then moaned, remembering how he'd made an ass out of himself earlier.

"Why?" Jessie exchanged another one of those glances with Randal.

"I may have accidentally made a pass at Matt today," Lucas admitted, a heat coming over his face. He expected some sympathy, maybe even some encouraging words. What he got was Jessie and Randal bursting into laughter. Lucas stared, gape jawed in outrage as the pair cracked up so hard they got tears in their eyes. "Thanks for the support," he snapped.

"I'm sorry," Jessie said between gasps of mirth. "It's just usually Matt who's the aggressor. I would have paid a hundred dollars to have seen the look on his face once he realized that he was the prey for once."

"How did he react?" Randal asked.

Lucas took the drink from the waitress before he answered, "He didn't get pissed or anything. Although I wouldn't be shocked if he's a no-show tonight. He probably wants to be as far away from me as possible."

James and Calvin chose that moment to arrive. As they got settled into chairs, Lucas downed his shot, once again following it with a sugar-coated lemon. The alcohol finally began to have the desired effect as a warm buzz settled over his body. He raised his hand to signal for another, but Jessie reached out and jerked Lucas's arm back down.

"At least take a breather in between," Jessie advised.

"Is Matt still coming?" Randal asked James.

"Yeah, he pulled up after us so he should be walking in any second." For some reason, James stared at Lucas when he answered.

Lucas looked away so he could check out the entrance. A few seconds later, the door swung open and Matt came in. Even though he knew he was gawking like some groupie, Lucas couldn't tear his gaze away. Damn, that man was a living, breathing sex fantasy. He had on a pair of tight blue jeans that molded perfectly to his muscular legs and a dark blue shirt that brought out the color of his eyes flawlessly. His blond hair was swept back off his face and Lucas had the insane desire to run his fingers through it. Just enough to mess it up a bit.

Lucas ran his tongue over his lips, tasting the sweet, lemon tang that still lingered there. That led him to wonder what Matt would taste like. How it would feel to run his tongue over this man's tone chest before he moved lower to suck him off.

He was so caught up in his lust-filled thoughts, Lucas didn't realize someone was talking to him until Jessie kicked him under the table. Jerking, Lucas returned his attention to the group. "I'm sorry, did I miss something?"

"Yeah, I was wondering if you ate anything today," Calvin stated as he eyed up the line of empty shot glasses.

"Just the cake from earlier," Lucas admitted. He'd been too upset to be able to stomach more than that.

Calvin waved the waitress over and put in an order for some appetizers. At that same moment, Matt reached the table. Since the waitress was all blonde hair and

boobs, Lucas expected the medic to immediately start flirting. Instead, he came over and playfully ruffled Lucas's hair.

"How's the birthday boy," Matt teased as he took the seat next to Lucas.

"Just peachy," Lucas replied, feeling awkward after the encounter in the hall.

"Ouch." Matt gave an exaggerated wince. "Usually when people say they're *just peachy*, it means they're not having a good day. Here, maybe this will cheer you up."

He plunked a wrapped package down in front of Lucas. At first, Lucas just blinked stupidly at it since he hadn't realized Matt had been carrying a gift until just then. To be fair, Lucas had been way too busy checking out the rest of Matt's body to notice the man's hands. Lucas touched the elaborate, red ribbon before he moved on to caress the thick, heavily embossed, blue wrapping paper. "Which one of your girlfriends did you get to wrap this?" he asked, trying hard to keep his voice light.

"I did it myself." Matt's lips twisted into a wry smile. "Well, maybe I had some help from the lady at the *Hallmark* store, but she's old enough to be my grandmother."

Lucas would be willing to bet Granny fawned all over Matt, however. All females, be they elderly or young, seemed to always throw themselves at the sexy medic.

Matt tapped the gift, a slightly amused look on his face. "Are you going to open it or not?"

Lucas nodded, feeling even more self-conscious as he pulled the heavy, box-shaped, gift closer. Carefully peeling away the bow and wrapping, he let out a small gasp. "You got me the complete set of all the seasons of *Torchwood*."

Stunned to the point of numbness, Lucas lovingly caressed the boxed set. He'd been dying to buy it for himself for a while, but hadn't been able to justify the expense. With his student loan payments and other various bills, he didn't have much free income to play around with.

"Do you like it?" Matt asked in a tone that could have been called earnest. "I hear you talking about that show all the time. Jessie said you always have to rent it from *Netflix* because you don't own a copy."

"I love it," Lucas confessed in a near whisper, still in awe that Matt had given him such a thoughtful gift. "Thank you so much. It must have cost a lot though."

"You're worth it." Matt shrugged as he got a slight flush to his cheeks.

That stunned Lucas even further. In all the time he'd known Matt, the man had never shown anything but the same carefree, in-your-face attitude. Rarely had he shown a sensitive side and he'd most certainly never shown any bashfulness.

"Did you get him a card, too?" James asked Matt.

Lucas grew confused when he noted that James was giving his friend a secretive smirk.

"Nah, I couldn't find one that said, *So I hear you hate it's your birthday*," Matt shot back.

Lucas finally noticed the rest of the table had grown silent as they stared at him and Matt as if they were some sort of exotic creatures. Now it was his turn to blush as a warm heat came over his cheeks. He realized he'd probably come across like yet another one of Matt's groupies by nearly swooning over the gift. It was just DVD's for cripes sake. It's not as if Matt got him a promise ring or anything.

The waitress came over with the food and she also brought Lucas another shot. He took it gratefully and downed it in one throat-burning gulp. He had a sinking feeling that he was in for a long night and would need all the liquid encouragement he could swallow to get through it.

Chapter Three

Two hours later, Matt shook his head as he watched the waitress stack all the empty shot glasses and lemon rinds on her tray. How in the hell someone as small as Lucas managed to consume so much vodka and still remain standing was a miracle. "Can you do me a favor and not serve him anymore tonight?" Matt asked the waitress.

She glanced over to the dance floor where Lucas was doing his own drunken rendition of the *Hustle*. "Yeah, I think that might be a good idea," she agreed with a wry twist of her lips.

Once she'd left, Matt looked at the others at the table. All of them had identical looks of horror on their faces as they watched Lucas tear up the dance floor. Or maybe a better term would be *disgraced* the dance floor. Lucas's skills left a lot to be desired. While he'd always seemed graceful when he walked around the hospital, tonight he appeared to be all limbs and bad rhythm.

"What move is he doing now?" James asked, his eyes wide in terror.

"I think it's the *Cabbage Patch*," Calvin replied dryly before he took a drink of his soda.

"Does someone want to tell me why he's been so depressed today?" Matt demanded. "I've seen some people get upset about being a year older, but never this much."

Jessie exchanged looks with Randal before the blond man leaned forward and said, "Lucas isn't upset about his birthday. Something else happened on June first a couple years ago."

Matt's gaze darted back over to Lucas who was currently doing *The Sprinkler*, his arm nearly clocking a nearby woman on the head. A small crowd had gathered and was cheering him on. Matt recognized several staff members from St. Michael's in the group. Poor Lucas was never going to live this down. "What could have happened to make him so sad?" Matt wondered aloud, his chest aching at the thought of Lucas suffering in any way.

"He got into a huge fight with his dad and brothers over him being gay. I guess it was so bad that they still aren't talking," Randal said, his jaw clenching in a hard line.

"Not only that, but later on that same day, Lucas's long-time boyfriend dumped him," Jessie added.

Lucas switched to the *Lawnmower*. Matt swallowed against a suddenly dry throat. While Lucas's technique still left much to be desired, the dance move still made his ass shake in the sexist ways.

Matt grew hard as he imagined running his hands over those tight buns. At the same time, he wondered how any man in his right mind could give up a sweet thing like Lucas. "What kind of idiot would let someone as great as Lucas go?" Matt wondered aloud. That comment earned him a few more curious stares, but Matt was beyond caring at that point. After hearing about how much hurt Lucas had suffered, all he worried about at that moment was trying to find a way to make him feel better.

Then Lucas started to do the zombie dance from the *Thriller* video and everyone let out a groan of dismay.

"I think we need to get him home." Jessie visibly cringed when Lucas tried to do the *Moonwalk*.

"I'll drive him," Matt offered, already getting to his feet.

"Are you sure that's a good idea?" James cut in, his face etched with worry.

"Sure, I haven't had anything to drink tonight," Matt replied, deliberately misunderstanding.

"You know what I mean," James persisted, his voice edged with disapproval.

"I'm just giving a friend a ride home. That's all." However, even as Matt spoke those words, he knew it was a big, fat lie. The feelings he had for Lucas had not been on the friend level for a long time. Still, it wasn't as if anything was going to happen sexually. Not with Lucas being so drunk.

Before there could be any further argument, Matt started for the dance floor. The crowd of spectators had grown so loud that Lucas didn't notice him until Matt tapped on his shoulder.

Lucas turned and gave him a sloppy smile that still managed to be cute. "Matty, you came to dance with me!"

"No, I came to take you home," Matt announced as he shot the pack a voyeurs a scathing look.

"But I don't want to leave. I'm having fun with all my friends." Lucas went to make a sweeping motion of his hand, but instead staggered and almost lost his balance.

Matt reached out to steady him. "I'm sure they'll understand if you left."

Lucas seemed to consider it for a moment before he shook his head. "Nah, I think I'll stay for a while. I just put in a request with the DJ for him to play the *Macarena* and I don't want to miss it."

Matt sighed. Lucas *would* have to make this hard. "Last chance, either you walk out with me now, or I carry you over my shoulder. Choice is yours," Matt threatened.

Lucas had the gall to grin as he gave off an oh-well shrug.

Matt didn't know whether to get mad or crack up. In the end, he settled for grabbing Lucas by the waist. Before Lucas had a chance to fight, Matt hoisted the smaller man over his shoulder, fireman style. Turning to the crowd, Matt shot off a sarcastic, "Sorry, but tonight's entertainment is over. If I don't stop him now, he may attempt to do the *Tango* next and nobody wants to see that."

"I do," Lucas replied, his voice muffled against Matt's back.

Matt smacked Lucas on the ass. "Be good, birthday boy."

"Buzzkill," Lucas grumbled in a slurred voice.

Matt pushed his way through the disappointed group and started to walk out of the bar. "Yup, that's my official middle name. I even have a driver's license to prove it."

"Really?"

"Let's just get you home and into bed," Matt sighed, realizing he had a long car ride ahead of him. He just hoped Lucas didn't puke on the way there.

"Hey, did you hear that bitches?" Lucas crowed to the audience. "You can gawk at him all you want, but it's me he's taking to bed tonight." Lucas punctuated his declaration by another wide sweep of his arms.

Unprepared for the movement, Matt almost dropped him. As he walked outside, any hopes of the fresh air sobering up Lucas fled.

"You have a really nice ass, but why is it upside down?"

"Because we're in Australia," Matt snarked, wishing he'd thought ahead to video this whole episode so they could all see the look on Lucas's face as he watched it.

"Oh, okay," Lucas accepted in a way only a drunk could.

Matt made it halfway across the parking lot before he felt two hands caressing his ass.

"I mean it, Matt. You're a fucking work of art," Lucas whispered as he splayed his fingers out over Matt's butt cheeks.

Matt stumbled again, but this time it was because of the blinding desire that shot through his body. His cock swelled to life as he let out a small groan. He didn't know if it was Lucas's touch, or raw sexuality to his statement. All he knew for sure was that if they had been alone or if Lucas had been sober, nothing would have stopped Matt from pinning down the smaller man and fucking him into oblivion.

Once Matt reached the car, he needed to get the keys out of his front pocket so he had no choice but to put Lucas down. Matt bit back a moan of pleasure as Lucas's lithe form slid down his body, the friction making his cock jerk in reaction. Once his tennis shoes hit the pea gravel, Lucas rested his forehead on Matt's shoulder.

"You always smell so good. Like warm rain." Lucas made a loud sniffing sound.

Matt paused, keys halfway to the lock. "What in the hell does warm rain smell like?"

"Fresh...masculine...like spring mixed in with sex." Lucas sighed before he turned his face to the side.

Matt jerked in surprise when he felt the sensual feathering of lips pressed to his neck. "What are you doing?"

Lucas pulled back, his body slamming into the car. His eyes grew wide as he let out a small sound of distress. "Oh crap! There I go making an ass out of myself again. I'm so sorry."

"You have nothing to apologize for," Matt murmured as he reached up to touch the still tingling skin.

Lucas let out a long moan and he ran a hand through his hair. "Yes, I do. First, I come on to you at the hospital and then I do it again, tonight. You must hate me."

He grabbed Lucas by the back of the neck. "Lucas, don't you know that I could never hate you?"

Lucas gave a lopsided grin that never reached his glass-eyed gaze. "Maybe not, but I'll always be some annoying, little pest who has a stupid puppy dog crush on you."

Matt couldn't have been more stunned. Didn't Lucas realize how attractive he was? Matt constantly caught people of both sexes checking out the sexy, dark-haired nurse. What could have possibly happened to make him so blind to that fact? Since he didn't dare speak those thoughts aloud, Matt decided to show Lucas another way. Dipping his head down, he brushed his lips over Lucas's mouth.

Lucas let out a small gasp before he whispered, "Matt, you do realize that it's me you're kissing?"

Matt chuckled before he licked Lucas's bottom lip. He tasted the vodka and sugar Lucas had been downing all night. "Yeah, I'm well aware of who I'm with."

"But--"

Matt cut him off with a hard, demanding kiss. At first, Lucas stiffened and Matt worried he'd pushed things too far. Then Lucas let out long moan before he started to return the passion in earnest, his tongue sliding into Matt's mouth.

A low growl rumbled in Matt's chest as he pinned Lucas tight against the car. He thrust his own tongue out to meet Lucas's caresses as the passion between them reached a level Matt had never dreamed possible. If he got this jacked up over a simple kiss, how good would it be once he got Lucas naked and between the sheets?

Fuck! I'm kissing another guy and I actually like it. Hell, I more than like it. This could be addicting. A small sane part of Matt remained and let him know that it was probably because it was Lucas and not just anyone. For the first time, Matt finally and fully admitted to himself that he'd been attracted to Lucas for a while now and that his need wouldn't be sated until they made love.

Still, it felt strange to have a hard body pressed against him instead of the usually, soft curves of a woman...to have another man's erect cock push against his hip. It seemed like forever ago that he'd had that adolescent affair. It was almost as if everything were new to him.

Matt knocked that thought away. This wasn't like before because this was Lucas and what they were doing wasn't dirty and wrong like before. This time, Matt knew, full well, what he was getting into and he planned on enjoying every moment of it.

Lucas started to rock against him, his hard cock grinding against Matt's thigh. "Please, Matty. I need you to fuck me."

Those words hit Matt like a cold splash of water. Damn, he wanted to screw, too, but not while Lucas was drunk. When he finally did get into that sweet ass, he wanted to make sure Lucas was alert enough to totally enjoy it. Matt broke off the kiss. "Not yet, babe."

"Why?" Lucas whined.

Matt smiled. The fact that he'd just pouted like a girl would probably later embarrass Lucas even more than the dancing. He leaned down to give Lucas another kiss, this one more tender than before. "Because when I do make love to you, I want you to remember every second of it."

"You're just saying that to let me down easy, aren't you?" Lucas sighed.

Matt took Lucas's hand and pressed it against his aching cock. "Does this let you know how much I want you?"

"Damn," Lucas whimpered, a soft shudder going through his body. "You're huge. I was right when I said you're a work of art."

A group of people walked out of the bar, their loud chatter breaking up the moment. Matt forced himself to step back and open the car door. "Let's get you home."

After he got Lucas in and buckled in, Matt went over and jumped into the driver's seat. As he started up the ignition, he glanced over at Lucas. "If you have to puke, do me a favor and give me a warning so I can pull over."

Lucas gave a sloppy dismissive wave. "I'm not that drunk."

"Yeah, because it's normal for sober people to do the *Running Man* in the middle of a crowded dance floor," Matt snorted as he started the car and pulled out.

"How do you know that name of the dance?" Lucas asked, his voice getting sleepy as he rested his cheek against the window.

"I had a younger sister who was on a competition dance team. I used to get dragged to all her events."

That was the last of the conversation as Lucas fell asleep. He didn't move for the rest of the ride and barely woke up enough for Matt to drag him inside. Luckily, Matt knew his way around because he'd been over to Lucas's apartment once before when the man had thrown a Halloween party.

He half-carried Lucas into his bedroom and eased him back on the mattress. "Give me a second and I'll be back with some water. You need to keep hydrated or you're going to be suffering even more in the morning."

Lucas muttered something that may have been an agreement before he rolled onto his side and tucked his knees to his chest.

Matt paused for a second, taking in the way Lucas's dark lashes fanned his flushed cheeks and how his lips parted ever so slightly. Even drunk off his ass, Lucas still had an innocent, yet sexy, appeal that drew Matt in. *Lucas* was the true work of art as far as Matt was concerned. Tearing himself away from the sight, Matt went into the kitchen, got a water from the fridge and grabbed a bottle of pain reliever from the bathroom. He had no doubt Lucas would need it in the morning. He went back into the bedroom and found Lucas in the same position. Matt sat on the edge of the mattress and gently shook his shoulder. "Wake up and drink some water for me."

Lucas grumbled, but after a few more minutes of coaxing, sat up and drank a couple swallows of the water. Once he'd finished, he gazed up at Matt. "Stay with me tonight."

"I don't know if that's such a good idea," Matt hedged. This had to be a first--him refusing to stay the night with someone.

"Please." Lucas's eyes grew so beseeching that Matt knew he was powerless to refuse.

"I'll have to leave early because I have a shift tomorrow," he agreed, already kicking off his shoes.

"Thanks. I just don't want to be alone tonight."

Lucas's voice hitched a bit and Matt didn't know for sure if it was from being drunk or from some other emotion. God, the thought of Lucas sinking under that same despair he'd suffered from earlier made Matt's heart nearly break. "He was a fool for giving you up." He cupped Lucas's cheek.

"So, Jessie told you about that?"

"Yeah, I asked him why you were so upset and he spilled. I hope you don't mind."

Lucas's eyes welled up as he shook his head. "It's probably best that you knew. Do you want to know why he dumped me?"

"Why?" Matt asked, sweeping the pad of his thumb over Lucas's cheek to catch a tear.

"I pushed him to make our relationship open. He freaked out. Then he said that only f--" Lucas took in a hiccupping breath, "only fags go out in public together. That what we did was just a way for us to get off and nothing more."

"That's crazy, and he didn't deserve you," Matt soothed, desperate to make Lucas feel better.

"I kept fighting the issue, even though I knew better than to make him angry." Lucas sobbed, the tears falling freely now.

At that sentence, Matt's heart thudded in dread. He'd heard those words coming from emergency calls countless times and it had always been in domestic violence cases. "Did he hurt you?"

Lucas didn't say anything, just nodded and closed his eyes.

But not before Matt saw the shame etched there. Matt had never been a violent person, but at that moment, he could have murdered Lucas's old boyfriend. Knowing that was probably the last thing Lucas needed to hear, Matt instead reached out for him. Wrapping his arms around Lucas's waist, Matt pulled the smaller man in. He didn't stop until Lucas was halfway on his lap.

With a shuddering sigh, Lucas buried his face into Matt's chest. Even after Lucas's breathing had evened out as he fell asleep, Matt still held him.

Chapter Four

Lucas woke up and tensed as he made a quick inventory of his body. He had a slight headache, but not too painful to be non-functioning. While his stomach felt a little queasy, it wasn't to the point where he'd be kissing the Porcelain God. He let out a sigh of relief as he realized he survived his drinking binge relatively unscathed. While he'd been fortunate enough to never have suffered through a hangover before, he'd never quite drank as much as he had last night.

As he sat up, he did a mental replay of all his activity the night before. He recalled Matt coming in, them talking and the very thoughtful gift. Then there had been more shots and...dear God above...some horrible dancing. Lucas moaned as he buried his face in his hands.

A noise came from his kitchen and Lucas straightened with a gasp. Matt! He'd driven Lucas home last night. A heat came to Lucas's face as he recalled how he'd thrown himself at Matt. Not only that, but he'd begged Matt to stay and comfort him. Fuck, he'd even cried like some pig-tailed nancy.

Lucas also recalled some...kissing? Crap, had he actually kissed Matt? Shit, not good. But wait, was it just wishful thinking or had Matt actually kissed him back? Lucas could have sworn that Matt's tongue had been doing just as much exploring. Not only that, but Matt had even mentioned wanting to fuck at some point. Had Matt really meant it or was it just his way of placating the slobbering drunk? Or worse, what if it had all been some sick game? What if Matt was only sticking around long enough to laugh in his face and tell Lucas to stay the hell away from him?

It took every ounce of courage Lucas possessed to make himself walk out of the bedroom. When he saw it was Jessie instead of Matt, Lucas felt a profound sense of relief and strangely enough, disappointment.

It must have shown on his face because Jessie immediately said, "Matt had to go into work this morning, so he called and asked me to come over and check up on you."

"He did?" Lucas smiled, a warm feeling settling in his stomach. That must mean that Matt wasn't mad. Usually, people don't send over nursemaids to someone they're pissed at.

"Yeah, I tried to tell him that you never get hangovers, but he insisted." Jessie made a big show of rolling his eyes, but his lips curled up in a smile.

"Did he really?" Lucas couldn't resist asking as he went over and poured himself a cup of coffee.

"Yeah, he even left a note for you."

Lucas glanced over at the table and saw a folded piece of paper with his name scrawled on the outside. Next to it was the boxed set of DVD's that Matt had bought for him. He shuffled over and picked up the note, but didn't open it, yet.

"I drove your car here in case you had to work today," Jessie said as he put some bread into the toaster.

"Thanks, I do have to go in, but I switched with Sally to take the midnight shift." That had been the only reason Lucas had let himself get drunk the previous night.

Jessie wrinkled his nose. "Doesn't that mean you'll have to pull a double since you're scheduled to work tomorrow morning, too?"

Lucas wearily nodded as he finally opened the note. He smiled as soon as he saw Matt's sloppy handwriting.

Sorry to take off on you, but I had to go to work. I would have called in, but James whines so much whenever he gets stuck with a substitute partner. You were a great snuggle buddy last night, even if you do snore. Give me a call. I want to see you again.

Matt

A sense of relief and excitement went through Lucas. Not only had Matt not seemed disgusted with the whole tears and babble show, but he wanted to see Lucas again. He folded the note and set it down next to the DVD's.

"So what happened after he took you home last night?" Jessie asked as he carried over the toast to Lucas.

Lucas didn't know how much he was ready to share, so he decided to distract Jessie. "Did I really make an ass out of myself on the dance floor?"

Jessie bit his bottom lip, almost as if he were holding back laughter before he said, "You did the *Worm*. Does that answer your question?"

"Oh, my God. Did I really?" Lucas scrambled to remember exactly what kinds of dances he'd done and most of what he recalled wasn't pretty.

"Well, you mostly just laid on the floor and wiggled some. But you were screaming, *I'm doing the Worm! I'm doing the Worm!* So, we all knew your intent."

"Damn." Lucas held a hand to his stomach as he realized he'd have to go into work and face a whole bunch of people who had witnessed that.

Jessie cocked his head to side. "Actually, it looked more like the *Slug* to me, but I don't think they have a dance move called that."

"Damn," Lucas repeated, sinking even lower.

"Just think, you invented a new dance step last night. How cool is that?" Jessie beamed at him.

"Oh, that's just wonderful. Too bad I don't still have my baby book so I could mark down this life changing milestone," Lucas returned tartly.

Jessie ignored the barb and nudged the plate closer. "Start eating, and while you're at it, you can answer the question you've been avoiding."

"What one is that?" Lucas blinked innocently as he took a bite.

"Why the straight as an arrow Matt spent half the night asking about you and the other half eyeing you up like you were his next conquest."

Lucas's gut clenched at the reminder of Matt's sexual orientation. "He was just looking out for a friend."

"Uh, huh." Jessie looked pointedly at the DVD's. "Because he always puts that much thought into his friends' gifts."

"That doesn't mean anything."

Jessie snorted. "You want to know what he got me for *my* birthday? A twenty dollar gift card and a *Shrek* drinking glass from *McDonalds*."

Yeah, he could see Matt doing that. "We kissed," Lucas confessed as he nervously crumbled his toast.

"I knew it!" Jessie declared, his eyes wide.

"But that's all we did. It wasn't because of me either. I all but begged him to fuck me, but Matt said he didn't want to do it while I was drunk."

"That makes sense."

Lucas took a deep breath before he confessed his biggest concern. "What if that wasn't the real reason though? For all I know, Matt could have just been experimenting to see what it felt like to kiss a guy."

Jessie gave an adamant shake of his head. "I don't think so. You should have seen the way he was looking at you last night."

"But you said yourself, he's straight," Lucas argued as he thought about all the countless times he'd witnessed Matt flirting with woman. God, it made Lucas nearly sick with jealousy to think of anyone being on the receiving side of Matt's signature sexy smile.

"So, what are you going to do?" Jessie asked.

Shit, if that wasn't the question of the day? Lucas sighed. "I honestly don't know."

After a long nap and several mind-numbing hours of TV, Lucas still wasn't any closer to an answer. Several times, he picked up his cell and started to dial Matt's number. Every single time, Lucas chickened out before he could finish punching in all the numbers.

Before he knew it, it was time to go into work. Lucas got into his scrubs and made the short drive to the hospital, his mind working overtime the entire way. He

was finally willing to admit to himself that he liked Matt. On the other hand, Lucas wasn't willing to become some *straight* guy's dirty secret again either. Nor did Lucas see Matt giving up his playboy status anytime soon.

Thankfully, once he got into the ER, he didn't have too much time to dwell over his problem because they were busy. Not only was there a multi-vehicle accident, but there had also been an outbreak of the flu, so the hospital had more than its share of patients.

In between, Lucas had to listen to an endless stream of smartass remarks about his dance skills. One of the nurses even bought him a pair of legwarmers as a joke. It really didn't bother him too much because he knew they all meant it in a lighthearted manner. He even vowed to himself that he'd find a way to work the legwarmers into his next Halloween costume.

Before he knew it, the midnight shift had ended and a fresh wave of staff came in to take over. Wishing he didn't have to face another shift, Lucas went back into the break room to grab a cup of coffee. It had slowed down some and the lack of sleep was finally catching up to him.

Taking his drink with him, he went out to one of the nurses' station to finish his charting. He got so caught up in his work that he shut out everything around him.

"I heard you guys had a busy night."

Lucas glanced up and saw James approaching. "Yeah, but it quieted down, finally. Good thing, since I'm working a double and I'm beat." Then it hit him. If James were here that would only stand to reason that...

"Yeah, Matt's here, too," James said, almost as if he could hear Lucas's thoughts.

"Damn." Lucas abandoned his chart and started to beat a path down the corridor. He needed to find something to keep him busy and out a sight, pronto.

"You know it won't help to run away. It's just a turn on because he loves the thrill of a good hunt," James sang out way too cheerfully.

Lucas turned around to shoot off a dirty look, but got caught up short when he ran into something hard, warm and oh-so-good smelling. Finding himself face first in a dark blue uniform top, Lucas immediately knew the identity of the brick wall. Letting out a gasp of fear, he slowly looked up and found himself locked into Matt's intense gaze.

"Going somewhere?" Matt's lips curled up into a brittle smile

"Yeah, I just had to go do this thing." Lucas pointed lamely in no particular direction.

"It can wait. We need to talk."

Before Lucas could argue, Matt grabbed him by the arm and practically dragged him into a nearby room. Lucas didn't even bother to fight, not wanting to make a scene. He did have a sense of relief when he realized it was the family consultation suite and not the *urine room*. The setting was far more intimate with big fluffy brown couches, several framed paintings and a tan carpet. It even had a small private bathroom off to the side. Most importantly, it didn't stink like piss and stale food. "What the hell?" Lucas demanded once Matt had locked the door.

Matt stalked over and pinned Lucas to wall. Putting a hand on either side of Lucas's head, Matt leaned in until their faces were inches apart. "Why haven't you called me?"

Lucas almost winced until he realized Matt didn't appear angry. Sure, he acted upset, maybe even a little hurt, but there was no rage in his blue eyes. "I didn't know for sure if you really wanted me to," Lucas admitted as he licked his dry lips. A shiver went through him as he watched Matt's gaze track the movement. Embolden, Lucas did it again, this time letting his tongue make a slow lazy path. Matt took in a sharp breath as he leaned in closer, the hard length of his cock pressing into Lucas's stomach.

"Didn't I tell you to call me in the note I left?" Matt fanned the pad of his thumb over Lucas's bottom lip.

"Yeah, but a part of me worried that you just wrote that to let me down easy." Lucas gave Matt's thumb a love bite. Unlike before, there was no shame in the act. As soon as he tasted the salty tang of Matt's skin, Lucas let out a moan as his own cock swelled to life.

"Look, I'm not going to lie to you and say this has been easy for me. I've never been attracted to a guy like I have been to you. All I do know is that the other night when I slept with you wrapped in my arms, it felt so right," Matt declared, the hard lines on his face softening.

"I can't go through another relationship where I'm someone's shameful secret," Lucas argued, even as his body screamed, *Yes! Yes! Yes!*

"Oh, babe, I would never ask you to do that. I'm through with caring what others think of me."

God, Lucas wanted to believe that, he really, really did. However, the past hurts still left him doubtful. "You say that now, but you'll change your mind."

"I'm not your ex-boyfriend, Lucas. Please, just give me a chance to prove that," Matt beseeched.

Lucas still hesitated.

Matt added another, "Please?"

Even though he realized it could be one of the biggest mistakes in his life, Lucas nodded before he tilted his head up. Matt moaned low in his throat before he captured Lucas's mouth in a hot, carnal kiss. Lucas slid his tongue out, licking the seam of Matt's lips. A thrill went through Lucas when Matt opened for him. Lucas stroked the inside of his mouth, tasting peppermint. His head spun and his only coherent thought was *thank God this room doesn't have any windows*. Lucas threaded his fingers through Matt's hair and sucked in the medic's bottom lip.

"You're a fucking addiction I don't want to shake," Matt whispered against Lucas's mouth.

Lucas let out a small whimper, the sheer sensuality of Matt's voice nearly pushing him over the edge.

Matt pulled back, his lips curling into a wicked smile as he reached down and cupped Lucas's cock. "I've been wondering for weeks what this tastes like," Matt said as he gave Lucas a gentle squeeze.

"You can find out if you like," Lucas replied as he resisted the urge to thrust into Matt's fingers.

Matt shocked him by dropping to his knees. Lucas let out another embarrassing whimper as he gazed down. "I didn't mean right now."

"Why not?" Matt eyes grew stormy with desire and he started to undo the ties of Lucas's scrub pants.

Lucas made a half-hearted attempt to bat Matt's hands away. "Because we're both working."

"Then I better be quick." Matt lowered Lucas's bottoms and underwear.

A jolt of adrenaline went through Lucas as his cock sprang free. He'd always had a little bit of an exhibition side to him. The fact that the hottest medic in all of

Genesee County was getting ready to suck him off while they were surrounded by others, threatened to throw Lucas to the edge. Matt's tongue darted out to caress the head of Lucas's dick. Lucas threw his head back, a hiss of pleasure escaping his lips.

"Do you still want me to stop?" Matt asked, a triumphant gleam in his eyes. Even though he was the one on his knees, they both damn well knew he'd won this round.

"No, I want you to suck me raw."

Matt grinned, showing off the sexiest set of dimples. "I just knew you'd talked dirty in bed."

Lucas answered by putting his hand on the back of Matt's head and pushing forward to urge him on. Matt obeyed, his hot lips wrapping around Lucas's shaft. At first, Matt's movements were hesitant and clumsy, but after a while, he managed to get some semblance of a rhythm. Not that Lucas gave a damn. Good technique--or bad--all that mattered was that he was actually getting a blowjob from Matt. It was Lucas's favorite wet dream come true.

"That's it. Take it all in," Lucas crooned as Matt sucked in hard.

Already, Lucas could feel the tingle at the base of his spine that let him know he wasn't going to last much longer--which was probably a good thing since they were in a very public building. Lucas fisted his fingers through Matt's hair and started to thrust in and out of the man's hot mouth.

Matt ran the flat of his tongue on the underside of Lucas's cock, his throat closing in a bit as he swallowed. That move finally shredded the last bit of Lucas's self-control. "You better pull back. I'm getting ready to come."

Matt shook his head as he continued to suck Lucas to release. After a few more passes, Lucas's balls tightened up right before he shot off into Matt's mouth.

At first, Matt seemed to have trouble. He even jerked in surprise as he gagged a bit. Soon enough, he caught on and began to drink in Lucas's cum.

The entire time, Lucas rubbed Matt's head and crooned words of encouragement.

After it was over, Matt stayed on the ground for a few moments before he stood back up. Lucas pulled his scrubs back up. His hands trembled a bit as he redid the ties, but he figured he was due for some shakes after the mind-blowing orgasm

he'd just experienced. "You didn't have to do that," he said, his voice just as unsteady as his hands.

Matt leaned in and kissed him. When he plunged his tongue inside Lucas's mouth, the salty, tang of cum still clung to the medic's lips. For some reason, that totally turned Lucas on. Eager for more, he sucked Matt's tongue in deeper. He could have gone on tasting Matt's mouth all day. Since they did have to breathe, the kiss eventually had to come to an end, however. Matt gazed down and Lucas's stomach flipped at the tenderness in the man's eyes.

"It was no problem. I'm willing to bet I even enjoyed it more than you did," Matt said as he ran a tongue over his swollen lips.

Lucas blushed as he realized all James would have to do is look at his partner and he'd know what they'd been up to, too. "I should get going before they send out a search and rescue team for me." Lucas felt so reluctant to leave though.

"What time do you get off today?"

"A little after three. How about you?"

"Four. Why don't I pick up some dinner and bring it over to your place?" Matt asked, hopeful.

"That sounds great." Lucas's body tingled in anticipation of spending some quality time with Matt. All of the sudden, the weariness left his body and he felt so high, he may have well drunk a dozen cups of coffee.

Chapter Five

By the time Matt got off work and went home to change, he didn't get to Lucas's until nearly six. As he knocked on the door, Matt felt more nervous than he had before on any other date. He even had a full set of butterflies dancing in his stomach. It wasn't because this was his first official date with a man either, but because he cared more for Lucas's than anyone before. Somehow, somehow, the nurse had fully wormed his way into Matt's heart and now nobody else could ever begin to compare.

Lucas answered the door seconds after Matt knocked. "Hey, you finally got here. I was beginning to worry you got tied up at a long call or something."

"Nah, I just wanted to shower first." Matt noticed that Lucas had showered, too. Not only was he in jeans and a red t-shirt now, but his dark hair was slicked back from being wet. As Matt walked by him to go inside, he detected a fresh, soapy scent coming from Lucas.

"What did you bring for dinner?" Lucas asked as he shut the door.

"I stopped by and got some subs from *Big John's*. You still like the chicken philly from there, right?"

Lucas nearly bowled him over as he swooped in for the bag. "Are you kidding? If I were on death row, I would request it for my last meal."

"Michigan doesn't have the death penalty." Matt held the bag back slightly so Lucas would have to lean closer to get his prey. As soon as Lucas moved in, Matt stole a quick kiss.

"That's playing dirty," Lucas accused, a pleased blush on his cheeks.

"I can't help it. I just want to touch you all the time."

"Dinner first." Lucas finally snagged the bag from Matt. "We have all night for fun."

Matt followed him into the kitchen and leaned against the counter as he watched Lucas move around the kitchen, getting utensils and drinks. The entire time, Matt admired the way Lucas's ass moved under his tight jeans.

"Do you want to eat this in the living room while we watch the DVDs you got me?" Lucas asked.

Although Matt just wanted to go straight to the bedroom and learn every inch of Lucas's body, he agreed. They got settled on Lucas's couch in front of the TV.

Matt had never seen *Torchwood* before, but he found himself enjoying it. Sure, the special affects sometimes weren't the best, but the story lines proved to be addicting.

After they finished eating, they continued to veg out. Lucas seemed really tired, so Matt wasn't overly surprised when he laid down on his side. He used Matt's lap for a pillow, allowing Matt to spend the next hour caressing Lucas's hair.

Lucas had grown so still that Matt thought he might have fallen asleep. Not that he could begrudge the nurse since he'd just worked a double. Matt got ready to shake him awake so he could move Lucas into the more comfortable bed. Just as his hand started to move, Lucas turned his head and started to nuzzle Matt's cock.

Desire shot through Matt at the sight of Lucas's mouth nipping at the fly of his jeans. Even though a thick layer of denim separated him from Lucas's sweet lips, it still felt hot and decadent.

"Please," Matt moaned, not entirely sure what he was begging for.

"Don't worry, I'll take care of you," Lucas whispered before he shifted some so he had room to slide his hands between them.

Matt sucked in a breath as he felt Lucas undoing his pants. The sound of a rasping zipper filled the room before Lucas reached in and pulled Matt's cock free. As soon as the cool air hit his dick, Matt gripped the edge of the couch cushion and let a moan of approval.

"I knew you'd be perfect," Lucas declared before he slowly ran his tongue up the underside of Matt's shaft.

"Fuck!" Matt cried as he jerked forward.

The corners of Lucas's mouth curled up into a cocky smile. It was obvious, he liked the reaction he'd got out of Matt. Then he gently blew on the tip of Matt's cock. Matt hissed in pleasure as he reached out and palmed the back of Lucas's head.

"Enough playing around. Suck me, hard," Matt ordered in a strained voice as he gave Lucas's hair a not-so-gentle tug.

* * * *

Lucas moaned at the small spike of pain. He'd always enjoyed things a little rough. Scott, his ex-boyfriend, had always told him it was twisted to want sex that way, but Lucas had never been able to shake the urges. It's not like he was into whips and chains or anything. He just didn't mind a bite or a slap here and there.

"You liked that?" Matt asked, but there was no disgust in his voice.

If anything, Lucas would have to say it turned the medic on more. His normally soft blue eyes had grown dark with passion and a slight flush covered his cheeks. Still holding Matt's gaze, Lucas slowly nodded. Matt responded by giving his hair another tug, this one even rougher than before. Lucas moaned as his cock pressed almost painfully against his pants.

"Suck my dick, now," Matt ordered in a hard voice.

Delighted by Matt's willingness to play along, Lucas had to bite the inside of his cheek to stop from smiling. When Matt gave his hair another pull, Lucas let out a whimper of passion, before he parted his lips and slowly sucked in Matt's cock. It wasn't easy since Matt was huge, so it took all of Lucas's talents. He managed by taking in deeps breaths while relaxing his throat muscles.

He whimpered again, no doubt coming across as some dork. Lucas couldn't help himself, however. The warm, velvety sensation of Matt's cock rubbing against his tongue, the musky scent of the man--all of it threatened to overwhelm Lucas. Wanting to add taste to all the sensations, he pulled back enough to collect some of the pre-cum lingering at the tip of Matt's erection. Lucas moaned as soon as the salty, tang of Matt's essence washed over his taste buds.

Lucas was so caught up in the moment, he let out a growl of disappointment when Matt tugged his hair and pulled him back. Matt's cock slid from Lucas's lips with a loud popping sound.

"If I let you keep going, I'm going to come and I'm not ready for things to end just yet," Matt explained.

Lucas nodded in understanding. He scrambled to his feet and held out his hand. "Let me show you where the bedroom is."

Matt reached up, their fingers lacing together. As they walked down the short hall, Lucas heart pounded loudly almost as if saying, *Matt is going to fuck me. This is actually going to happen.*

His bedroom wasn't much. Just a small space, mostly occupied with a large queen-sized bed and matching dresser. At least he'd thought ahead enough to make sure the bed had been made and all his clothes put away. He let go of Matt's hand and rushed over to the dresser. Opening the top drawer, he pulled out a strip of condoms and a bottle of lubricant. With shaking hands, he handed them to Matt. Now that they were about to do this, the nerves had started to settle in. Somehow, Lucas knew this would be big and neither one of them would be the same after.

"Get naked for me," Matt ordered as he started to pull off his own clothing.

Lucas took in a shuddering breath. "Okay."

"Hey, why are you so nervous?" Matt reached out and cupped Lucas's cheek.

"I just can't believe this is really happening. I keep expecting to wake up and find out that it was all some wonderful dream."

Matt leaned in and gave Lucas a soft kiss. Still keeping their lips pressed together, Matt asked, "Does this feel real enough for you?"

Lucas nodded, unable to speak through the emotions clawing at his insides. When he didn't move, Matt started to take over the task of undressing. As he peeled back Lucas's clothing, Matt lips grazed the patches of newly exposed skin.

By the time he was nude, Lucas was trembling, but for a whole different reason. "I need you so bad," he confessed, his voice strained with need.

"You have me," Matt assured as he pulled off the rest of his own clothes.

Once they were both nude, Matt moved back in. His lips seemed to be everywhere at once. First, he went to Lucas's cheek, then to his jaw, before finally trailing down to his neck. Lucas tilted his head back to give Matt more room to work.

Fuck! Matt's mouth was pure talent. He seemed to know when to be gentle, when to give light nips and went to suck hard. Lucas's mind spun so much, he hardly noticed when Matt lowered them to the bed.

"You taste so damn good," Matt crooned as he ran his tongue along Lucas's throat.

"Do you want me to get myself ready?" Lucas asked as he blindly reached for the lube that Matt had tossed on the mattress.

"Don't worry, I've done this before."

Lucas jerked with shock. "You have?"

"Sure, I've just never topped before." Matt grabbed the bottle and squeezed a generous amount of lube on his fingers.

"When did you--" Lucas started to say, but the last of the words came out as a wordless moan. Matt had started to work his finger around the rim of Lucas's ass and it felt too damn good to worry about something as small as having an intelligent conversation.

Matt dipped one finger inside Lucas. "Just like this, right?"

"Yes," Lucas hissed as he writhed under Matt's attentions. A sly grin covered Matt's lips as he added another finger. Lucas closed his eyes against the wonderful, burning sensation. Matt then plunged in a third finger and Lucas lost all control. He started panting as he thrust himself against Matt's hand. "Condom, on, fuck me," Lucas begged, hoping he made enough sense for Matt to know what he wanted.

Matt pulled his fingers out and tore a condom of the strip.

"Let me." Lucas sat up and took the foil package from Matt. Ripping it open, Lucas pulled the condom out. As he rolled it over Matt's thick, length, they both moaned in unison. Once it was in place, Lucas leaned forward and gave Matt's chest a light nip before he tilted his head up to gaze at the man.

"How do you want me?" Lucas asked.

"Just the way you were. I want to see the look on your face when you come."

Lucas sucked in a sharp breath as a fresh wave of desire slammed into him. Just when he thought Matt couldn't be any sexier, he'd been proven wrong when the medic showed off both his tender and dominant side. Lucas eased back and spread his legs out to give Matt plenty of room.

"Just let me know if I hurt you too much," Matt said as he lined the tip of his cock against Lucas's hole.

"Okay."

Even though it was just a one-word reply, it still seemed to placate Matt before he began to push his way in. "Fuck, babe, you're so tight."

"Sorry." Lucas took a deep breath and forced his body to yield.

"Don't apologize. I love it." Matt slowly thrust forward, working his cock deeper. It seemed to take an eternity before Matt got all the way in, but damn if it wasn't worth the wait.

Lucas groaned against the sensation of being filled. It wasn't like he was a virgin by any means, but Matt had to be one of the biggest lovers Lucas had ever taken. "Fuck me," Lucas pleaded as he thrust against Matt.

"I'm trying to keep control here," Matt argued, his face tight with tension.

"Control is overrated. I don't want slow and easy. I need a hard, dirty screw."

"Wow, who knew you were so bossy?" Matt replied in his snarky tone. He then started thrusting, hard and fast, just like Lucas wanted.

Lucas let out a choked cry as Matt pounded into him. This is how he always imagined it to be with Matt--intense, visceral, hard and just plain wonderful. Matt may have never topped, but he caught on fast enough and he soon had Lucas to the edge.

"I'm not going to last much longer," Lucas warned, his voice broken up with pants.

Instead of slowing down, Matt increased the pace as he reached between their bodies. His strong fingers wrapped around Lucas's shaft. After a few strokes, Lucas yelled his release as thick ropes of cum shot from his cock.

"So good," Matt moaned as he gave one last thrust. He whispered something that may have been Lucas's name as his cock pulsated.

Matt rested his forehead against Lucas's shoulder while they both caught their breaths. The other man's body was heavy and Lucas could feel the cum drying on his skin, but the after sex high made it so he didn't give a damn.

It wasn't until Matt got up and held out a hand that Lucas found the energy to move. Neither of them spoke as Matt led him to the shower. They washed up together, Matt even going so far as to shampoo Lucas's hair. While they didn't have sex again, they did spend a great deal of time running their hands over one another's soap slicked bodies.

"Stay the night with me?" Lucas begged as he turned off the water and grabbed some towels.

"I have to work in the morning," Matt said as he began to dry off.

"I do, too, so we'll both be getting up at the same time."

Matt thought for a minute. "Okay, I have an extra uniform in the car."

A thrill went through Lucas. Although he knew he'd be asleep as soon as he hit the sheets again, the prospect of being in Matt's arms all night had Lucas smiling. After toweling off, they both crawled back into bed. Lucas rested his cheek on Matt's chest and started to run idle patterns on the man's flesh.

When he reached a puckered scar, Lucas frowned. "Is this from where you were shot?"

Several months ago, Matt had been shot while on duty. Lucas still had nightmares about that day when they wheeled Matt into the ER. It had ripped Lucas apart when he'd seen the usually strong man covered in blood and near death.

"Yeah," Matt replied, his gaze growing briefly troubled.

Lucas leaned up and kissed the worry away. "I was on duty that day and helped run the trauma. Do you remember?"

Matt's gave a tight smile. "How can I forget? Your calming voice helped me get through it. I think that's when I knew."

Lucas wrinkled his nose in confusion. "Knew what?"

"That you were the one for me. I was just too scared to admit that until recently."

"Oh." Lucas blinked in surprise. He certainly hadn't expected that.

"Before you say anything, there's something I should probably tell you."

"Does this have something to do with your *I never topped before* comment?"

"Yeah, it does." Matt then told him about his first sexual experience.

Lucas listened, his heart going out to the then sixteen-year old Matt and all he must have gone through when everything had come crashing down around him. "I'm sorry that happened to you, but not sorry that your coach got into trouble," Lucas said, once Matt finished. "He should have never touched a minor like that. Especially one he was supposed to be coaching and mentoring."

Matt let out a deep sigh, some of the tension leaving his body. "So, you're not disgusted with me?"

Lucas went up on one elbow so he could gaze down at the man he cared so much for. "I could never be disgusted with you."

Matt pulled him down for a kiss. As Lucas allowed himself to get lost in the sensation of Matt, he realized that he never wanted to let go and, for once, that thought didn't scare him.

Chapter Six

"Just thought you'd like to know that Alpha 304 is coming in," Janet, one of the ER nurses sang as she walked by Lucas.

Lucas hid a smile as he finished marking up a chart and hung it back in the slot on the patient's wall. He glanced at her with a look that he hoped projected innocence. "Why should I care?"

Janet let of a very unladylike snort. Not that Lucas expected better from her. Sure, she looked all diva, with a petite build and light blonde hair that she always pulled up in a twist, but deep down she was just one of the guys.

"Really?" Lucas cocked his head to the side. "Why should I care what medic team is coming in?" Meanwhile, inside he was doing a *Happy Dance* and chanting, *Matt is coming! Matt is coming!*

"Hmm...let me think about that one." Janet thoughtfully tapped her chin with one manicured nail. "Could it be because you shouted *Hey, did you hear that, bitches? You can gawk at him all you want, but it's me he's taking to bed tonight?*"

Lucas flushed as he realized that he'd just walked right into that one. Giving her the finger, he spun on his heel and walked the other way. Of course, something like getting flipped off had never dissuaded Janet and she immediately started to follow him. If anything, it only made her more curious. Lucas had been friends with her since his first day at St. Michael's and if he knew one thing it was that Janet wouldn't stop until she had the full story.

"Did he?" Janet nosed, as she caught up to him.

"Did he what?"

She let a long suffering sigh. As if she were the one being put out. "Did he take you to bed?"

Lucas let his smile be his answer.

Janet let out a loud squeal of excitement. "So you two did shag!"

"Not the first night," Lucas hastened to explain.

"*First night?*" she echoed as she bounced on the balls of her feet. How she managed to do that and still walk at the same time impressed Lucas.

She continued with her interrogation, "Is it serious then?"

Lucas shrugged. "I don't know. For me at least, it is."

"Has he said anything to you that would let you know he feels the same way?"

"Calvin warned me how much you like to meddle and now I'm seeing he was right," Lucas grumbled even as he strained to look at the ambulance bay doors.

"Hey, cut me some slack. Where else is an old married lady like me going to get her excitement? I have to live vicariously through you guys."

Matt and James came through the automatic doors. They were pushing a gurney between them. Lucas almost moaned when he saw the patient, Indian Jack. A frequent flier in the ER, the homeless man came in at least once a week with some ailment or another. Not that Lucas didn't like the guy, it's just he didn't look forward to cleaning him up. He still carried the emotional scars from the last sponge bath he gave ol' Jack.

"I'll get started with the patient," Janet announced with a big exaggerated, wink. "James can help me."

She practically peeled Matt's fingers away from the gurney before giving him a shove toward the door. "You can go clean out the rig. Lucas was just going out to get a breath of fresh air anyway."

"I was?" Lucas asked as he shared amused glances with Matt.

"Yes, you were." She made shooing motions with her hands.

"Go get him, tiger!" Jack yelled, showing off his rotten teeth.

Lucas and Matt laughed, then ducked out the doors. Matt led him to the opposite side of the ambulance so they were away from prying eyes. As soon as they were alone, he pinned Lucas to the rig and kissed the breath from him.

"I missed you, too," Lucas teased once they'd parted.

They made out for a few more minutes until the sound of the bay doors swooshing open made them jump apart. A few seconds later, another one of the ER nurses, Gladys came storming out.

A stern woman with dull red hair and a permanent sour expression, she wasn't Lucas's favorite co-worker. As soon as she spotted Lucas, she made a beeline for him as fast as her sensible white shoes would allow.

"I've been looking all over for you," she admonished as if Lucas made a common practice of slouching off on the job.

"And you found me," Lucas returned easily. "What did you need?"

"Gunther just came in through Triage," she spat the name out like it left a bad taste in her mouth.

"And..." Lucas prompted, even though he already had a pretty good idea where this conversation was headed.

"You know he gives me the creeps," she huffed.

"Nice bedside manner you got there, Gladys. Too bad we can't bottle it up so the whole world could enjoy your warmth."

"You have to take him. I don't even like being in the same room with that man."

Lucas let his disgust show on his face. Gunther was another homeless, frequent flier. Unlike Jack though, Gunther was a meth addict and tended to be grumpy at times. To say his and Gladys personalities clashed would be an understatement. That still didn't mean Gunther posed any real danger though. "Fine." Lucas sighed. "I'm coming."

"Hurry, he's already yelling."

Lucas glanced over at Matt. "See you later?"

"For sure." Matt gave him that wonderful smile. "I have the next couple days off so I'm all yours."

"Great, I have time off, too." Not caring that Gladys was watching, Lucas stole another quick kiss before he followed her back inside.

"He's in isolation," Gladys said, referring to the examining room that was set off from the others. They always used it for loud or violent patients.

"Why? Gunther has never attacked any of us?"

"Maybe not, but he's annoying and stinky," Gladys sneered, then ghosted.

Lucas shook his head before he went in to see the patient. Gunther was still fully dressed and sitting on the edge of the cot. His leg tapped out a steady beat, showing Lucas that the guy was tweaking. A tall, thin man, with straggly black hair and wild dark eyes, he kind of reminded Lucas of *Gargamel* from the *Smufs*. That is if *Gargamel* had a nasty drug problem and a aversion to bathing.

Gunther stared at him with wild, unfocused eyes, but otherwise didn't acknowledge Lucas. Strange since the man usually at least had a *hello* for Lucas. While a lot of staff had taken the same rotten attitude at Gladys, Lucas had always gone out of his way to be nice to the man. So while they weren't exactly buddies, Gunther tended to treat Lucas with more respect than the other hospital employees.

"Hey, Gunther. What brings you in this time?" Lucas asked as he looked around for the patient chart. Gladys had a nasty habit of leaving the paperwork where she damn well pleased instead of using the slot on the door. So whenever he took over a patient's care for her, he had to play hunt-a-chart. He finally found it on the counter, next to the sink.

When Gunther still didn't say anything, Lucas's unease rippled to a new level.

Cautious and fearful, Lucas started to turn around to ask the question again. He saw the blow coming, but it was already too late. Pain exploded in Lucas's head as a fist collided with his right temple.

"You are of the devil, so you must die," Gunther whispered in an eerily calm voice as he pulled out a dirty switchblade.

Terror clawed up Lucas's back as he stared into Gunther's crazed gaze. Shit, this was not good. In her haste to get rid of the patient, Gladys must have overlooked Gunther's unstable mental status. It was a stupid mistake she should have never made and now Lucas would be paying the price. Any hope that anyone would have heard the commotion was out, too, since the isolation room sat so far away from the other rooms.

Lucas still tried to yell, but Gunther hit him again. This time, the blow landing on his jaw. Lucas fell to the ground, taking the bedside tray with him. It hit with a loud clattering sound. Since he knew he couldn't reason with the man, Lucas made a break for it instead. He tried to stand, but immediately dropped to his knees due to the blow to his temple that made his gait unsteady. Desperate, he started to crawl. He'd made it halfway there before Gunther was on him. Lucas screamed as a burning pain shot up his thigh. He looked back in time to see Gunther pulling out the now bloody blade. "Please. Please. Please," Lucas chanted before he finally took in a deep breath and yelled, "Someone help me!"

"Devil spawn must die," Gunther continued to talk in that same freaky tone. There was no compassion or remorse at all in his voice. That scared Lucas more than the knife because he knew there'd be no rationalizing with the patient.

He straddled Lucas waist and pinned him to the cold, tile floor. Lucas tried to fight, but it proved useless. Be it the drugs in Gunther's system or the blood loss from Lucas's leg--whatever the reason, Lucas was powerless to get away. Gunther's hand shot out and grabbed Lucas's by the hair. The man tugged, forcing Lucas's head to tilt back. Lucas whimpered as he realized the move exposed his neck. "No," Lucas pleaded, right before he saw the flash of the blade.

* * * *

Matt just put the cot in the back of the rig, when James came out.

"You ready to go?"

"Sure," Matt replied as he shut the rear doors.

"Where did Lucas go?" James gave him an I-know-your-secret grin.

"Gladys came and stole him from me." Matt sighed with false regret.

"Damn, that hussy anyway," James replied, playing along.

"I know! That's the third hot, sexy stud I lost to her this month alone." Matt began to walk to the driver's door of the ambulance when a loud commotion in the ER distracted him. Even through the closed bay doors, he could hear screaming and the alarm going over the loudspeaker.

"I wonder what's going on?" James said as he came over to stand next to Matt.

At that moment, Matt heard Lucas's name being yelled. It didn't happen just once either, but several times. Matt's heart pounded as he realized that probably meant his lover was in the middle of whatever was going down.

"Lucas," Matt choked before he took off running. Once inside, he followed the sounds until he reached a small room in the far corner of the ER. A crowd had gathered outside the door, but Matt just rudely pushed his way through. Once he got a good look inside the room, his whole world shattered.

Calvin and another man had a male patient pinned down while Janet knelt on the ground next to Lucas. Matt waited for Lucas to move--to give some sign that he was okay, but he remained motionless. His eyes were closed, his skin too damn pale. The air smelled tangy with fear and blood. Matt took in a sobbing breath as he realized all that blood seemed to center around. *Oh God, there's so much. Please don't let it all have come from him.* Even as Matt made that silent prayer, the truth was right in front of him in all its sickening detail. A large puddle blood had formed on the ground under Lucas, the sight making Matt's insides curl in horror. Matt's gaze quickly assessed Lucas's body. He could see one leg of Lucas's scrub pants was soaked and that Janet held a trauma dressing to his neck. So that meant Lucas had not one, but two life-threatening injuries. With a sob, Matt rushed over and fell onto his knees by Lucas. When Lucas opened his terror-filled eyes, Matt nearly lost it and cried. "What happened?"

Lucas opened his mouth to answer, but no sound came out. Maybe it was because of the neck wound or maybe because shock had started to set in. Whatever the reason, he seemed incapable of speech.

"A patient attacked him," Janet said, tears falling down her cheeks.

"How is that possible? I just talked to him ten minutes ago and he was fine. None of this makes any sense. This can't be happening," Matt babbled, knowing he probably didn't make sense. He didn't care though. If he pleaded enough, maybe then he'd find out that this was all some horrible joke or bad dream and Lucas would be all right. Even as the irrational thought flew through his mind, the warm

feeling of Lucas's blood seeping into his uniform pants let him know how real this was.

Matt reached down with trembling hands and caressed Lucas's hair. Lucas stared up at him, panic etched on his too-pale face. "It's going to be okay, babe. I promise," Matt crooned, his voice breaking with unshed tears. "I love you and I won't let you go. We didn't just find each other only to be ripped apart this soon." A cot came through the door and a set of hands gently started to pull Matt away.

"Come on, buddy. Let the trauma team take care of him," James soothed.

Matt ignored him, instead chanting to Lucas, "I love you. I love you. I love you."

James pulled harder until Matt had no choice but to let go. The team worked quick, scooping Lucas up and rushing him to the trauma room. Soon after, security came in and took out the still struggling patient. Through it all, Matt looked down at his bloody hands. It wasn't until he felt something trickle down his cheeks that he realized he was crying.

In a fog, he stood up and looked down at his uniform. Even with the dark color, he could tell blood covered nearly the entire front. Dimly he heard the loudspeaker calling out for the rest of the trauma team--a situation he'd seen countless times as a medic.

This time was different though. Because it wasn't just anyone who was in that room fighting for their lives, it was Lucas. Janet came over to him, her clothes just as bloodied as his.

"He's going to be okay," she assured him.

Matt let out a sob and she threw her arms around him. Embracing her back, Matt finally gave into the grief and allowed himself to breakdown.

* * * *

The pain woke Lucas up. No, pain didn't quite cover it. Ball-numbing agony would be a better description. His throat felt ached like it'd been through a paper shredder while his leg throbbed so bad he almost wondered if a pit bull was gnawing on it. He tried to reach out to touch his injury, in order to assess what it the hell had happened, but his arms refused to cooperate. It felt like he'd ran a

marathon, then finished it off by carrying a truck a city block. It wasn't just his arms either, his whole body felt weak and worn out.

He let out a moan as he opened his eyes. A moment of panic hit him as he was met with unfamiliar surroundings. Frantic, his gaze swept the room. The first thing he saw was a monitor that let out a steady beeping sound. Okay, that let him know he was in the hospital, so he wasn't totally out of his element. His second visual was Matt and that allowed the rest of the panic to leave Lucas. The medic sat in a chair next to the bed, sound asleep, his head resting against the mattress. Even in his slumber, he still kept one hand curled around Lucas's fingers. Out of nowhere, another wave of pain hit Lucas and he moaned louder this time. The noise woke Matt up. He opened his eyes and gave Lucas a tender smile.

"You're up."

"Yeah," Lucas croaked, his throat dry.

Matt caught on and brought up a cup of water.

Lucas took several sips through the straw before he tried talking again. "What happened?"

"A patient attacked you," Matt said, as he rubbed the back of his knuckles down Lucas's jaw.

Lucas noted how Matt had bags under his eyes and he wondered when the last time the man got a good night's sleep. Slowly, the details filtered back to Lucas and he recalled the assault in all its horrifying detail. "What happened to Gunther?"

"Who?"

"The patient, they didn't hurt him, did they?"

Matt let out a soft chuckle. "Only you would worry about someone who nearly *killed* you."

"It wasn't his fault. The meth messed up his mind," Lucas explained as he winced in pain.

Matt reached up and pressed a button on the IV pump.

Lucas felt the warm buzz of morphine. *Ahhh...much better.*

"Right now, Gunther is in the psyche ward, but when he gets out, they plan on charging him. Had that blade cut you one inch further on either side of the neck, you would have bled out before help came. Calvin said you nearly died." Matt's voice hitched at the last part.

Lucas fell silent for a few moments while he soaked in all the new information. Then Lucas recalled how Matt had held him as he lay bleeding in that horrible room. More importantly, he remembered what Matt had said. "I love you, too," Lucas whispered, hoping Matt had really meant those words and he just hadn't said them in the heat of the moment. To Lucas's immense relief, Matt's eyes lit up with happiness.

"Really?"

Since it still hurt to talk, Lucas just nodded. Matt leaned down to kiss him, but Lucas shrank back. "Sorry, I just realized I probably have the worst morning breath," Lucas risked the pain to explain.

Matt kissed him anyway. "Nothing can stop me from ever wanting you. Not even if you had fire-breathing King Kong breath."

Lucas started to laugh, then moaned in agony. "Damn you and your smartass mouth," Lucas complained with no real anger.

"Well, you better get used to it. Now that we found each other, I'm never letting go."

"Me either," Lucas declared, right before Matt kissed him again.

Epilogue

"Stop picking at your stitches," Matt admonished as he knocked Lucas hand down.

Lucas shot off a dirty look before he shifted away, the movement making the paper of the examination table crinkle. He knew he was acting a bit surly, but at the moment, he couldn't find it in him to give a damn. He truly hated being the patient and he just wanted this appointment done and over with. "I can't help it. They itch like hell. You try having something like these in you for two weeks."

"It hasn't been two weeks." Matt patiently reached out and grabbed Lucas's hand again. "Plus, I've had stitches plenty of times."

"Okay, ten days. It's still a long time to be miserable." Though released from the hospital a few days ago, Lucas knew he wouldn't truly feel on the mend until he got rid of the thread decorating his throat and leg. While he knew he'd have the scars to deal with for the rest of his life, he could withstand that since he realized it could have been a lot worse.

When Calvin walked into the room, Matt threw up his hands. "Thank God you're here. *Wiggle fingers*, won't leave his wounds alone."

Calvin smiled as he pulled up a stool and peered at Matt's neck. "I don't see any infection, so why don't we take the stitches out?"

Lucas let out a sigh of relief. "Thank you so much."

Calvin worked in silence for several minutes before he asked, "So are the rumors true? Did Matt really move in with you?"

"Yes," Lucas admitted, not bothering to hide his happy grin. He winced when a bit of thread got stuck in his freshly healed skin.

"He barely let me bring any of my furniture," Matt griped.

"You had a chair in the shape of a hand. Excuse me for not letting monstrosities like that into my house." He stared down at the tray that held the remnants of his stitches. It still made his stomach lurch whenever he thought about how many it'd taken to close up his neck wound.

Calvin laughed before he set down his scissors. "Don't forget the velvet tiger painting."

Lucas let out a small shiver of disgust as he thought about that particular part of Matt's décor. "Yeah, that stayed behind, too."

"I never get any love," Matt protested, but he was smiling when he grabbed Lucas's hand and placed a kiss on his knuckles. He also tossed a towel over the tray, covering the small bits of thread that had just recently decorated Lucas's neck. A move that touched Lucas deeply. Matt always seemed to know what Lucas needed even without it being vocalized.

"I did let you bring the bean bag chair," Lucas pointed out.

"Only because I showed you how fun one can have with that type of furniture." Matt wagged his eyebrows.

"James said your youngest brother is back in your life," Calvin said as he started to apply steri-strips to Lucas's neck.

Lucas felt a pain of sadness as he recalled the night Dylan had shown up at the apartment. "He got kicked out of the house because Dad found out he was gay, too. When Dylan read about my attack in the paper, he decided to reach out to me."

"Is he living with you, now?"

"Yes, he just got his medic's license, so Matt is going to help him get a job."

"It looks like things are working out for you," Calvin said.

Lucas beamed up at Matt. "Yeah, they're working out perfectly. I've never been happier." Not caring there were others around, Lucas tilted his head up in a silent order.

Matt complied, dipping down to capture his mouth in a tender kiss.

As Lucas felt himself get lost in the wonderful sensation of the man he loved, he vowed that he'd never regret another one of his birthdays. Not when every day, every year was a true blessing because he had the love of his life by his side.

About the Author

Stephani Hecht is a happily married mother of two. You can usually find her snuggled up to her laptop, creating her next book.

Stephani's email:

archangelwriter@yahoo.com

Stephani's website:

www.stephanihecht.com

Stephani's MySpace:

<http://www.myspace.com/stephanihecht>