

The poster features a woman's face in profile on the right side, with a film strip winding around it. The background is a deep blue with a grid-like pattern. The title 'BARRIE ABALARD' is in large white letters at the top left. A marquee sign with the word 'SWINGING' is in the center, and a red carpet with stanchions is at the bottom.

**BARRIE
ABALARD**

SWINGING

SWINGING

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ALSO BY BARRIE ABALARD

Exposed

Licked

Play Hard

Poker Brat

Poker Stud

Semper Fi

Six-Pack

SWINGING

BY

BARRIE ABALARD

AMBER QUILL PRESS, LLC

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SWINGING
AN AMBER QUILL PRESS BOOK

This book is a work of fiction.
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the author's imagination, or have been used fictitiously.
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*To my husband and daughter,
who, as always, support me and my writing.*

CHAPTER 1

1975

“Grass now. Talk later.” Troy Camden held up a joint, his softening cock still slick with juices.

Kirk Bauer shook his head while he fucked Natalie Smythe doggie-style. “I prefer martinis. So much more civilized.”

“Do you mind?” asked a panting Natalie, who was reaching for the joint.

“Go ahead. I’m going to find the gin. Soon.” But Kirk didn’t pull out to go look for a drink. He was close, so close. When his gaze landed on Troy’s chest, he came, howling. Afterward, while he was catching his breath, Natalie bitched,

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“Hey, I wasn’t there yet.”

What the fuck? I looked at my buddy, and I came?

Troy took the joint back from Holly Lane who said, “Hey, T, no Bogarting the J,” just before she went down on him. Groaning, he passed the grass to Natalie. “Whatever you say. Just keep sucking.”

Kirk, watching the woman’s cheeks hollow with her efforts, felt himself growing hard again. “Never trust anyone over thirty, remember?” he managed to say, while he touched Natalie’s clit absentmindedly. She crooned, “Oh, yes, Kirk, that’s so good.” When her croons became sharp little cries, he grasped her hips to slip inside. Driving deep, he stared at Troy’s wet cock, sliding between Holly’s lips.

Jesus, I’m not drunk enough to think what I’m thinking.

Troy moved in time with Holly’s efforts, gasping to Kirk, “Or, in your case, over forty.”

“I’m not a day over thirty-five—aaaahh!” Kirk came a second time, his thoughts full of cocksucking—and the sucker was Troy.

I am definitely not drunk enough!

When he finished, Natalie broke free. “Enough, Kirk. I was done a while ago. I don’t want to get sore—I plan to enjoy a few more fucks tonight.”

He gave her the half-lidded glance that made women all over the country pant. “Get me a martini, and I’ll lick your sweet pussy.”

“Yum.”

As soon as Natalie left, he let himself drink in

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Troy...sweaty, muscled, and moaning, his cock huge and hard thanks to Holly's mouth.

Goddamn, but he wanted to jerk off—and he'd just come twice. What the fuck was going on with him tonight?

Natalie returned, handing him a glass before she lay on her back and spread her legs. "Hey, you two should try being a woman. Hollywood loves older actors, as long as they're men. We women are washed up at twenty-nine."

Ordinarily, Kirk loved to suck pussy, especially Nat's, because she was always so damned appreciative, letting him fuck her ass as much as he wanted. Only, tonight he didn't want to suck pussy, he wanted to suck a prick—Troy's prick.

The gin went down pretty easily before he went down on Natalie. He had her screaming within minutes. Once she'd finished, she sat up, pushing him away. "Hey, I've been spending all my time with you. This is a party, remember?"

And, with that, Kirk's date crawled in the direction of a man he didn't know, but who had a nine-inch schlong, for sure.

Kirk watched Troy finish, his hands on Holly's head while she deep-throated him. He grew hard once more, and Kirk didn't fucking believe it. He hadn't done it three times in a row since his twenties.

Holly wiped her mouth with the back of her hand. "I'm tired of cock. I want some of that fine, fine pussy you were licking, Kirk."

Kirk smiled. "If you can pull Nat off that guy's dick, you're welcome to it. Hey, Troy, come with me while I get

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another drink.”

“Haven’t you had enough tonight?” his friend asked while they sauntered to the bar.

Stealing a glance at Troy’s cock, Kirk said, “I never get enough. Do you?”

His friend paused, his sky blue eyes burning holes into his own hazel ones. “Are we talking about booze and dope, or something else?”

His damned mouth was so dry, the words wouldn’t come out. Instead, he placed a hand on Troy’s shoulder.

His friend’s eyes glittered. “Come out to the cabanas with me.”

Everyone knew that at Warren’s parties the cabanas by the pool were the places for male-male experimentation. In 1975 Hollywood, women could lick clits openly and nobody cared, but a leading man couldn’t afford the hint of homosexual scandal, not if he valued his career.

Kirk resisted Troy’s insistent tug on his forearm. “I need another drink first.”

Troy shrugged, letting go. “Get your drink, then meet me at the first open cabana. I could use a snort, myself.”

“Jesus, Troy, don’t use coke.”

Troy drew close, but didn’t touch him again. In a whisper, the younger man said, “Dick’s better once you’ve had a toot.”

Watching Troy walk toward the double doors that led to the cabanas, Kirk wondered about the man’s experience level, or whether he was just bullshitting. Troy loved to bullshit.

No matter. Another martini would fix things.

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* * *

Behind one of the cabanas, Troy quickly snorted a little powder. He loved coke when he fucked a guy. He'd never figured Kirk, all-American, true-blue Kirk, would want to take it up the ass. For one thing, where would he put the stick he usually stored there? But Troy had longed to fuck his friend ever since they'd acted together in that gritty western back in seventy-two.

Damn, fucking Kirk was going to be one bitchin' ride. He'd bet an ounce of the white powder that Kirk's hole was virgin.

Naked men slipped past him in twos and threes, high as the famous Hollywood sign. In a chair near the pool, a moaning woman was taking two men—one behind and one in her mouth. Seeing that much action stiffened him.

Then, he caught sight of Kirk, sexy, naked Kirk, out of the corner of his eye. With an incline of his head to signal the other man, Troy entered the first empty cabana. Kirk tied the canvas that served as the fourth wall closed behind him.

Reaching out, Troy cupped the older man. "I'd love to suck you," Troy whispered. "But first I want to kiss you. That okay?"

After some hesitation, Kirk nodded.

Troy brushed his lips against Kirk's, and the older man shuddered. He tasted of gin and pussy, a combination Troy had never had before, but liked. His tongue fluttered inside Kirk's mouth for a moment until he sucked the man's tongue into his own mouth, his hands slowly rubbing cock.

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Kirk cupped his face with his hands, kissing Troy hard enough to bruise his lips. Surprised, Troy broke the kiss, then sank to his knees. He licked Kirk's balls while his index finger played with the man's anus. Troy expected Kirk to tighten up, but instead he opened his stance, seeming to welcome the intrusion.

Kirk's cock tasted a little like pussy, but mostly of man-musk. Licking the cock lollipop-style, Troy took a moment to wet a finger. As he engulfed Kirk's cock, he also invaded the older man's back hole with his wet digit.

Kirk sighed, as if he'd been waiting his entire life for another man to make love to him.

* * *

Jesus H. Fucking Christ! Why had he waited so long to try a man? Now he understood what the girls meant when they said that another female ate pussy best, because she knew what a woman liked. Seemed to be that way with cocksucking, too—men knew what men liked. And the thing Troy was doing with his finger felt so goddamned *good*. Intense. He'd have to remember to tell Natalie to stick her finger up there when they screwed.

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Then...pressure against his anus. Troy bent over his back, murmuring, "Kirk, man, don't freeze up on me. I'm going to blow your fuckin' mind, so hang on."

Troy's hand spread lubricant on his cock and his anus, inside and out. Kirk didn't know where the younger man had found some, but couldn't say he cared. Troy began prying his back door open, the pressure and pain shocking him even while his dick turned to stone. Taking Troy's cock hurt—he couldn't help moaning his pain—but something hard back there, fucking him relentlessly, excited him in a fresh way.

Troy's hot breath on his neck disappeared. Fingers gripped

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Kirk's hips still while Troy pounded in and out, in and out. *Now I know how Natalie feels!* flitted through his thoughts, and he wondered that he, Kirk Bauer, wide-shouldered hero that made women swoon, should find satisfaction in another man reaming his ass.

"Oh, Christ," he moaned, aching to come, but unable to, and wondering what he should do. "Jesus, I gotta, please."

One of Troy's hands grasped his erection, the other still restraining Kirk while he fucked Kirk's ass hard. He gave himself up to the sensation of stiffness inside rubbing him, and stiffness outside being pumped, wanting to shriek when the tide of pleasure rushed through him. Not even his first time with a woman compared to this grasping, thrilling sensation of being thoroughly possessed, with another man's hand on him, pulling the last bit of cum from him.

All he could think was, *I want to give the same pleasure back to Troy.*

* * *

When he heard the big man cry out, his cock pulsing like a snake, Troy let himself go, and it was as if shooting stars spilled from his cock. The more he fucked, the more they came, and the more he came.

He softened after a year or so. Slipping out, he said, "I hope I wasn't too rough on you for your first time."

Kirk said nothing, and worry pushed at the edges of Troy's mind. "You all right, buddy?"

The older man's voice was a growl. "Yeah, I'm fine. But I

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want to bend you over now. You deserve to enjoy it as much as I did.”

“Uh.” Troy searched for the right words. “You see, I don’t receive. I only give. Back there, I mean. You gonna be okay with that?”

Kirk said nothing as he straightened to his full height. “Of course I am. Jesus, you think I’m a sissy, or something? Just because you fucked my ass doesn’t mean I’m a sissy. Fuck, I need a drink.”

All-American, true-blue Kirk Bauer stalked out, jerking the canvas flap aside as he did. Troy knew trouble when he saw it. He might have even lost a friend. But his strict policy of not allowing another man to ass-fuck him was born of hard-won experience, back when he was an innocent twenty.

His heart couldn’t handle it.

He couldn’t say he regretted having sex with Kirk. He’d wanted to fuck that muscled ass the first time he’d spied it, encased in tight jeans. He’d wanted to rip the denim off, then suck his friend’s enormous hard-on until the older man quivered like jelly. After that, Troy had dreamed of taking his ass, hard and fast, of making him scream with lust, until his cock exploded. Then, they’d lie side-by-side, his own head nestled under Kirk’s, his hands caressing the older man’s muscles with affection.

Troy slapped himself. He had to stop with the fantasies. A party was all about swinging, about fucking everyone you wanted, not about falling in love. He stared at his hard-again dick, thinking he’d go wash up and find someone else to fuck.

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But first, he needed another toot—coke would clear his head. Christ, if he didn't get a grip on his emotions, he'd be singing that stupid song that was all over the radio.

Feelings, wo-o-o, feelings...

After he snorted the coke, he went back inside, but Kirk was gone. When he asked Natalie where the man had gone, she'd shrugged her thin shoulders and replied, "Said he had an early call, needed to be on a set."

The party was still in full swing mode. Reaching out for one of Nat's exquisite tits, he took out his desire for Kirk on the starlet.

CHAPTER 2

The following week

“I’m tellin’ ya, man, it’ll be a blockbuster.”

Kirk sipped his Scotch while puffing on a Cuban, regarding the expanse of dark wood and chairs covered in dark green leather in his agent’s office. How he loved Cuban cigars. They might be illegal now, but if you had money, you could buy as many as you could smoke. Morey always stocked Cubans for him.

Even though he’d recovered from his monster hangover two mornings before, Troy was still stuck in his head like some melody he couldn’t place. What his agent was

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suggesting, that he make a movie with the younger man, scared him shitless. Suppose everyone on the set sensed how Kirk felt about Troy? “I don’t know. The western we worked on together did okay at the box office, but nothing spectacular. Why do you think this movie will be big?”

Morey Wolowicz, agent to the top stars in the film industry, swirled the amber-colored liquid in his glass. “Because Troy Camden is hotter with the public than Geneviève Bujold’s ass, and you’re getting a little long in the tooth.”

Kirk put his hand over his heart. “Morey, you *wound* me. Are you saying I’m too old?”

The agent grinned. “Not too old. But co-starring with a hot young lead wouldn’t hurt. Troy’s bigger than even Newman and Redford right now. Besides, my wife wants a new fur coat, and so does my mistress. Make me some money, why don’tcha.”

Kirk inclined his head. “I understand where you’re coming from, but I have reasons why I don’t want to work with Camden.”

“What the fuck might they be? You’ll make a boatload of money. C’mon, Kirk, I put in a lot of friggin’ hours to bring you two together. You guys have chemistry.”

Chemistry was exactly what made Kirk nervous. “But a private eye flick? Aren’t they as dead as Humphrey Bogart?”

“You forgettin’ about *Chinatown*? *Noir* is in. And, frankly, your last pic didn’t exactly have audiences begging for more.”

Kirk puffed on the cigar, lost in thought. What Morey’d

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just said hurt, but it was true. He needed some boffo box office or his career would sink. “All right, you win. But I want top billing.”

His agent’s devilish grin was his answer. “I’ll tell Camden’s agent the names have gotta appear in alphabetical order.”

* * *

January 1976

Troy poured himself into the waiting limo, not happy with the cold, wet L.A. morning. He wanted nothing more than to jump back in bed with the hot piece of ass he’d scored last night. Normally he didn’t bring men home—the scandal of gay sex wasn’t something his career could bear—but he’d tortured himself about Kirk all day yesterday, until he’d needed a man’s ass to fuck as much as he needed some hair of the dog this nasty dawn. He sipped the coffee waiting for him, adding a little whiskey from his silver flask to improve the flavor.

Beverly Hills slid past his window in all its soggy glory while he wondered how the filming would go. He’d seen Kirk around, of course, in restaurants and at parties, and they’d even played some tennis together, but neither of them had approached the other sexually since that one incredible night. He’d heard somewhere that Kirk was seeing a new woman, even younger and firmer than Natalie, and he wondered what that might mean. Had their wild encounter been only about

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sex? Or had Kirk's heart stirred the way Troy's had?

He tipped a little more whiskey into his coffee. Most of the morning would be taken up with makeup, costumes, and blocking the action. He'd be plenty sober by the time he'd need to recite lines—assuming they'd get that far today. So much of acting involved long hours of waiting for everything to be ready before, finally, the director called on you. Boring, really. But it certainly paid well, once you were on top.

Kirk flashed through his mind, and he smiled to himself. On top, all right. Maybe he'd find a way to convince the big, brawny fella to slip into his trailer for some hot cock up the ass. Damn, just thinking about it had him hard as a pistol grip.

The limo cruised through the studio gate, the guard waving them on. Troy popped a couple of peppermint candies to cover the whiskey. Madeleine, his makeup girl, could be trusted not to tell anyone she'd smelled booze on his breath at six in the morning, but you never knew who else might tattle. Brownfield, the director, had been clamping down on actors coming to work half-wasted.

But there's no one I can trust when it comes to sex.

Resting his head on the back of the seat with eyes closed, Troy let himself feel the truth roar through him like a freight train—that he preferred men. That he'd always preferred men. And that such news would kill his career. Yes, even though more and more gay men were coming out of the closet across the country, actors who were leading men and known for their romantic roles simply could not come out. And he wasn't about to commit financial *hara-kiri* just so he could tell the

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truth about his bedmates. He'd worked too long and too hard to escape North Dakota, and he'd keep fucking starlets as long as he had to. As long as he fantasized about men, he could screw women all night.

Damn, but he wanted another slug of whiskey. Or a hit of coke. Yeah, some coke would do the trick. Make him forget about the man he loved—scratch that, lusted for.

Troy Camden loved no man. He couldn't afford to.

* * *

Kirk settled into the makeup chair, smiling at Judy Overton, his favorite makeup girl, as she handed him a cup of coffee. "How's tricks, Jude?"

"Oh, honey, same as usual—a hard man is good to find." The short, plump woman winked at him. "Want a donut?"

"Just coffee for me. Got to watch the weight." He slapped his stomach, proud that at his age, he didn't have an ounce of flab on him.

"I'll watch your weight anytime, sugar buns." Judy grinned while she began applying pancake to hide his small skin imperfections. "You ever want to come to my place and take your clothes off, I'll watch."

Kirk laughed, causing Judy to mutter, "Hold still, you," while she shaded the bridge of his nose.

"That might be the best offer I've had all week," he said.

Judy blinked. "You're kidding. Aren't you hot and heavy with your new girlfriend?"

"Trish Vandemere? She's fun, but she's not a good talker,

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like you are.” Patting the makeup woman’s hand, Kirk said, “Besides, wouldn’t Jack be jealous?”

“I’d send him out for Chinese if you’d sneak in the back way.” When Kirk raised his eyebrows, she scolded, “Talk if you want, but don’t move the face around.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

Makeup finally in place, he rose from the chair, only to spy Troy, who was walking around shirtless for some reason. Showing off for the ladies, no doubt.

Kirk tried not to stare while his heart jumped in his chest. The younger man did something to him that went beyond physical, and he didn’t understand why. He’d never had a thing for men, had never been with a man before Warren’s swingers party. Well, there was that time when he and a friend had “experimented” in junior high, and that other time at summer camp with one of his fellow counselors, but ordinarily men did nothing for him. Not a thing, sexually or otherwise. He’d never fallen in love with a woman, but he’d always figured the right one would come along—eventually. Until that time, he felt entitled to have fun, and he’d never had any trouble getting it up for the ladies.

Almost never, anyway, except when he was too drunk. Every man, whether he admitted it or not, had a performance problem now and then.

Shit! Troy was heading his way, and Kirk couldn’t tear his gaze from the pecs and the flat stomach, the dark chest hair arrowing into the younger man’s jeans, pointing the way to what he most wanted to see—and feel.

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“Yo,” Troy said, waving. Kirk knew he’d picked that up from the actor starring in the movie being filmed on the next set, a relative newcomer named Stallone.

“Yo yourself,” Kirk answered. “You ready to be my sidekick in this flick?”

Troy looked back at him, hands on hips. “I’ll be your gun moll if you want, buddy of mine. Anything you want.”

Nervous laughter escaped his tightening chest. “What, a he-man like you wants to play a woman?”

Troy punched his arm lightly. “Just kiddin’. Hey, I’ve got something in my trailer you ought to see. Brownfield won’t need us for at least an hour. I asked him.”

Kirk’s stomach flip-flopped, wondering what Troy wanted him to see. The younger man’s hooded eyes gave away no secrets. “All right, but let’s make it quick. I have lines to rehearse.”

The two men crossed the lot to Troy’s trailer. Kirk could feel sweat running down his back, between his shoulder blades, right to the top of his ass crack. Part of him longed for Troy to widen that crack, the better to fuck him. The other part of him felt terror that Troy might actually do just that. Then someone would find out, and their careers would be kaput. *Finis*. Gone with the wind—or, more accurately, with the fuck.

Troy opened the door to his trailer, bowing like a butler. “After you, my good man.”

Kirk entered, the phrase *my good man* echoing in his head. Was he Troy’s good man? And why did he even care? He

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wasn't homo, gay, whatever you called it. A couple of experiments and one ass-fucking didn't mean he was walking the other side of the street. Not permanently, anyway. His voice rasped when he asked, "What did you want me to see?"

The younger man hung his thumbs in his empty belt loops, his jeans pulled low enough for Kirk to see pubic hair. "The same thing you want to see."

"What is that?" A trickle slid down the side of his face. He couldn't seem to focus on anything but the bulge in Troy's jeans.

"Dick."

Trying for nonchalance, he said, "I've seen your dick. Why would I want to see it again?"

Unfastening his jeans, Troy pushed them to his thighs, freeing an erection that pointed skyward. "You know why. Come here and kiss me, big boy."

His blood roaring in his head, Kirk grasped Troy's shoulders and jerked hard, slamming the other man's body into his own. Lips sought lips, tongues sought tongues, fire sought fire. Firm muscles under his hands aroused him as he let his fingers play across Troy's back, moaning as the younger man crushed his mouth with his kiss. Helpless to stem his desire, Kirk let Troy remove his clothing until he stood naked, shaking with lust. The younger man gripped his ass cheeks and pulled them apart, one finger exploring, while he ground his body against Kirk's. Both of them were slick with sweat, and moans filled his ears. With wonder, he realized the moans were his own, and they grew louder when Troy's finger

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traveled deeper.

Troy broke their kiss. “God, I could just eat you up,” he murmured before sliding his tongue down Kirk’s neck, across his collarbone, to his chest. Troy sucked a nipple between his teeth, worrying it, each nip sharp and delicious. Kirk had sucked a lot of nipples in his life, but only a couple of women had ever sucked him in return. He loved it, but the biting Troy was doing—*Jesus*.

Blindly he grabbed for Troy’s cock, pulling it for all he was worth, determined to give back pleasure equal to what he was receiving. Troy’s hands found Kirk’s cock and balls, and his entire body stiffened with the effort of holding back his orgasm.

“Couch,” Troy rasped just before stripping away the last of his own clothing. They fell together, in a tangle of arms and legs, turning so that they could suck each other. Kirk took as much cock in his mouth as he could, licking the underside of the head while maintaining suction. With a hoarse cry, Troy bucked, pulsing in his mouth. Kirk sucked and licked until the younger man’s member softened.

Troy’s finger invaded his ass once more, his mouth relentless. Kirk felt the cum rise in his cock, rhythmic waves of keen gratification taking away his breath. His body was weightless, and he was falling, falling, yet still connected to Troy, always connected to Troy, goddamn, but he was in *love* with Troy, and he wanted nothing more than to offer himself to the man forever.

Using his mouth until his jaws ached, again Kirk sucked

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Troy, and his hands worked Troy's balls until he brought Troy to full stiffness once more. When Troy was thrusting deeply, Kirk abruptly stopped, whispering, "Fuck me. Fuck me hard."

The other man said nothing as he adjusted Kirk's body so he could receive. Slowly, carefully, Troy took him. Kirk cried out—it hurt again, as it had the night in the cabana—but, like the first time, the pain faded into pleasure. They fucked like lovers, Troy's hands working his dick, until an intense shudder flowed through Kirk. He thought he might have called out Troy's name but he wasn't sure. As his body floated back to earth, Troy drove into him, making noise as if he didn't care who heard them.

The realization sank into Kirk's brain. *Noise*. Oh, God, suppose someone had heard them? Suddenly afraid, he jerked so that Troy's cock slid out.

* * *

Even though his dick was no longer up Kirk's ass, Troy's arms still clutched him around his middle. He never wanted to let the man go. Goddamn it, he was falling in love, and Troy Camden never wanted to fall in love again.

"Let me go," Kirk said, struggling.

"No." Even to himself, Troy thought he sounded like a spoiled little boy.

"Yes."

Kirk pried his arms apart. Troy tumbled onto the couch, feeling angry and empty as he watched the man grab clothing. "What's your hurry? We have plenty of time."

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The knock on his trailer door startled them both. "Need you back on the set, guys, in five, so put away that weed," an assistant called out.

"Fuck," Kirk growled. "Someone might have heard us. If someone heard us, our careers are over."

Troy smiled from the couch, propping his head up with one hand. He let his gaze drink up Kirk's finely-muscled body, blond chest hair and gorgeous cock, before they were swallowed up by the clothing. "Jesus Christ, Kirk, no one heard anything. They think we came back here to suck on a joint. And we did, just not the kind of joint they're thinking of."

Kirk disappeared into the washroom, emerging a few seconds later with a damp washcloth and a towel, wiping his face and hands. "Get dressed. We're needed on the set."

He stretched, deciding to needle Kirk. "We got plenty of time, old man."

"Old man? *Old man*? If I'm an old man, then I'm going to enjoy an old man's prerogative."

A massive hand flipped him onto his stomach, pinning him ass-up, and something leather cracked across his backside.

"Hey, that hurts like hell. Stop it."

"You need to learn some manners, *young man*."

Kirk's heavy leather belt continued whipping his bottom and thighs. Each burning lick made him a little more desperate to escape, and after four more, he was struggling in earnest. "I'm not kidding, Kirk. Christ, that hurts. Stop it! I'm not into this stuff."

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Silent, the older man walloped him a few more times. Troy felt tears leak from his eyes. Goddamn it all, he wasn't going to cry.

Big boys don't cry.

His sitting area was on fire, but it was nothing compared to the pain in Troy's heart as he remembered Robert, the only man he'd ever loved, the only man he ever would love, because there was no way he'd fall in love again. Not after the horrendous breakup he'd suffered through.

Big boys don't cry.

That's what Robert had said as he'd walked away, out of Troy's life forever. Pressing his lips together, he stifled the sob welling inside him, but was unable to stop the tears.

"That oughta hold you, you handsome little brat," Kirk said. "Now that your ass is hot and sore, let's go. God, I'm going to love watching you squirm—hey, Troy, what the hell? You crying? I barely busted your ass."

He gulped once, twice, before he trusted his voice enough to speak. "Guess I'm just a sissy-boy. Spankings always made me cry. You could cut off my foot and I wouldn't blink, but spank my cute little butt, and I cry." Trying for the lightest tone he could, he wiggled his ass. "I do have a cute butt, don't I?" He reached back to rub his smarting flesh.

Kirk sighed. "It's cute, all right. C'mon, get dressed. Playtime's over."

Troy touched his bottom lip with an index finger, batting his eyes. "And you're not mad at widdle ole me anymore?"

Rolling his eyes, the older man said, "No, I'm not mad."

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Using the backs of his hands to swipe away the tears, Troy sat up, forcing a grin, saying, "I guess I liked the spanking more than I let on." He started jerking off, hoping Kirk would drop his pants one more time. "Let me do it to you again."

Muttering a curse, Kirk stalked out, leaving Troy sitting on the couch, naked and aroused. Disappointed, he stopped jerking off. He might as well wash up and go to work.

Later that day, after an especially grueling scene, the director told everyone to take a break. Troy's ass still burned a little, but mostly his heart felt wounded, and it pissed him off. He'd fucked Kirk the first time because the man was sexier than sexy, with his wide shoulders that tapered to a round, muscled ass. He wasn't in it for the love.

And yet, here he was falling for the guy. He was an idiot.

Kirk sidled up to him at the table holding snacks and drinks. "Want a little something stronger in your soda?"

Stung by the older man's refusal to let Troy fuck him one last time before they went to work, he shrugged. "No alcohol right now. But, man, if you had some blow, I'd follow you anywhere."

Kirk said, "Walk with me."

Troy matched the man's pace, waiting for him to speak.

"If I had some blow, would you let me fuck you for a change?" Kirk asked.

Troy halted. "I told you, I'm not into that." Despite his words, Troy could feel his cock stiffen at the thought.

"Maybe I've decided I am. Into that, I mean. Maybe I'm tired of being the fuckee instead of the fucker. So, if I get you

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some coke, do I get your ass?”

“Sure.” Troy was sure Kirk didn’t know the first thing about buying coke, so his ass was safe, which meant his heart was safe. Kirk was strictly a cocktails-at-five kind of guy.

Kirk nodded. “In that case, let’s go make some movie magic.”

CHAPTER 3

The following Saturday, Kirk staggered out of bed a little after noon. Stumbling into the bathroom, he stared at himself in the mirror. What the sick hell had he been thinking, picking up a guy? Fooling around with Troy was one thing, because the man had as much to lose as he did, but taking home a stranger? What a dumb shit he was.

He glared at the young buck soaking in his bathtub, who grinned in response. “Climb on in—and climb on in, if you know what I mean.” The muscle-bound hulk rolled onto his knees, sticking his ass into the air. “I did you all night long, but you never did me. You got a nice, big one, so let Tommy have it, just once.”

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He'd been stinko drunk last night—that was why he hadn't "let Tommy have it." His dick never did get fully hard, he'd been so pickled, but it hadn't stopped him from getting off. Tommy really knew how to suck. Knew how to fuck, too. His ass felt like a piledriver had pounded a telephone pole into him all night long.

Truth be told, he was ashamed he'd picked up a guy instead of being true to Troy. Being true to anyone—now, there was a novel concept for Kirk Bauer, known in the gossip rags as "Bachelor Forever." And to be true to a *guy*? He shook his head, not believing what he was about to say. "Tell me, Tommy, you know where I can find some blow?"

Clearly disappointed that Kirk wasn't going to fuck him, the young man turned onto his back and began to masturbate. "Uh-uh, I don't do that stuff. Booze and weed, that's it for me."

Thoughts raced around his head as he considered what to say next. "Tommy, one of the reasons I didn't, uh, 'let you have it' last night was because there's this one person I really want, and he—I mean, *she*—told me if I got her some blow, I could cornhole her. I'm kind of saving that experience for him, uh, her. So, I need coke."

"Are you sure you don't want to practice on me? I'll suck you first. I'll even find you some coke, man. Promise."

"No more sex, Tommy. What would you like for breakfast?"

Later that day, the coke safely tucked away, he called Troy, only to get an answering machine. A lot of the younger

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crowd used the newest toy instead of a call service these days, so Kirk wasn't surprised to hear one. Trying for a casual tone, he said, "Hey, it's me. Would you like to spend the rest of the weekend on my ranch? I know you enjoy horses, and we had a blast working together on that western a few years ago. Give me a ring for directions, and I'll meet you there."

He hung up the phone, and settled in to wait. He loved to ride, though he wasn't eager to pound his ass on a hard saddle, not after Tommy. Still, for cheating on Troy, he deserved a little pain, didn't he?

Pacing his bedroom, he marveled at how, in a few short days, he'd moved from being afraid for his career, to deciding he had to have Troy. Couldn't live without Troy. Would die for Troy.

Well, maybe not die. But he believed he'd kill his career for the man. The realization shocked the hell out of him.

The phone rang. He dove for it, then answered in a practiced, bored tone, "Hello."

"Hello, yourself. What are you doing on this fine California day?"

"You get my message?"

"That's why I'm calling."

"I'm headed for my ranch. Want to come along? I located something you want, something you said you might enjoy. Besides, I know you like to ride." Kirk tried not to put any special emphasis on the words *something* and *ride*.

"You got a stallion wild enough for me?"

Kirk smiled. "I think you'll be well-pleased with the

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stallion I've picked out for you."

"In that case, man, I need directions."

* * *

Troy's Jag hugged the curves of the road that led inland, to the rugged areas of southern California where the rich and famous owned spreads. Keeping his speed under control wasn't easy, but he'd no wish to miss a curve and careen into space, plunging hundreds of feet to certain death.

At least his car was working. The damned Jaguar was in for repairs more than out, but he loved its sleekness and quick handling. He'd lowered the top in honor of the glorious weather. It usually was glorious in southern California. Beat the hell out of North Dakota.

The sun was an orange ball in his rearview mirror when he slowed to take the unmarked dirt road Kirk had said was one and six-tenths miles past a red mailbox on the left. The ruts forced him to stay in second gear to keep from ripping out the Jag's undercarriage. After rounding a corner, he hit the brakes to avoid running into a black wrought iron gate at least ten feet high and topped with spikes. The same kind of wrought iron continued on either side of the gate as far as he could see, creating a fortress against the outside world.

But there was no guard, which seemed interesting. What might old Kirk have planned? Troy grinned to himself.

He used his car phone to ring the number Kirk had given him, happy that he'd splurged on one. Even in the rarified levels of the film industry's elite, they weren't commonplace.

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“Hey,” he said when Kirk answered. “Open sesame.”

“See the keypad on the right? Enter the following numbers.”

Leaving his car idling, he did as Kirk instructed, amazed to see the gates slowly part. When he bought his place in the canyons, as he would eventually, he’d have to install one of these modern gates. Kept your privacy better than a guard, who could be bribed by the vultures in the press.

A long, long drive, then a rustic home that could have been anyone’s—if you didn’t take into account the breathtaking view and what looked liked miles of private land. Kirk was slouching against the front door’s jamb, and the cocky jut of his hip made Troy’s heart pound. An entire thirty-six hours before either of them were needed back on the set lay before them. Man, the things they could do in the space of thirty-six hours...

He stopped the Jag, threw it into neutral, set the brake, and hopped over the door rather than opening it. He stopped three feet away, his hands in his front pockets. “Hey, Kirk. What’s shakin’?”

The older man looked him over, the way a ranch owner would a prospective piece of horseflesh. “We’re completely alone,” was all he said.

When the words sank in, Troy ambled toward Kirk until he could touch his face. As he reached out, the older man enfolded him in his arms. Their kiss began eager and grew aggressive, with each of them devouring the other with lips and tongues. Grabbing his belt buckle, Kirk dragged Troy just

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inside the front door. Within seconds, they each had their jeans and underwear down to their knees, enjoying a rough approximation of sixty-nine on the wide-planked pine floor.

When he came, he saw stars. But he had no time to linger over the sensations. After Kirk came, he pulled up his pants and clambered to his feet, saying, "Let's ride."

Troy responded with a leer. "You betcha. How about you lean over that chair? It won't take me long to get hard again."

"Jesus, we just had sex! I'm talking about riding horses."

Troy felt embarrassed without being sure why. "Okay. Sorry."

Kirk punched his shoulder lightly. "No apology needed. I can see where you'd get, not a wrong idea, but a different idea. I just had to let off a little steam once you were here. Now that we've both done that, it's time for horses."

Ninety minutes later, resting the horses after a hard canter, Troy's entire being thrummed with delight. The evening sun had set the world on fire, turning the Joshua trees, ocotillos, and creosote bushes a rich gold. The sound of his horse, a dun named Danger—Troy had grinned when Kirk had told him the name—blowing air through his nostrils, the slight breeze, the golds and browns of the desert, and the man who took his breath away, astride his own horse, perfected the moment. He wanted to experience the moment forever.

"You stick pretty good to a saddle," Kirk said. "For an inexperienced whippersnapper."

"Invite me more often, and I won't stay inexperienced for long." He let his gaze linger on the other man's face, whose

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full lips curved into a smile.

Kirk neck-reined his mount around. "Race you back."

When Bandito, Kirk's horse, took off at a full gallop, Troy thought he was ready for Danger to spring forward, but he wasn't. No longer concerned with looking cool, he grabbed for the saddle's horn, losing his reins in the process. Within seconds he was flying through the air, landing hard enough to knock all the wind out of him. Breathless enough to panic, Troy thought he was going to die for long moments before he finally, painfully, sucked air in.

By then, Kirk had trotted back. He was holding Danger's reins. "You all right?"

Pushing himself up to a sitting position, he winced while feeling his ribs. "I don't think anything's broken, but I feel like someone kidney-punched me."

"That'll pass. Can you ride back? We'll walk, and I'll even hold Danger's bridle, if you want."

Working to hide his grimace, Troy rose to his feet, dusting himself off with hard slaps. "Hell, I'm no pussy. Of course I'm all right. And you don't have to lead me back. I can ride the horse."

"In that case, think you can stand a trot part of the way? Light's fading. We need to get back."

He wasn't looking forward to bouncing in the saddle, as shook up as he felt, but Troy ground out the word, "Sure."

"Hey, look at it this way—at least I don't have to pick any cactus spines out of your ass."

The moon shone silver by the time they'd returned to the

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barn. He'd bitten his tongue to keep from crying out while bouncing most of the way back, and when he'd slid off the horse, the last thing he wanted to do was use his sore muscles to brush Danger and clean his tack. But Kirk reminded him that they were alone, and the horses needed care. Troy stiffened his upper lip and did what he had to.

* * *

Kirk kept stealing glances at Troy as they walked back to the house. The younger man couldn't quite hide his limp, and Kirk worried that maybe something more than bruises were making him suffer.

Inside the house, he cut the evening's chill by lighting a fire in the enormous stone fireplace. Once the blaze took hold, he told Troy, "I've got some fantastic wine."

The younger man was sitting in one of the overstuffed leather chairs, groaning, his head thrown back and his eyes closed. "I could use a few glasses. I'm hurting in places I didn't know I had."

After fetching and pouring the wine, Kirk said, "Steak and potatoes okay by you?"

"Yeah."

Once he had the potatoes reheating and the steaks broiling in the kitchen, he returned to Troy and the fire. "Strip."

The younger man laughed weakly. "Hey, man, no offense, but I'm not sure I'm up for any wild fucking tonight. I hurt like hell."

"Exactly why I want you to strip. Let's look at your

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injuries.”

Kirk drank in the sight of Troy’s hard body, chest hair arrowing its way toward his cock. But he frowned to see the black-and-blue areas on his torso.

“My pants, too?” Troy asked.

“For Christ’s sake, yes, your pants, too.”

Troy looked away shyly, his revealed erection pointing straight up. Kirk’s cock pulsed at the sight. Running his fingers lightly over the sore-looking areas on the younger man’s back, hips, and thighs, he willed his horniness to stop distracting him. “You’re going to be sore tomorrow.”

“I’m sore tonight.”

Unable to stop himself, Kirk let his hands caress Troy’s bottom. The younger man moaned, “Aw, man,” spreading his legs.

With great effort, he withdrew. “Steaks,” was all he said while he hurried away. In the kitchen, he turned the meat, then pulled out his own meat. He couldn’t hold off one more moment. Within seconds, his orgasm tore through him, and he pressed his lips together tightly to make no sound.

He washed up, then plated the food. When he entered the room, he felt keen disappointment that Troy had put his clothes back on. “Grub’s ready,” he said in his best John Wayne voice.

They ate in front of the fire, slight wincing passing over Troy’s face every time he moved. Kirk knew Troy was stifling his responses so Kirk wouldn’t think he was a sissy. By the time they were into the second bottle of wine, however, Troy

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had relaxed significantly, not grimacing as often when he changed position.

"I noticed you have a hot tub," the younger man said, his tone soft. "A soak in some hot water sure would feel good."

Kirk shook his head. "Hot water tonight would only make those bruises worse. Save the hot tub for tomorrow. After we finish dinner, however, I'll give you a rubdown." When Troy's eyebrows shot skyward, Kirk protested. "Hey, a real rubdown. My masseur uses special oil on me when I strain something. It'll make you feel better, I swear."

Food gone and with it the second bottle of wine, Troy stood. "No time like the present for that massage, I guess. Where do you want me to lie down?"

"Follow me." Kirk led him to a room just off his bedroom and heard the other man's gasp of surprise when he saw the space.

"Jesus, you have a room just for massage, table and all? Wow."

"Sauna, too. Tomorrow we'll both use it, and the hot tub. Tonight, just massage for those tender spots of yours." He threw a towel at Troy. "Here. Get on the table facedown and put this over your butt."

Then he went away, doing his best to quit thinking what he was thinking. He intended to stick to the plan, which was just massage, no sex. If Troy was better tomorrow, they'd have time enough to fuck.

After five long minutes in which Kirk thought seriously about jerking off one more time, he returned to the massage

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room. The ropy muscles of his young lover's back called to him. After pouring the oil on Troy's back, he placed his hands on the man and kneaded. He was rewarded with a groan and a, "Damn, that feels good."

Kirk massaged less gently, using long strokes to spread the oil around, intent on healing his lover. Spilling more oil into one cupped palm, he worked on Troy's leg muscles, paying special attention to the inner thighs. A man not used to riding on a regular basis would be sore there, he told himself, doing his best to ignore the rush of feelings that washed through him while he stroked.

"Ohhhhhhhh," Troy exhaled, spreading his legs.

Moving the towel away, Kirk kneaded the younger man's glutes, taking it easy near a nasty-looking discoloration on one hip. His breathing quickening, he felt powerless to stop his well-oiled thumbs, which were now slipping into Troy's crack. Kirk pulled apart the butt cheeks, nearly fainting with old-fashioned lust. He wanted to make love to this man, possess this man, own this man, because this man, whether he knew it or not, owned Kirk's heart.

Dribbling a little oil onto Troy's anus, Kirk spread it around, slipping one finger inside. The younger man tightened, resisting. Kirk remembered the white powder Tommy had helped him buy.

"I've got what you like," he whispered hoarsely, his fingers working Troy's hole. "You said I could ass-fuck you if I got you some blow."

When the younger man didn't say anything right away,

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Kirk stopped what he was doing and waited. Three forevers later, Troy whispered, "Forget the blow. Go for it, big boy."

Clothing disappeared somehow. Kirk climbed on the table, then tugged Troy onto his knees. He put a little more oil on his hands, one palm oiling his own dick, one slipping up and down the other man's. Positioning himself, Kirk pushed gently against Troy's asshole, pausing when he heard a quiet cry of protest, moving only when the other man muttered, "Do it."

Kirk Bauer had fucked plenty of women up the ass, but he'd never felt like this, as if he were sailing on a cloud, his heart hammering in triple-time. The world slowed down, and the edges of his vision glowed a faint pink. Inside, a hunger he'd felt the first night they'd fucked, something he'd never felt for any other person before, man or woman, swallowed him whole. Using all his power to restrain himself, he slid into the younger man slowly to minimize the discomfort, still pumping his cock.

Troy gasped, but said nothing, letting him control the pace. Kirk fucked more quickly now, kissing the younger man's nape, thrusting hard, stroking Troy's cock all the while. Troy's strangled, "God!" gave him the permission he needed to let himself go. He came and came and came and came until he thought the world had ended, but it was only his orgasm that had. Sweaty, slippery with oil, and tears in his eyes, Kirk blurted out, "I love you."

The younger man shifted under him, but Kirk kept his cock tight up his ass, one arm wrapped around him, unwilling to pull out.

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“What did you say?” Troy asked.

“I said, I love you, Troy.”

Silence, then laughter. Kirk’s heart broke—was Troy really laughing at him?

“Listen, I understand if you don’t feel the same way.” It killed Kirk to say the words, but he knew how these things went. Men like them didn’t fall in love—they used each other, that was all.

When Troy stopped laughing, he reached back, patting him tenderly. “But I do feel the same way, you big lug. I love you, too.”

* * *

Sunday evening, both men were relaxing on the stone patio, enjoying their wine. Troy had never felt so tranquil without drugs. He’d told Kirk to forget about the cocaine—he didn’t need anything other than his lover. And he didn’t regret the decision for one minute. The dry, dusty scent of the desert filled his nostrils as they both watched the sun go down.

“Penny for your thoughts,” Kirk said.

“I was thinking, another splendid day in southern California.” Troy tipped his glass in Kirk’s direction. “And that I’m glad we’re together.”

“Me, too.”

When Kirk reached out for his hand, he gladly gave it. Funny, he’d never thought about the simple beauty of holding hands with another man—for him it had always been about the sex. But Kirk made him want to hold hands and cuddle after

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making love and do small favors for him.

"How should we handle things back in the real world?" Troy asked.

He felt the other man's hand tighten its grip. "I think we should play it cool. I love you, and I could give up my career if I had to, but I'd rather not. Understand what I'm saying?"

"Yeah, I do. I'd rather not give up my career either. And we both know how the press can act once they've discovered a secret. I don't think the world's ready for two leading he-men to admit they make love together."

Kirk turned his gaze upon him. "Tell me—why did you resist letting me fuck you at first? You clearly love it."

"Because I knew I'd fall in love with you if I let you. Let me tell you about Robert."

Troy polished off his glass of wine, then held it out for more as he began. "Robert was my first real love, right at the beginning of my career. We spent every night together, and he taught me everything I know. He also broke my heart into a million little pieces. That's when one-night stands and, eventually, the white powder became my salvation. After that, I never let another man fuck me—until you. Something about having a man fuck my ass just wrecks my heart. I didn't want to give that up to just anyone."

After a moment, Kirk asked, "So, why me?"

"Because I couldn't bear living without you any more. I need you. So, I took a chance that you also needed me, loved me."

The other man nodded. "I'm grateful you took the chance."

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Troy reached across the space between them, tracing Kirk's mouth with an index finger. "Can we go back to bed?"

Before sucking his finger into his mouth, Kirk replied, "I thought you'd never ask."

CHAPTER 4

An unusually gray spring morning greeted Kirk when he emerged from his Beverly Hills home. Sliding into the waiting limo, he couldn't help smiling. He and Troy had spent as much time together as they could the past three weeks, while still running around L.A. with women on their arms, to keep up appearances. The four of them—Kirk, Natalie, Troy, and Holly—had enjoyed dinners and had made certain they were seen by the press. On some of those nights, the men had needed to sleep with the women, to further the fiction, but Kirk never had trouble getting it up. All he had to do was imagine he was with Troy.

Fortunately, both Natalie's and Holly's careers were taking

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off, so neither woman was eager for a more permanent arrangement. In fact, the four of them had enjoyed a couple of nights together. Of course, Kirk and Troy couldn't fuck each other with the women around, but it suited them both that the women were in it mostly for the sex, and for the publicity of being either Kirk Bauer's or Troy Camden's girlfriend.

Leaning back in the seat, eyes closed, Kirk considered his future. When they were done filming, he and Troy were going to spend a week at his ranch, fucking and sucking until they couldn't stand up—they'd already agreed on that. Maybe they'd meet up in Europe, too, for a tryst in the Provençal countryside.

Damn, absolutely nothing could ruin this day, not the gray skies, not the fiendishly early hour. He never got much sleep these days, not with Troy in his bed till past midnight. Rapping on the divider, Kirk opened it, saying, "Tom, isn't it a great day?"

His driver, a morning person, usually had a chipper response. This morning, however, the man said only, "Yes, sir." Kirk noticed that he shifted in his seat.

"Something wrong, Tom?"

"Uh, not with me, sir."

What was going on? "Seriously, Tom, is something wrong? You don't seem happy. I hope everything's okay at home?"

"Yes, sir, I'm fine, and so's the family. Look, I don't want to be the one to tell you, but I suspect I have to."

"Tell me what?"

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Without another word, Tom passed back a Hollywood scandal rag. On the front page was a photo of Troy, sloppily-dressed, sneaking out of Kirk's mansion at night, with the caption—

HE-MEN REALLY SHE-MEN?

His hands began to tremble as he read the story.

"Sir?" his chauffeur asked.

"Yes?" Kirk choked out.

"Sir, if you don't mind my saying so, I don't believe that crap, not for a minute. I know you're no homo, and neither is Mr. Camden."

He heard himself say, in a wooden tone of voice, "Of course we're not *homos*, Tom."

On the set, people averted their gazes, even while they protested the truth of the story. Kirk kept his jaw firm, agreeing with everyone's assessment—he and Troy weren't homos, not gay, of course not.

But inside, he knew that they knew. They *knew*. How could they not, when you could cut the sexual tension between him and Troy like it was a ripe Camembert? A couple—well, more like four—assignations at lunchtime in their trailers probably hadn't helped keep their affair secret, either. When you've just been energetically fucked by your lover, it shows. They had both returned to work those afternoons flushed with love and deliciously dirty sex.

He did his best to act normally as he approached Troy,

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who was sitting in his makeup chair, the portion of his face still bare of pancake, deathly pale. Punching him in the shoulder, Kirk said, "We really should do something about the lies they're telling about us. Maybe a lawsuit?"

The younger man kept his gaze on the floor. "Yeah, maybe," he mumbled.

"It's not true, of course." Kirk thought he heard a tinge of desperation in his voice. He needed to get a grip.

Troy's voice sounded hollow. "Of course not."

"It's preposterous."

Dully, from Troy, "Absolutely."

"So, you want to sue for defamation of character?"

Kirk saw the glimmer in the other man's eyes, watched his Adam's apple convulse when he swallowed his feelings. "Can we talk about it later, man?"

Pain twisted him up inside, but somehow he managed to say, "Sure, Troy. Sure."

* * *

Staring at his reflection in a shop window, Troy reconsidered his idea one more time. His proposal was outrageous, but just outrageous enough to work. Now, he had to convince Kirk to go along with it.

He hoped his lover was waiting for him inside the bar next door. They'd located an out-of-the-way place to meet through a friend of a friend, and Troy was pretty sure he hadn't been followed by any members of the gossip trade.

He rubbed his temples. He hadn't been alone with Kirk for

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more than a few moments ever since that horrible morning. The older man was paranoid about someone seeing them together, and Troy felt as if he'd been suffering from a headache for the past week. He'd been tempted to dive back into the white powder and pick up a stud or two, but he'd resisted. Instead, he'd used all his mental powers to solve the problem—he hoped.

Hat and sunglasses on, he slouched into the bar. The sight of Kirk in a booth at the back quickened his breath. God, he loved the man.

When Troy sat across from Kirk, his lover pushed a tumbler full of what looked like Scotch at him. Eyes full of pain, the older man spoke first. “I don’t think we should stay here long.”

Troy wanted to scream, but instead said, “Stay long enough to hear me out. I think we can save our careers and have each other.”

Kirk eyed him before taking a big slug of his drink. “Yeah, right. You still believe in Santa Claus and the Easter bunny, too?”

He couldn’t help himself. He reached for Kirk’s hand, and the other man flinched as if the touch stung him. Troy gripped Kirk’s hand, whispering, “Please don’t pull away.”

Lines of tension in his lover’s face eased. “You know I don’t want to. But the movie we’re working on is big. We can’t queer the deal now. That’s my agent’s idea of a joke, by the way.”

“My agent said worse than that.” Releasing Kirk’s hand,

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Troy passed a piece of paper to him. "I'm going to the men's room. Read this, then meet me there."

A few minutes later, a white-faced Kirk opened the door. "Christ, you're crazy. We can't say that."

"Yes, we can. We can, and we will. I'm positive it will work. It's always easier to get people to believe a big lie than a small one. And in our case, we won't be lying at all."

Troy threw the lock on the door, then pulled Kirk into his arms. The couple kissed for a long moment, then hugged each other with fierceness. If he didn't know better, Troy would have been certain he'd heard a stifled sob. But Kirk Bauer wasn't the kind of man who cried. At least, not when anyone else was watching.

He held Troy so close it hurt. "I hope it works. I love you."

"It'll work," Troy said with more confidence than he felt.

If it didn't work, their careers would be over.

* * *

Three days later, in front of dozens of photographers, reporters, and gossip columnists, Kirk Bauer and Troy Camden stood shoulder-to-shoulder, their postures easy, their faces smiling. Flashes went off constantly as everyone jockeyed for shots of the handsome, popular actors.

Kirk tapped the microphone before saying, "I'm glad you could all show up for our little party." His comment was greeted with titters. Sucking in a deep breath, he said, "Both Troy and I want you to know the truth about us."

With everyone's attention riveted, and the most serious

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face he could muster, Kirk intoned, “We spend a lot of time together because we’re gay. We’re desperately in love, and plan to get married—as soon as the State of California will allow two guys to tie the knot. Our honeymoon plans include the Riviera and Provençal.”

Troy took his hand, entwining their fingers together. “When we’ve decided how we’re going to dress for the wedding—or, maybe I should say, which one of us will wear the wedding dress—all of you will be the first to know. We know how the public adores Hollywood weddings and happily-ever-afters.”

Deafening silence. Kirk kept his face straight while squeezing his lover’s hand.

Then, one of the writers giggled. Laughter spread through the room, morphing into howls and roars. Within moments, every member of the press was shaking. Some even removed their glasses so they could wipe tears from their eyes.

Troy squeezed his hand three times, their prearranged private signal for, *We did it!*

Allowing his *aw, shucks* grin to spread across his face, Kirk said, “I can see you’re treating this news with the gravity it deserves.” Next to him, Troy chuckled.

A famous columnist in the back called, “You guys are hilarious. Ever thought about doing comedy together? You’d be bigger than Martin and Lewis, or Rowan and Martin!”

“Make sure you put that in your article, Liz. I want my agent to see it.” Kirk mugged for the cameras, and the explosion of lights began anew. The big story of two “possible

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she-men” had just had its bubble burst, and in a most entertaining way.

Out of the corner of his eye, Kirk caught Troy’s wink just before the younger man kissed him conspicuously on the lips, to the delight of everyone present. “Hold that pose!” cried one of the photographers.

EPILOGUE

Present Day

Troy watched Kirk tend the chiminea. The golden light of sunset washed over the man's gray hair, turning it platinum. He snuggled deeper in his chair with a sigh. "You know, for an old fart, you're not bad-looking."

"Want me to use the paddle on your cute little ass, bad boy?"

With an expression of mock-horror, he said, "Oh, no, anything but the paddle." Troy batted his eyelashes while taking a gulp of wine. "Mmm, this Syrah is incredible. I'm so glad you opened a winery back in eighty-five—or was it

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eighty-six?”

“Eighty-five. I hadn’t gotten any work since we were outed in eighty-two, three long years. How could you forget that fact?”

“I haven’t forgotten the date that bitch”—Troy named a well-known and much-disliked gossip king, who revealed years later he was also gay—“told the world about us, complete with video. *Video*. How the fuck did he get footage of us screwing our brains out, considering we were deep in the woods of your place in Provençal?”

“I figured it was one of the hired help who let him in.”

Kirk shrugged as if the betrayal didn’t hurt, but Troy knew better. “Why didn’t you fire the lot of them?”

“Easier just to sell the place. When it became clear no one wanted to hire John Wayne’s oh-so-gay *heir apparent*, the idea of a vineyard popped into my head, and I had all this cash from the Provençal sale, so—a no brainer.”

“And now everyone in Tinsel Town has their own vineyard. Fucking copycats. We were the first.”

“That we were.” Kirk drank, saying nothing more. The silence turned moody. Reaching for the older man’s hand, Troy said, “Hey, you okay?”

As they gripped each other, Kirk batted at the air with his other hand as if he were shooing a fly. “Bah. I don’t want to think about those dark days, when I couldn’t get work selling floor wax. The Nineties were much kinder to us both.”

“Yeah, *everyone* came out. It became cool to be gay.”

“Working with Kushner on *Angels in America*. Not too

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fucking shabby.” Kirk touched Troy’s glass with his own. “I always knew you’d go places, Camden.”

“And don’t forget the Tonys we won when we finally became a comedy team, starring in our own Broadway show.” Troy watched his lover’s eyes focus on a faraway place, the spot where memories live.

“I haven’t worked in nearly ten years. I kind of miss it,” Kirk said.

He winked at his lover. “What, producing award-winning wine isn’t enough for you?”

Kirk turned a gimlet eye on him. Troy trembled in delicious anticipation when he replied, “I’d better get that paddle. You’re way too much of a smartass tonight.”

“Sorry, lover. How about some more of that yummy red stuff?”

He was holding out his glass, Kirk pouring, when the older man’s cell phone chirped. Putting down the wine bottle, he stared at the caller’s name before answering.

“Well, I’ll be damned. What the fuck you want, Wolowicz, you old fart? You not making enough money agenting the younger clientele these days? Why are you calling a gray, gay old has-been? Come to think of it, why haven’t you retired? You were young when Moses brought the tablets down the mountain.” Kirk’s face began to shine as he said, “Uh-huh, uh-huh.”

Troy tried to grab the phone, then laughed when his lover shook a finger at him, mouthing, *you naughty boy*. Unable to stand the suspense, he jumped to his feet and paced. Kirk was

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grinning like he'd won an Oscar, and the wait to find out what was going on felt like an itch inside his head. "Well, what?" he cried when the older man hung up.

"You remember *Vegas Shadows*?"

Troy stopped pacing. "Duh, it was only the movie we were filming when we fell in love. Of course I do!"

"Morey says there's interest—a *lot* of interest—in making a sequel. I told him to messenger over the script. If it's any good, are you in?"

"Does it hurt when you fall off a horse?"

"That's what I thought. I think another bottle of wine is in order."

"Yeah, maybe something in champagne. Got any Taittinger in the cellar?"

Kirk pulled Troy close. "I think we should celebrate before we celebrate."

Before his lover's mouth could envelop his, Troy said, "Last one in the hot tub has to suck the other."

But when he turned to race off, Kirk restrained him, holding his upper arms. "Not so fast. I think I've earned the right to be on top this time without a foot race. After all, if it weren't for me, you wouldn't have a shot in hell at *Vegas Shadows Two* or whatever the fuck they plan to call it."

"Ha-ha. I can act rings around you, buddy."

Kirk's eyes glittered. "Better watch your mouth. Remember that day in your trailer, when I used the belt?"

His heart still stuttering with love and lust more than thirty years later, Troy smiled. "Like it was yesterday, lover boy."

BARRIE ABALARD

Barrie has worked as a radio personality, technical writer, taxi driver, bank clerk, and ad copy writer, but she's always come back to her first love, fiction writing. For eleven years, she has written for various spanking-oriented e-publishers. Her credits include the sale of over thirty short stories, several novellas, and two short novels to DisciplineAndDesire.com, for whom she writes as "Belle," and over thirty-five short stories and two short novels to CF Publications, for whom she writes as "Miss Lee." Barrie is married with a grown child and lives in one of the Middle Atlantic states, along with two persnickety cats.

You can learn more about Barrie by visiting her website:

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* * *

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